

A copy of this Complaints Policy can be found at [www.apexconsultants.com/governance](http://www.apexconsultants.com/governance)

### **Policy statement**

The Apex policy on complaints is that they should be tackled early and dealt with quickly and thoroughly. Our definition of a complaint is:

**“Any oral or written expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, from, or on behalf of, an individual or group, about training, learning, apprenticeship or other relevant matters”.**

This is based on a similar definition of complaints used by the insurance and financial services regulator, the Financial Services Authority (FCA).

### **Issue of Apex’s Complaints Policy and Procedure (including Appeals)**

Apex’s Complaints Policy and Procedure (including Appeals) is issued to apprentices in the induction session for their apprenticeship programme. The purpose of the policy and process to follow is explained at that point and the importance of the complaints and appeals processes emphasised. The apprentice’s employer is given a copy too at that point and similarly briefed.

All Apex staff have a copy of the policy and have been trained on it and how to follow it correctly. New Apex staff and associates receive a copy in their induction session and the purpose of the policy and the importance of the complaints and appeals processes is emphasised at that point.

### **Scope**

In our experience, complaints can arise from a variety of different concerns. Some can be dealt with informally and others need to follow a formal path. Some complaints, once handled and a decision reached, may result in an appeal for reconsideration or different action. The scope of this policy is intended to cover all complaints and all appeals. It is worth noting that how Apex handles and responds to a complaint or appeal provides us with an opportunity to offer fair treatment and strengthen the relationship with the group or individual.

### **Complaints procedure**

The stages of Apex’s Complaints Procedure are as follows:

- 1) If an individual on an Apex programme or connected with it (e.g. a manager) has concerns or is unhappy about any aspect of the relevant Apex programme, this should initially be discussed informally with the Apex team member, who will endeavour to reach an agreement on the point of concern. A file note should be passed by the Apex team member to both the Head of Strategy & Marketing (HoSM) and Apex’s Managing Director (MD), briefly describing the matter and how it was/could be put right.

- 2) Should the matter not be resolved at this stage, the complaint should be referred to the Head of Strategy & Marketing (HoSM). The HoSM will acknowledge the complaint in writing within three working days of its receipt and following investigation will arrange give a response in writing within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. HoSM is authorised to discuss the matter confidentially with the employer and/or Apex’s Managing Director (MD), unless this would put the individual/group making the complaint at a disadvantage.
- 3) If the matter is still not resolved at that stage, it will be referred as an appeal to Apex’s MD, who will acknowledge in writing within three working days and will give a response in writing within 10 working days. The response from Apex’s MD will be final.

**Important notes**

Although few formal complaints or appeals are expected, it is nevertheless the right of all individuals (or groups) to use the complaints and appeals procedures where appropriate. Apex recognises this right and will do all it can to resolve matters in a way which is beneficial to both sides.

In practice and in our experience, many “complaints” are about how things can or should be done differently. This does not underplay the importance of the Complaints Procedure but acknowledges that if the Employer and Learner Engagement Policy is working well, it will assist in resolving difficulties.

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**Date of document and date of next review: This document is dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and will be reviewed by Apex by no later than 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**