

## **SOUTH WEST SKILLS ACADEMY (SWSA)**

### **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

Name of policy	Complaints Policy and Procedure
Name of person responsible	L Sturgess Head Of Centre SWSA  Safeguarding Lead, Cornwall College Group
Approved by	SWSA
Date of approval	03/09/19
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<b>List of Contents</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
ction	3
Scope of Complaints Procedure	3
complain	4
Support	4
Complaint Procedure	4
Appeals Procedure	5
Formal Complaint form	6
Informal Complaint Form	7
Structure	8

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 South West Skills Academy is committed to providing a high-quality service for all its students, staff and visitors. Its policy is to welcome and to try to satisfy complaints and observations from all who use the centres.

1.2 South West Skills will deal with legitimate complaints in a fair, prompt and objective manner. Complaints will be handled without recrimination and students and staff and members of the public will not be disadvantaged by raising a complaint. All information will be kept in strict confidence and shared only on a need to-know basis. SWSA staffs are expected to respond positively to complaints and to alert students to the Complaints Procedure.

1.3 SWSA will be fair in its treatment of all those who complain.

1.4 Complaints will be dealt with promptly and constructively. The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any SWSA staff involved. Complaints made which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious, may result in disciplinary or other further action.

1.5 If the complaint is about a course or a service offered by SWSA, the manager of the area concerned will be the complaints officer deliberating on the complaint unless the complaint is about that manager. SWSA head of centre will deal with all appeals against the outcomes of complaints.

1.6 SWSA head of centre has overall responsibility for the Complaints Procedure and may nominate another person to investigate a complaint if there is a conflict of interest between being the manager of an area and being the complaints officer investigating the complaint.

1.7 If the complaint is against the head of centre, then the Complaints Officer will be the Safeguarding lead.

### **2 Scope of Complaints Procedure**

2.1 The Procedure deals with complaints arising from:

- The quality of the provision or training including teaching, course content, tutoring and student support
- Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the centre
- The quality of support services provided by the centre including administration of fees, enrolment and examination registration.
- Unacceptable behaviour by centre staff

2.2 Separate procedure exist for:

- Whistleblowing

### **3 How to complain**

3.1 All students receive a student handbook which prompts guidance as to how comments and complaints may be made. All students will receive a copy of the handbook at Induction.

3.2 The Staff Handbook refers to policies and procedures and new staff are informed of this Complaints Procedure during their induction programme.

3.4 The Complaints Procedure and Complaint form is accessible through both centres and all centre staff have access to these.

3.5 If a complainant writes directly to the head of centre the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate department manager. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant.

NB Very serious complaints, for example those that involve the Police, will be responded to in writing by the head of centre.

### **4 Support for those involved in a complaint**

Support, if required, is available for all those involved in a complaint:

- Representation: parent, guardian, friend, supporter:
- Help with completing the Complaint Form: Parent, friend, appropriate centre individual.
- Support during the procedure: counsellor, appropriate centre individual.

If any further help is needed, Information Services should be contacted.

### **5 Complaint Procedure**

Stage 1: Informal resolution of complaints

5.1 Most complaints should be able to be resolved immediately with discussion between the complainant and the appropriate member of staff. The complaint must be made orally or in writing and the manager receiving the complaint should make a response within 10 working days, orally or in writing. It is expected that staff are tactful and courteous in dealing with a complaint. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, they should then be guided to using the formal procedure.

5.2 If a complaint is raised with the expectation of a refund or partial refund, the student or member of the public must make that clear at the time of raising the complaint.

Stage 2: Formal procedure

5.3 A formal complaint should be made in writing within 15 working days of an incident or action from which the complaint arises, or from the date when the complainant received a written reply to an informal complaint (5.1 above). In exceptional circumstances, a longer period will be considered. The complaint should be sent to the Head of centre. [lee@southwestskillsacademy.co.uk](mailto:lee@southwestskillsacademy.co.uk). The complaint will be acknowledged in writing to the complainant within 5 working days.

5.4 The manager dealing with the complaint or an independent investigator will acknowledge the complaint and carry out an assessment of the complaint within 5 working days. More serious or unusual complaints or complaints that may represent a conflict of interest will be investigated by an alternative manager appointed by the centre.

5.5 The manager will carry out an investigation of the complaint and may interview the complainant; the respondent; witnesses to the matter or events and anyone they believe may have a role in establishing or disproving the complaint, as necessary. They will prepare a summary report within 10 working days of the assessment.

5.6

The Complaints manager will record the outcome of the complaint in the relevant record of Complaints and either arrange a meeting to deliver the outcome or notify all those involved in writing as appropriate. All outcomes will be confirmed in writing to all those involved.

5.7 If the complaint involves a student, they will be offered the support as set out in 4 above. All students will be encouraged to bring a supporter to the interview. Vulnerable Adults must have the support of their care worker, or a person of their choice, who can act as their advocate and the head of centre must be informed.

## **6 The Appeals Procedure**

6.1 Either the complainant or the respondent may appeal in writing, stating detailed reasons for their appeal to the Head of centre within 5 working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the formal complaint. The appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days and the Deputy Principal will review and notify the final decision in writing to all those involved within 20 working days of receiving the appeal.

6.2 If the complainant is not happy with the conduct of the appeal, the complaint can be taken further to the Education department. This would be to review the performance of the Head of centre.

6.3 If the centre does not resolve the appeal to the complainant's satisfaction, then they should contact:

Customer Service Team,  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT

## **7 Monitoring the Procedure**

7.1 It is essential that complaints are resolved promptly. The Head of centre will check the Register of Complaints every 2 weeks to identify outstanding complaints and ensure that the procedure follows the set time limits.

7.2 The Head of centre will hold a record of all complaints for 2 years for audit purposes

7.3 Complaints will be monitored through the APTM system in the register of complaints; these will be stored in appropriate area and accessed by head of centre for monitoring.

### Formal Complaint Form

Name of Complainant
Address:
Telephone
Description of complaint or "informal complaint form" attached, and previous action taken.
Action taken by head of centre or appropriate individual:
Complainant advised of decision:
Further action by centre manager:
Resolution:
Action agreed by complainant:

Further action identified:

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**Informal Complaint Form**

**Name of complainant:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Description of concern:**

**Action Undertaken by Centre manager:**

**Resolution:**

**Action agreed by complainant:**

Action not agreed and formal complaint procedure instigated



**Managing Director**

**Lee Sturgess**

**Safeguarding Lead**

**Internal Verifier**

**Administrators**

**Dan Jenkin**

**Craig Burley**

**Assessor**

**Tutors**

**Chantelle Wilkes**

**Hazel Jervis**

**Daisy Adams**