



Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Aspire to Learns' Aim

Aspire to Learn (ATL) is committed to providing a quality service for its members and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members, customers and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognize that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Preamble

Definition: ATL defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with ATL, with a member of staff) that relates to ATL and that requires a formal response'.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

ATL's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to ATL's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in ATL;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow ATL a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond ATL's control.

Responsibility for Action: All Staff of ATL.

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and ATL maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

The Complaints Procedure

If you are not satisfied with the service that Aspire to Learn, in collaboration with its funding contractors provides then you should consider using the following procedure.

You may rest assured that your complaint will be dealt with fairly and swiftly and that you will not be discriminated against in any way as a consequence of bringing a complaint.

PROCEDURE

1. You should make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter informally with the person concerned before using the Formal Complaints Procedure.
2. If, having attempted to resolve the matter, you feel you still have grounds for complaint you should begin the formal complaints procedure within 6 weeks of the incident which gives rise to the complaint occurring.
3. If you wish for the matter to be taken up as a formal complaint you should use the "Complaints Form" on the next page, or request one from your assessor or lecturer. Complete the form, giving as many details as possible (e.g. date, time, people involved), and return it to **Ziggy Pindoria, 68 George Lane, South Woodford, London, E18 1LW** within 6 weeks of the incident which gives rise to the complaint having taken place.
4. You will be sent a written acknowledgement that your complaint has been received and this will clearly state the name and position of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You will also receive documentation which tells you about the process which will be used in the handling of your complaint.
5. You will receive a response from the person named in the acknowledgement letter within 10 working days. This will indicate the initial decision of the person responsible for dealing with the complaint and will give information which tells you how the decision was reached or indicate what further processes will be followed.
6. If you are not happy with the outcome then you may make an appeal, in writing, within 10 days of receiving notification of the decision. This is the last stage in the Procedure and you will be informed by the Executive Manager, or the person who has been appointed to act in the matter, by what process the appeal will be handled. You should receive this notification within 10 days of submitting your appeal.
7. If you have exhausted all of the procedures, but remain unhappy with the outcome, then you can obtain advice from the Information & Guidance Department about which avenues are open to you.

Complaint Form

YOUR DETAILS:

NAME:

EMAIL:

ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

YOUR COMPLAINT (please complete all sections)

Name of person (s) / Programme / Service complained about:

Specific Complaint:

Please identify the issue you are complaining about and provide factual evidence, for example, names of witnesses, dates, times, supporting statements. Add an extra sheet if necessary and clearly mark it with your Name.

What informal steps have you taken to resolve the issue?

(Please give the names of people / departments you have sought help from and say what the outcome was)

If your complaint is upheld, what remedy would be acceptable to you?

(remedies must be appropriate to the nature of the complaint)