



# **The Vocational Academy**

## **Complaints Policy**

## **1. Policy Aim**

The Vocational Academy is committed to providing the best possible service, and we recognise that occasionally stakeholders may feel that they have cause to complain about the service they have received. A complaint may be received from either an employer, an apprentice or one of our internal team. In this instance, a complaint may be in relation to, but not limited to, dissatisfaction with our responsiveness and communication, an apprentice or employer unhappy with any aspect of our delivery, an appeal or complaint against a non EPA related assessment decision or treatment by one of our team, financial complaint, breach of one of our policies such as health and safety, or issues with our customer service.

We encourage feedback from all stakeholders, including complaints.

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, this will be dealt with as a failure of service under the terms of our Complaints Policy.

The Vocational Academy aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. We will:

- Aim to put things right quickly for our stakeholders when they go wrong
- Keep our learners, staff and other stakeholders informed of the progress of their complaint and result of any investigation
- Seek to learn from each complaint to improve future performance
- Set performance targets for responding to complaints and monitor our performance against these targets

Advise our stakeholders of the right to complain to the prime contractor/ ESFA if they remain dissatisfied after their complaint has been through all stages of the internal complaint procedure

[Education complaints procedure.](#)

[Department for Education](#) · [Education And Skills Funding Agency](#)

[Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT](#) · 0845 377 5000

The Vocational Academy Complaints Policy and procedure are readily available to all staff, apprentices, employers and other stakeholders and a copy can be requested from [admin@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@thevocationalacademy.co.uk) It is also available on our website. All of our policies are reviewed at least annually or when legislation/ guidance is updated. Our staff and apprentices complete a robust initial assessment which includes reading and a check of understanding of the policy.

## **2. Monitoring**

The Vocational Academy is committed to continuous improvement in service delivery.

- We will make it easy and straightforward for you to make a complaint
- We will endeavour to respond to your complaint within the timescales and keep you informed
- We will ensure that you have a full explanation to your complaint in your preferred format
- We will tell you if changes have been made to services following your complaint
- We will review our policy at regular intervals

## **3. Responsibility**

The Vocational Academy in partnership with The Vocational Academy and all education staff are responsible for developing and encouraging good customer care handling practice.

#### 4. Equality & Diversity

Staff, learners and other stakeholders have the right to express dissatisfaction with the services they receive from The Vocational Academy. This policy ensures that stakeholders can expect to be treated fairly and without discrimination. Please see Equal Opportunities Policy for further information.

#### 5. Procedure

All stakeholders have the right to complain and appeal against any aspect of service delivery. The Vocational Academy support our stakeholders when they feel that our service has fallen below their expectations. Each complaint or appeal will be dealt in a professional and courteous manner by a relevant member of staff. The nature of the complaint or appeal will determine which member of staff will investigate and take action.

##### Stage 1

The complaint is verbally identified to the line manager or the IQA and is successfully resolved under verbal agreement by all parties

##### Stage 2

If stage 1 does not resolve the complaint or the complaint is written, then the written complaint is passed to their Line Manager, who must agree a date to meet/phone the complainant to discuss and, if possible, resolve the complaint.

##### Stage 3

If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2, either route A or B is followed, as appropriate.



##### Route A

If the complaint takes the form of an appeal on an assessment issue e.g. against an assessment decision, then the assessment decisions appeals procedure is to be followed. See below.

##### Route B

If the complaint does not take the form of an assessment decision appeal the IQA/management will review the complaint within 10 working days of the Stage 2 meeting.

Management or the IQA will investigate the complaint and their decision must be sent to all parties within 10 working days of the complaint meeting

## 6. The Appeals Process for non-End Point Assessment appeals

### Stage 1

All appeals must be made in writing, clearly stating why the appeal is being made.

Candidates can make an appeal against an assessment decision within 20 days of an assessment decision being made.

The written appeal can be handed to the relevant Coach/ Tutor or IQA

### Stage 2

If stage 1 is not resolved the appeal will be passed to the Curriculum Manager within 5 working days.

### Stage 3

If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 3, it will be passed to the relevant awarding body or the qualification regulator. Following their investigation, the decision is final.

### *End Point Assessment complaints and appeals.*

End Point Assessment (EPA) complaints and appeals will follow the End Point Assessment organisations (EPAO) appeal process- please see further documentation from your EPAO.

## 7. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the term used when a staff member passes on information concerning wrong doing. In this guidance, we call that "making a disclosure" or "blowing the whistle". The wrongdoing will typically (although not necessarily) be something they have witnessed at work.

To be covered by whistleblowing law, a staff member who makes a disclosure must reasonably believe two things. The first is that they are acting in the public interest. This means in particular that personal grievances and complaints are not usually covered by whistleblowing law.

The second thing that a staff member must reasonably believe is that the disclosure tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one or more of the following categories:

- criminal offences (this may include types of financial impropriety such as fraud)
- failure to comply with an obligation set out in law
- miscarriages of justice
- endangering of someone's health and safety
- damage to the environment
- covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

Whistleblowing law is located in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Gov.uk guidance 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013). It provides the right for a staff member to take a case to an employment tribunal if they have been victimised at work or they have lost their job because they have 'blown the whistle'.

*Please see separate Whistleblowing Policy for further details.*

