



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices

Version Number 2.1

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Author: Head of Apprenticeship Services Unit

Apprenticeship Services Unit

Document Control Information			
Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised & Date
AL	Update of committee names and policy review	V2.1	17.04.2025 - Locally reviewed (AL, HS, AC)
AL	Updated governance structure for apprenticeships	V2.0	11.09.2023 - Higher Technical Skills and Apprenticeships Board
AL	New procedure devised Employers of Apprentices	V1.0	
Policy Management and Responsibilities:			
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the Quality Management Office who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on third party complaints and has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Head of Quality Management.		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.		
Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) Equality Assessment form	1. <i>This is mandatory. Specify date completed and brief outcome. Email the completed EA to Equality@salford.ac.uk</i>		
Legal implications (LPG)	2. <i>Please specify date completed and brief outcome, or N/A</i>		
Information Governance (LPG)	3. <i>Please specify date completed and brief outcome, or N/A</i>		
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. <i>Please specify date completed and brief outcome, or N/A</i>		
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5. <i>Please specify date completed and brief outcome, or N/A</i>		
Consultation:			
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	1. <i>Specify date/outcomes of any relevant consultations or N/A</i>		
Review:			
Review due:	2026		
Document location:	University Policy & Procedure Pages and Apprenticeship website		
University of Salford Policy pages http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies			
The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.			

1.0 Purpose and Scope

This Procedure applies to complaints about the University raised by employers of apprentices registered with the University.

It does not apply to complaints made by registered apprentices who should use the [Student Complaints Procedure](#). The University reserves the right to refer complaints to the appropriate alternative processes where these exist.

For the purposes of this procedure a complaint is defined as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the Institution”.

A complaint may relate to the quality and standard of service, failure to provide a service, the quality of facilities or learning resources, treatment by or attitude of a staff member, student or contractor, inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, student or contractor, the failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative process or dissatisfaction with institutional policy.

The University is unable to consider:

- complaints considered to be frivolous, vexatious, defamatory or abusive;
- complaints arising from the result of the private endeavours of staff or students;
- complaints arising from commercial relationships between the complainant and the University where the University deems that there is a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with such disputes;
- complaints which are the subject of a legal claim or criminal investigation.

2.0 Procedure

2.1 Early Resolution

Complainants are encouraged to initially raise their complaint with the individual(s) directly concerned as soon as they become aware of the issue or via the central Apprenticeship Services Unit (apprenticeships@salford.ac.uk) with the aim of resolving the complaint quickly and informally. If the complaint cannot easily be resolved in this way the complainant should submit a formal complaint.

Although the early resolution stage is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to the employer, copying in the Apprenticeship Services Unit at apprenticeships@salford.ac.uk who will record the details of all informal employer complaints. Outcomes should normally be provided within 14 days. If it is not possible to respond within this time-frame, the employer should be provided with a rationale and an expected date of response.

2.2 Formal Complaint

What are the timescales for submitting a formal complaint?

All complaints should be brought to the University's attention at the earliest possible opportunity and, in any event, within three months of the issue or event leading to the complaint. The decision on whether, exceptionally, to accept a late complaint will be at the discretion of the Director of International and Regional Development (or nominee). If the decision is not to accept a late complaint, the complaint will be closed and the employer notified.

What information should the formal complaint contain?

You should include the following information in your formal complaint:

- Your name and contact details, for example correspondence address, email address, and telephone number.
- All relevant information relating to the complaint, together with any supporting evidence. This should include relevant dates and times of any particular incidents, the names of any people the complaint relates to, and the names of any witnesses who can provide evidence in support of your complaint.
- Information about informal resolution already sought.
- The outcome(s) you hope to achieve from the process.

This information is required to enable the matter to be reviewed and a response provided. If information is not provided, it may not be possible to review the matter and offer a response.

You are advised to keep a copy of your complaint and any supporting documentation submitted to the University, as documents will not normally be returned. and may be destroyed in line with our Document Retention Schedule.

How should a formal complaint be submitted?

If you wish to submit a formal complaint this should be submitted in writing to:

The Head of the Apprenticeship Services Unit, Apprenticeship Services Unit, 5th Floor Maxwell Building, University of Salford, Salford, M5 4WT or via email to apprenticeships@salford.ac.uk

What steps will the University take upon receipt of a formal complaint?

The University will acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint, and it will be forwarded to the appropriate School/Department for consideration and where necessary will be flagged with the Director of International and Regional Development which is where the Apprenticeship Directorate sits. The Head of Apprenticeships within the academic School will consider and respond to your formal complaint and will notify the Apprenticeship Services Unit and the nominee of the outcome.

A full and considered response will normally be provided to you, typically no later than one month from the time the formal complaint was received, and a copy of the outcome will be sent to the Quality Management Office. If the review cannot be completed in that time for good reason (such as staff unavailability due to holidays) or the matter is complex, the investigating officer will advise you of a revised timescale.

If, at any time during the investigation of your formal complaint, it appears that some or all of the matters complained about raises issues, which would more appropriately dealt with under another University Procedure e.g. Student or Staff Misconduct Procedure, Fitness to Practice Procedure, such matters will be transferred for consideration under the appropriate process, and you will be notified accordingly. If the matters are transferred for consideration under the University's Staff and/or Student Misconduct Procedure, the University may not be able to provide you with information in relation to such matters.

What happens if I am unhappy with the outcome of my complaint?

The University's response is final and there is no further right of appeal.

If after exhausting this process the employer complainant is still not satisfied, they can escalate their complaint to the Complaints Adjudicator at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Email: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

Address:

Customer Service Team,
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

Please note that the ESFA will not usually investigate complaints more than 12 months after the original decision or action has been taken.

3.0 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints will be handled with discretion and access to information will only be provided to those who have a legitimate interest for the purposes of facilitating investigations. In determining this, the University will have regard to legislative requirements for example, data protection and freedom of information legislation, as well as internal University policies and regulations. Data Protection legislation specifies that individuals have a right to access information concerning them, except in limited circumstances. This means that any third party identified in a complaint, may have an entitlement to access the information that has been written about them on request. Equally, individuals that are the subject of a complaint have a right to understand the nature of the complaint about them in order that the complaint can be adequately investigated and to ensure they are afforded the opportunity to respond.

4.0 Oversight of Complaints

A summary report of formal complaints received and outcomes shall be presented to the University Apprenticeship Operations Group (UAOG), the Skills Sub-Committee and the University Education and Student Experience committee on an annual basis.