

Complaints Policy

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Introduction

The Institute for Professional Sales (ISP) is an Awarding and End Point Assessment Organisation (AO/EPAO) approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and regulated by Ofqual. The ISP recognises its particular responsibilities regarding complaints.

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

The Head of Awarding is responsible for its oversight.

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

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

Statement of Purpose

ISP AO/EPAO aims to provide efficient and effective services and whilst every care will be taken to ensure that these are of good quality, ISP AO/EPAO accepts that, on occasions, complaints will be made.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the ISP AO/EPAO, our staff or contractors affecting a learner, centre, external partner, such as an employer or external contractor.

If you are dissatisfied with any element of our service, you have the right to complain. However, before you make a formal complaint we would suggest that you talk to us informally in the first instance to see if your concerns can be resolved straightaway. You can e-mail ega@the-isp.org. If your complaint cannot be informally resolved a more formal process is detailed below.

ISP AO/EPAO will treat complaints positively and recognises that they are a means of identifying improvements which can be made to our standards and ways of working. We will deal with complaints quickly, take prompt action to resolve the complaint and take steps to ensure that complaints of a similar nature do not arise in the future.

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. Its associated procedures are intended to ensure complaints are dealt with in a consistent and fair manner keeping the needs of the Learner at its centre.

ISP intends to ensure that:

1. The complaints procedures promote best practice, keeps the Learner as the central focus and deals with complaints and appeals to an appropriate timescale.

2. In its function as an Awarding and End Point Assessment Organisation, it recognises and states its commitment to minimising complaints and ensuring that learnings from complaints are built into its process of continuous improvement, where possible avoiding re-occurrence of said complaint.
3. It will protect the brand, reputation and high standards of integrity, required of an Awarding/End Point Assessment Organisation, by using effective quality and management controls and oversight by leaders to minimise complaints.

Complaints regarding Regulated, Centre Assessed Qualifications

Centres and providers must have their own policy and procedure for dealing with complaints. Where the complaint is in regards to ISP Regulated Qualifications, the centre/provider and learners must follow their policy before referring to ISP AO/EPAO . If the complaint is not resolved this can be escalated to ISP AO/EPAO. If there is an allegation of malpractice or maladministration refer to the ISP AO/EPAO Malpractice Policy.

Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Initial Complaint

If a Learner, their representative, employer, Training Provider, Centre or other relevant stakeholder wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of ISP's organisation, operations, actions, End Point Assessment, qualifications or assessments, they should contact ISP at eqa@the-isp.org .

The complainant should clearly explain the nature of the complaint and provide any relevant supporting evidence to enable ISP to consider the complaint fully and respond appropriately.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged promptly and a response provided within 10 working days. Where further investigation is required, ISP will normally provide a full response within 20 working days. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with an expected timescale.

Stage 1 complaints will be overseen by the Head of Awarding and investigated by an appropriately competent person who is independent of the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. Where appropriate, the Head of Awarding may delegate the investigation to a suitably experienced member of staff.

Where a complaint relates to assessment decisions, assessment practice, assessor judgement or the delivery of a regulated qualification or End Point Assessment, the investigation will be undertaken by a person with appropriate knowledge and experience of the relevant qualification, assessment or EPA requirements.

The person investigating the complaint must not have been directly involved in the matter being complained about.

Stage 2 – Internal Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 1 outcome, they may request a review of the complaint by ISP.

The Stage 2 review will be undertaken by an appropriately experienced person who has not been involved in the original investigation or decision. Where the complaint relates to assessment, qualification or End Point Assessment matters, the review may be undertaken by the Lead IQA/Assessor or another suitably qualified and experienced person appointed by ISP.

The purpose of the Stage 2 review is to consider whether the Stage 1 complaint was investigated appropriately, whether the relevant evidence and information were properly considered, and whether the outcome was reasonable and consistent with ISP's policies and regulatory requirements.

The outcome of the Stage 2 review will be communicated to the complainant in writing, normally within 20 working days of receipt of the request for review. Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reason and expected timescale.

External Escalation

Once ISP's internal complaints process has been exhausted, the complainant may, where appropriate, refer the matter to the relevant external quality assurance body or regulatory authority.

ISP will provide information about any applicable external escalation route where this is available. External organisations will consider complaints in accordance with their own procedures and remit.

The complaints process should not be used to challenge an assessment decision where the appropriate route is the ISP Appeals Policy. Where a complaint includes an appeal against an assessment decision, ISP will determine which procedure or combination of procedures is appropriate and will ensure that the complainant is advised accordingly.

Where a complaint raises an allegation of malpractice or maladministration, the matter will be considered under the ISP Malpractice Policy.

Responsibility for Complaints

The Head of Awarding has overall responsibility for the oversight of the ISP Complaints Policy and for ensuring that complaints are appropriately recorded, investigated, monitored and reported.

Responsibility for investigating an individual complaint may be delegated to an appropriately competent and suitably independent member of staff or, where necessary, an appropriately qualified external person.

No person should investigate or determine a complaint where they have had direct involvement in the matter giving rise to the complaint.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Complaints

The Head of Awarding will maintain appropriate records of complaints and will monitor complaint themes, outcomes, timescales and any actions arising from complaints.

The Head of Awarding will report relevant complaints data and identified trends to the Managing Director and Governance and Quality Board (GAQ), as appropriate.

Where complaints identify potential weaknesses in ISP's policies, procedures, assessment arrangements or other aspects of its operations, appropriate corrective or improvement actions will be identified and monitored through ISP's continuous improvement and risk management processes.

The annual report to the Governance and Quality Board will include a statistical analysis and summary of complaints, together with any significant themes, actions or recommendations arising from the analysis.