

# Hult Ashridge Apprentice/Student Complaints Policy

## Definitions

An apprentice/student complaint (“Complaint”) is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by an apprentice/student (or group of apprentices/students) enrolled on an Apprenticeship/Program with any individual, service or lack of service at the School, where a response is reasonably expected and which has not already been resolved.

## Principles

Complaints are:

- Resolved informally if possible
- Treated seriously, consistently and in line with principles of natural justice
- Considered in accordance with the School’s policies such as those for diversity and equal opportunity
- Resolved or escalated promptly through the stages of the procedure, normally within ten working days at each stage

The School maintains reasonable confidentiality regarding the Complaint if this is explicitly requested by the apprentice/student.

At any stage, the member of staff handling the Complaint may refer the Complaint to a third party and inform the apprentice/student that this has been done.

Where the same issue is raised by more than one apprentice/student, the Complaint of the group of apprentices/students may be considered as one Complaint if raised collectively, or at the discretion of the School. In such cases, in the Complaints Procedure, ‘apprentice/student’ means the group of apprentices/students.

Disciplinary action may be taken if the Complaint is malicious, frivolous or vexatious in intent or design, or a result of default or negligence.

## Scope

This procedure does not cover academic appeals which are dealt with under the relevant Appeals procedure which can be found

## Complaints Procedure

The procedure has four stages:

1. Informal Stage

2. Formal Stage
3. Internal Appeal
4. External Review

### Stages

#### 1. Informal Stage

Within a period of five working days from the event which has caused the Complaint, the apprentice/student making the Complaint needs to raise the matter with either:

- The faculty or staff member who is directly responsible for the cause of the Complaint
- The head of the department that is responsible for the cause of the Complaint

The member of staff discusses the Complaint with the apprentice/student and, with the apprentice/student's consent, anyone else involved, to see if it can be resolved informally.

The outcome of the Complaint is communicated to the apprentice/student in writing.

Normally, Complaints at this Informal Stage are dealt with within ten working days.

If an apprentice/student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Informal Stage, the apprentice/student may raise a Formal Complaint within five working days of notification of the outcome.

#### 2. Formal Stage

The apprentice/student submits a written Complaint, together with relevant evidence and/or a proposed solution.

The Complaint is submitted to the Associate Dean (Quality), Andrew Hyams, by emailing [Andrew.hyams@ashridge.hult.edu](mailto:Andrew.hyams@ashridge.hult.edu). The receipt of the Complaint is acknowledged in writing.

The Complaint is considered by the Associate Dean (Quality) or designee, unless the complaint is against that person, in which case the Dean of Faculty, considers the complaint.

The Associate Dean (Quality) or designee:

- Considers the evidence provided by the apprentice/student
- Meets or corresponds in writing with the apprentice/student, to understand the Complaint and any proposed solution
- Investigates as appropriate to provide further evidence

The Associate Dean (Quality) or designee may consult with the apprentice/student and other involved parties regarding potential solutions either individually or together.

The outcome of the Complaint is communicated to the apprentice/student in writing, together with the grounds for the decision.

Normally, Complaints at this Formal Stage are dealt with within ten working days.

If the apprentice/student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Formal Stage, the apprentice/student may request an Internal Appeal within five working days of notification of the outcome.

### 3. Internal Appeal

The apprentice/student submits the request for an Internal Appeal together with valid grounds for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Formal Stage to the Chief Operating Officer. Valid grounds are:

- Procedural error sufficient to affect the outcome of the Complaint
- Substantive bias in decision-making in the Complaint
- New evidence that was not available at the time of the Complaint
- Insufficient remedy for a Complaint that was upheld

The request for Internal Appeal of the Complaint is acknowledged in writing, as well as any request for a meeting (physical or virtual) with the Chief Operating Officer.

The Chief Operating Officer reviews the Complaint and the outcome of the Formal Stage considering the

Complaint, evidence, and process by which it was handled. The Chief Operating Officer may refer the Complaint to a third party.

The Chief Operating Officer may:

- Investigate to provide further evidence
- Consult with the apprentice/student and other involved parties, either individually or together
- Propose alternative solution(s)

Normally, Complaints at this Internal Appeal stage are dealt with within ten working days.

The decision of the Chief Operating Officer is final. The outcome of the Internal Appeal may be to uphold the outcome of the Formal Stage or propose a revised outcome. The outcome is communicated to the apprentice/student in writing.

### 4. External Review

If the apprentice/student is not satisfied with the outcome, internal procedures have been exhausted, and the apprentice/student may seek an External Review of the outcome.

#### Additional channels for apprentices and employers

After the internal Ashridge processes have been exhausted, complainants have the opportunity to raise their complaint with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are not satisfied with the School's response. You must contact the ESFA within 12 months after the issue happened. Full details are available here: [www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship)

Email or post your complaint to the ESFA complaints team:

[complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk)

Complaints team

Education and Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House

Quinton Road

Coventry

CV1 2WT

The ESFA will reply to let you know what will happen next.

If you're unhappy with the how the ESFA has dealt with your complaint, you can contact the Department for Education at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure>