

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full annually

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by Adam Russell, Head of Quality on 17th July 2018.

It is due for review in August 2019

Making a complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received then talk to a member of our staff or your tutor. If you are unable to resolve the situation, you will need to follow the procedure outlined in this document.

What is the procedure for complaints?

Stage 1

If you want to speak to someone about a complaint, you can call our offices on 020 7405 0197 (lines are open 9:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays), where we will try to resolve the issue if we can.

If you prefer to put your complaint in writing, in the first place, write to the person who handled your query: that's usually the quickest way to resolve a problem. If you're still not satisfied, ask for your complaint to be escalated to their line manager.

We will need

- a completed complaints form detailing what your complaint is about
- copies of any correspondence related to the complaint
- your email address or postal address (so we can reply)

We will inform you that we have received your complaint within 48 hours. If we can't reply to you within this time, we will let you know and tell you when you can expect a reply.

What happens next?

The Head of Quality will investigate your complaint [looking at whether your questions were answered, whether you suffered any injustice and what remedy would be fair and proportionate in the circumstances]. They will inform you of the outcome of our investigations and respond within 10 working days. It is likely that the Head of Quality will contact you during the investigation for further information.

Stage 2

What to do if you are not satisfied

If you are dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1, and/or wish to pursue your complaint, you may escalate the complaint to the Head of Academy within 10 working days of receiving the outcome from Stage 1.

If the complaint was dealt with by the Head of Academy at Stage 1, then you should submit a formal complaint to the CEO.

The Head of Academy or CEO may delegate the task of collating information concerning the complaint to another staff member, but not the decision, nor the action to be taken. The Head of Academy or CEO will meet with the complainant, hear the complaint, investigate and make every effort to resolve the issue. Subsequent to this meeting, the Head of Academy or CEO will write to the complainant summarising the outcome reached and the process for appeal.

The complainants will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 10 working days of the meeting with the Head of Academy or CEO.

Stage 3

What to do if you're not satisfied

The complainant needs to write to the Head of Academy or CEO within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying them of the outcome of Stage 2, notifying that they wish their complaint to be heard by the Complaints Appeal Panel. The Chair will convene a Complaints Appeal Panel consisting of at least two members of the management team of Free2Learn who are independent from the management and operation of the Academy. All panel members will have no previous knowledge of the complaint.

The appeal panel hearing is the last Academy-based stage of the complaints process. The panel will meet with the complainant, hear the complaint, investigate and make every effort to resolve the issue having met with the Head of Academy or CEO.

The remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel is to:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Should the complainant wish to be accompanied at the panel hearing this will be allowed.

The panel will meet within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If no dates within this timescale are convenient to the complainant, the panel may meet outside this period. The complainant will be notified in writing of the panel's decision, usually within 5 school days.

A copy of its findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and will be available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Head of Academy or CEO.

The letter will confirm the end of the Academy's involvement with the complaint.

The qualification awarding bodies such as SQA and C&G might be able to assist you in the complaints procedure but it will be your duty to contact them and the academy will have no involvement in this process.

All candidates have the right to complain to SQA and other awarding bodies about assessment related matters but not assessment judgements once they have exhausted their centre's complaints procedure. Candidates on regulated qualifications can complain to Ofqual once they have exhausted the centre and awarding body procedures.

In England, if an individual feels that their complaint has not been taken seriously by the college or provider they can raise it with the SFA (for Further Education and Private Providers) or EFA (for sixth form colleges or private providers funded by it).

Taking Action on Complaints

Complaints and grievances raised, will be collected, monitored and analysed by the management team. This will feed into the organisation's improvement plans as we are committed to high quality and learner satisfaction.