

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy

Whilst we strive to achieve the highest standards in our services, we recognise that concerns and complaints may arise from time to time. The complaints procedure is an opportunity for us to improve our services and we aim:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use;
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly within 15 days from receipt;
- 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.

The following complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure:

- made anonymously;
- have already been investigated;
- are made without disclosing or providing the required 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

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 any people being complained about and that the individual(s) will have the right to respond to the complaint.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Quality Assurance Department.

Monitoring

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

Procedure

Timescales

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

Contact Details for Complaints:

Complaints may be sent to the Quality Assurance Department

T: +44 (0) 161 295 5896

E: spd-customerservices@salford.ac.uk

Alternatively, complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose.

Receiving Complaints

Complainants should complete and submit the Complaint Form to the contact details above. Complaints may be made via telephone or in person. In such cases the following details should be provided:

- 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 Quality Assurance team to log the complaint and respond to the customer.

On receiving a complaint, this will be logged and documented by the Quality Assurance Department. 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 Quality Assurance Department or the staff member handling the complaint within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will advise who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive response within 15 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 Quality Assurance team (contact details are 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 Head of Quality Assurance will review the case but may delegate a suitably senior person to investigate. 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 15 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 is reviewed regularly by the Quality Assurance department to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.