

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Introduction

The Institute for Professional Sales (ISP) is an End Point Assessment Organisation approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and regulated by Ofqual. The ISP recognises its particular responsibilities regarding complaints and appeals. This Complaints and Appeals Policy concerns how we manage financial controls within the business and mitigate the potential for fraud and financial irregularity.

The principle of the Complaints and Appeals Policy is that all apprentices and/or their employers / training provider are readily able to access the complaints or appeals process and that such complaints and appeals are handled sensitively, fairly and swiftly. A second principle is that lessons learnt following a complaint or appeal are used to inform continuous improvement.

The Head of Education is responsible for its oversight. The Quality Manager is responsible for its operation.

This Complaints and Appeals Policy should be read in conjunction with the Fair Access and Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

The policy can be found on the ISP website www.the-isp.org

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the intentions and key tools that the ISP will use in respect of its handling, investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals. Its associated procedures are intended to ensure complaints and appeals are dealt with in a consistent and fair manner keeping the needs of the apprentice at its centre.

ISP intends to ensure that:

1. The complaints and appeals procedures promote best practice, keeps the apprentice as the central focus and deals with complaints and appeals to an appropriate timescale.
2. In its function as an End Point Assessment Organisation, it recognises and states its commitment to minimising complaints and appeals and ensuring that learnings from complaints and appeals are built into its process of continuous improvement, where possible avoiding re-occurrence of said complaint or appeal.
3. It will protect the brand, reputation and high standards of integrity, required of an End Point Assessment Organisation, by using effective quality and management controls and oversight by leaders to minimise complaints and appeals.

Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the work undertaken within our End Point Assessment services. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. If it is to be investigated further, then the complaint needs to be in writing.

An appeal is when an apprentice considers that an end point assessment (EPA) decision is incorrect. The appellant may appeal to make an application to the ISP for an assessment decision to be reversed.

Complaints Policy and Process

1. If an apprentice or their representative wishes to make an enquiry about an EPA result but does not wish at this stage to make a formal complaint or wishes to make an enquiry about any other aspect of an ISP end point assessment, they should fill in an ISP ENQ form (see below). The apprentice or their representative will need to make it clear on the form the nature of the enquiry and should include any relevant evidence to help ISP consider the enquiry and make an appropriate and prompt reply (normally within 20 working days)
2. The enquiry will be progressed by the Quality Manager and relevant personnel (in the first stage) and if required will be progressed to the Quality Assurance Group for resolution (in the second stage). The Quality Assurance Group consists of Head of Education, Quality Manager and the Managing Director
3. Upon reviewing the ISP ENQ form the ISP will inform the complainant whether they should make an appeal about a result, in which case the Appeals Procedure should be followed.
4. If an apprentice or their representative wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of ISP's organisation, operations, actions, EPA, qualifications or assessments, they should fill in an ISP ENQ form (see below). The apprentice or their representative will need to make clear on the form the nature of the complaint and should include any relevant evidence to help ISP consider the complaint and make an appropriate and prompt reply (normally within 10 days, if investigation involved within 20 days). The complaint will be progressed by the Quality Manager and relevant personnel (in the first stage) and if required will be progressed to the Quality Assurance Group for resolution (in the second stage).
5. If the apprentice or their representative is still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint and feels they have exhausted all avenues, they may further progress the complaint to the appropriate external quality assurance body / regulatory authority for England (the EQA/regulator will then progress the complaint through their procedures).
6. In all cases, the ISP ENQ form should be sent to equ@the-isp.org for the attention of the Enquiries and Appeals team, who will ensure the progress of the relevant procedure. The ISP ENQ form is available within this policy or on request to equ@the-isp.co.uk

Appeals Policy and Process

This appeals process should be used in the event an apprentice or their employer wishes to challenge any assessment decisions with regard to any Apprenticeship EPA's or any ISP qualification assessments. The ISP does not accept appeals made by Training Providers. Appeals should be made direct by a learner or their employer.

The Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel will meet as required to review any Appeals made to ISP. Membership of the Panel consists of:

- Quality Manager
- Head of Education
- Representative of the ISP Management Team

First Stage of the ISP Appeals Process

- The appellant must make their appeal within 30 days of receipt of their result. No appeals will be accepted after this date
- ISP will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 24 hours and provide a written response within 30 calendar days of acknowledgement.
- For end point assessment, the Quality Manager will produce a report, involving the independent assessor who conducted the EPA, if appropriate.
- If ISP upholds the assessment decision/s it will set out its reasons in writing with supporting evidence.
- If the assessment decision is overturned and the result is revised, ISP will issue the new result and, if necessary, issue appropriate certification.
- At this first stage there is an administration fee (£150) required to cover the cost of investigating the appeal only payable where assessment decisions are upheld.

