

Salford Professional Development Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy

Salford Professional Development (SPD) strives to achieve the highest standards in our services, but recognises that concerns and complaints may arise from time to time. We view complaints as an opportunity for services to improve.

We aim:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use;
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that customers know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- To make sure SPD staff know what to do if a complaint is received;
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner;
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved;
- To gather information which helps us to improve our services.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of service provided by SPD.

Who this Policy applies to

This policy applies to event sponsors, delegates on SPD courses or to those who are sponsoring delegates to attend SPD courses.

Complaints which:

- are made anonymously;
- have already been investigated;
- are made without disclosing or providing sufficient information;
- are made outside of the time limit and/or;
- have been disposed of in court or tribunal proceedings brought by the complainant or under a settlement agreement between the complainant and SPD or;
- are malicious, vexatious or frivolous

Will not be dealt with under this procedure.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively. The matter will only be discussed with those who need to know, ensuring compliance with relevant data protection legislation.

Complainants should be aware that, where relevant, a copy of their complaint will be provided to the person who is being complained about and that the individual will have the right to respond to the complaint.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Customer Services Coordinator.

Monitoring

Summary information about all complaints submitted is regularly reviewed by the Board of Directors.

Approval and Review

This document was approved by the CEO & Directors on 1st February 2017 and is due for review on 1st February 2018.

Procedure

Timescales

Complaints must be submitted within 10 working days of the matter arising.

Contact Details for Complaints:

Complaints may be sent to the Customer Service Coordinator

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Salford Professional Development

Adelphi House, University of Salford, Salford M3 6EN

t: +44 (0) 161 295 0460

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Alternatively complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Receiving Complaints

Complainants may wish to use the SDP Complaint Form (attached) which should be sent to the Customer Service contact above. Alternatively complaints may be made via telephone or in person. In such cases the following details should be recorded:

- The details of the complaint;
- The complainant's name, organisation, address, telephone number and e-mail address;
- The outcome sought by the complainant;
- Any other relevant information.

Where appropriate the complainant should be asked to send a written account by email or post with full details so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words. In addition, complainants will be asked to provide any relevant evidence to support their complaint within 5 working days.

The complainant will be advised:

- That SPD has a complaints policy and procedure, of which a copy should be provided;
- What will happen next;
- Timescales for dealing with the complaint.

Stages of the Complaints Procedure

Stage One

In many cases a complaint is best resolved by the staff member responsible for the issue. If the complaint has been made directly to the staff member responsible, they may be able to resolve it swiftly without the need to escalate further. Any complaints not resolved swiftly will be passed on to the Customer Service Coordinator to log the complaint and respond to the customer.

On receiving the complaint, the Customer Service Coordinator will create a record in the Complaints Log. If it has not already been resolved, they will appoint an appropriate independent person to investigate the issue and to take action where appropriate. If the

complaint relates to a specific staff member, they will be informed and given an opportunity to respond.

Complaints will be acknowledged in writing by the Customer Service Coordinator or the staff member handling the complaint within 10 working days. The acknowledgement will advise who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of the complaints policy and procedure will be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive response within 28 working days. If this is not possible because for example, the investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply can be expected.

Whether the complaint is valid or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The response will include a summary of findings and where appropriate, information about action(s) taken and how to progress to the next stage if the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request an appeal review of their complaint by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The customer must explain why they are dissatisfied with the action taken so far or the outcome reached. All requests for appeals should be sent to the Customer Service Coordinator (full contact details are in **Contact Details for Complaints** above). Requests will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will state who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Customer Services Coordinator will pass the complaint to a representative (Senior Leadership Team). The representative will review the case but may delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One will be kept informed of what is happening.

Normally complainants will receive a definitive reply within 10 working days from the date the appeal was submitted. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Directors may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Directors should not also have a Director as the person leading a Stage Two review. The complainant should be notified of any variance and the reason for this.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

A summary of all complaints received will be reviewed annually by the CEO & Directors to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.