

Learner Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedures

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Purpose

Educationwise is committed to providing high-quality education and training services. We recognise that, on occasion, learners may wish to raise concerns or challenge decisions. This policy sets out how learners can make a complaint or appeal, how these will be handled, and the routes for escalation if they remain dissatisfied. Our aim is to deal with all complaints and appeals fairly, promptly, and without bias, while ensuring the process is accessible and transparent.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on Educationwise programmes, including apprenticeships, commercial training, and funded learning. It covers two areas: **Complaints** (concerns about the quality of service, facilities, staff conduct, or other matters related to your learning experience) and **Appeals** (requests to review an assessment or grading decision where you believe it was unfair or incorrect).

Principles

- **Fairness:** All complaints and appeals will be considered objectively.
- **Confidentiality:** Information will only be shared with those directly involved.
- **Accessibility:** The policy is available in alternative formats on request (e.g. large print, easy read).
- **Non-Retaliation:** Learners who raise a complaint or appeal in good faith will not be disadvantaged or treated unfairly.
- **Right to be Accompanied:** Learners may be accompanied by a tutor, mentor, or another support person during formal meetings.

Recording and Monitoring of Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

Educationwise operates a central Stakeholder Voice Escalation process to ensure that concerns, complaints, appeals and significant issues are recorded, monitored and reviewed consistently.

All staff are responsible for identifying and escalating concerns through the Stakeholder Voice Escalation Form. Issues are reviewed and recorded by the Quality and Compliance Team within a central escalation tracker.

Each issue is risk assessed (low, medium, high or extreme) and monitored through to resolution, with actions clearly assigned and tracked.

Where a concern meets the threshold of a formal complaint or appeal, it will be progressed in line with the stages outlined in this policy.

Themes and trends identified through escalation are reviewed by leadership and inform quality improvement activity, including the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), standardisation and governance oversight.

Complaints Procedure

- **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution:** Raise your concern informally with your tutor, assessor, or programme coordinator as soon as possible. Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage. Concerns may also be recorded through the Stakeholder Voice Escalation process where they indicate risk, repetition or require wider oversight. A concern becomes a formal complaint where it cannot be resolved informally or where the nature of the issue requires formal investigation.
- **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint:** If the issue is not resolved informally, submit a written complaint to the Complaints Lead (details above). Educationwise will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. A formal investigation will take place, and a written response will normally be provided within 10 working days. If more time is required for complex cases, you will be informed of the revised timeframe. All formal complaints will be logged and monitored centrally to ensure consistency, visibility and timely resolution.
- **Stage 3 – Senior Leadership Review:** If you remain dissatisfied, you may escalate your complaint to the Senior Leadership Team. A further review will take place, and you will be informed of the outcome in writing.
- **Stage 4 – External Escalation:** If you have exhausted Educationwise’s internal process and remain dissatisfied, you may escalate to: **Ofsted** – for concerns about the overall quality of education or training (www.gov.uk/ofsted | 0300 123 1231) or **DfE (Education and Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship Service)** – for concerns about apprenticeships or funded learning (www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship).

Appeals Procedure

Grounds for Appeal: You may appeal an assessment decision if you believe that the assessment was not conducted fairly, the correct procedures were not followed, or the decision does not reflect the evidence provided.

- **Stage 1 – Informal Discussion:** First, discuss the assessment decision with your assessor. In many cases, issues can be clarified or resolved at this stage.
- **Stage 2 – Formal Appeal:** If unresolved, submit a written appeal to your assessor’s line manager or Internal Quality Assurer (IQA). Educationwise will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and arrange an appeals meeting (normally within 10 working days).
- **Stage 3 – Senior Leadership Review:** If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may escalate the appeal to the Senior Leadership Team. A final internal review will take place, and you will receive a written decision.
- **Stage 4 – External Appeal:** If you remain dissatisfied after completing the internal process, you may appeal to the relevant awarding organisation (AO) or End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). Contact details will be provided to you at this stage.

Monitoring and Review

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the number, type, and outcomes of complaints and appeals. Findings will be used to improve services and inform quality assurance processes. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by regulatory changes.

Supporting Learners

Learners will have access to support throughout the complaints and appeals process. This may include guidance from tutors, administrative staff, or independent advisors. Educationwise Academy will ensure that learners are kept informed at all stages of the process and that their concerns are addressed professionally and promptly.

Record Keeping

All complaints and appeals will be documented, and records will be securely maintained by Educationwise Academy. This includes issues recorded through the Stakeholder Voice Escalation process. These records will include:

- Details of the complaint or appeal
- The actions taken at each stage of the process
- The final outcome

Records will be kept for a minimum of six years, in compliance with data protection, funding and audit requirements and regulations.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any significant changes in relevant legislation, regulatory guidance, or internal procedures. Amendments will be communicated to all learners, staff, and stakeholders.