Second Stage of the ISP Appeals Procedure

- If either the apprentice or their employer is not satisfied with the result of the ISP review of the appeal, they should move onto the second stage of appeal and write to ISP using the form at the end of this policy. The apprentice or their employer must clearly state that the appeal is at stage two on this form.
- They must make a stage 2 appeal within 10 working days of receiving the stage 1 result, requesting a re-assessment of that part of the EPA under appeal. ISP will acknowledge receipt of this second appeal within 24 hours working days and provide a written response within 30 calendar days of receipt of the acknowledgement.
- At this second stage the appeal will be conducted and investigated by the Head of Education, with oversight from the ISP Appeals Panel.
- If the assessment decision is proved to be incorrect and the result is revised, ISP will issue the new result and, if necessary, issue appropriate certification. The administration fee will also be credited.
- For end point assessments, at this second stage there is an administration fee (£150) required to cover the cost of investigating the appeal only payable where assessment decisions are upheld

Third Stage of the ISP Appeals Procedure

- If the apprentice or their employer is unhappy with the outcome of the second stage of the appeal, they have 10 working days to take the appeal to the third and final stage.

- The apprentice or their employer resubmits their appeal using the appeal form and includes all relevant supporting evidence.
- ISP will acknowledge receipt of the stage 3 appeal within 24 hours and provide a written response within 30 calendar days of acknowledgement.
- The appeal will be reviewed by the Managing Director, the ISP Appeals Panel plus one independent person who has knowledge of EPA operations but has no connection with ISP and has never been employed by them.
- The process will focus on whether ISP appropriately used the correct procedures in arriving at its decision. If the panel still finds the EPA decision to be correct it will set out its reasons for doing so in writing with supporting evidence.
- If the assessment decision or EPA is proved to be incorrect and the result uplifted, ISP will issue new results and, where appropriate, inform the ESFA Apprenticeship Assessment Service to issue or re-issue a certificate as appropriate.
- If other assessment decisions might be affected by the result of such an appeal, all similar results will be reviewed in the same way.
- For end point assessments, at this third stage there is an administration fee (£250) required to cover the cost of investigating the appeal.

Re-assessment

If as a result of the appeal, at any of its three stages, the apprentice is offered a re-assessment this will be conducted under the standard ISP EPA procedures. However, the re-assessment will be assessed by a different independent assessor from the one involved in the original assessment. The requirements around the resit or retake procedures as described in the apprenticeship standard assessment plan do not apply in the case of a re-assessment following a successful appeal.

Evaluation of Complaints and Appeals

The Managing Director and the Head of Education will, as part of their annual reports to the Governance and Quality Board (GAQ), produce a statistical analysis and summary of the results of all appeals, enquiries and complaints. The reports will, where appropriate, make recommendations for revisions to any policies and procedures required as a result of this analysis and the GAQ will agree, reject or modify these recommendations as it feels necessary. Where appropriate this is fed into the ISP continuous quality improvement process.

Monitoring

A tiered approach to monitoring is taken. The Quality Manager will collect any relevant data and report to the Managing Director. The Head of Education collates information on complaints and appeals from all relevant sources and reports into the ISP Executive Board.

Review

The policy shall be reviewed annually or more frequently where findings around complaints or appeals indicate a need to change, amend or update the policy.

Date of next review: December 2022



ENQ1: ISP Enquiries, Complaints and Issues Procedure Form:

Please complete the following information, as applicable:

Employer Name:	Apprentice ULN:
Apprentice Name:	Assessment Date:
EPA/Qual/Unit Name:	EPA/Qual/Unit No:

Please explain the nature and reason for the enquiry, complaint or issue and provide relevant supporting evidence:

APP1: Appeals Procedure Form

Employer Name:	Email address:	
Apprentice Name:	Apprentice ULN:	
Apprenticeship Standard Title and Number:	Assessment Type:	Assessment Date:

Please explain the nature and reason for the appeal and provide relevant supporting evidence (please also reference what stage of appeal is being described):

STAGE of APPEAL:

Employer Contact Name:		
Position:		
Signed:		Date:

The Provider agrees to pay the administration fee (£150) required to cover the cost of investigating the appeal (£250 for Stage 3 of the appeal).

Please return electronically to: ISP Enquiries and Appeals Team, ega@the-ISP.com