



Effective From:	Next Review Date:	Policy Managed by:
01/08/2021	31/07/2022	Managing Director – D Coomer

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

Procedure for apprentices, all other learners and employers

Introduction

Our aim at the S&A Group is to provide you, whether you are an apprentice, a learner or an employer, with an outstanding service throughout the length of your engagement with us.

In order to ensure we continue to do so and to continuously improve, we depend on feedback from all of our apprentices, learners and employers that tells us what we do well and where we may be able to improve. This document outlines the procedures we ask you to follow in providing feedback and/or complaining about something we have got wrong.

These procedures will be implemented in accordance with other related policies such as:

- Safeguarding Policy
- PREVENT Policy
- Fair and Equal Access Policy
- Information Security & Data Protection



What is a complaint?

A complaint is where an apprentice, other learner or employer is unhappy with any aspect of the service that we provide. Examples include:

- Apprentice feels that we have unfairly treated them
- Apprentice feels that we have not given them the support during their programme that they would have expected.
- Any learner, who feels that we have assessed a piece of their work unfairly
- An employer who feels that we have not provided them with sufficient information regarding the progress made by their apprentice or learner.

There is no 'fixed' definition of a complaint. We will consider any issue that an apprentice, learner or employer wishes to raise, where they believe that they have not been treated properly by us.

Feedback

If you wish to provide us with informal feedback (negative or positive) about our service or something specific we have done, please do so by email wherever possible. You can address this email to your main point of contact who will forward it to our Operations Director.

We would also encourage you to give your feedback verbally to the person concerned or your main point of contact as this will often be the quickest way to have your feedback acted on as well as being greatly appreciated.

Complaints and Appeals

Stage 1: submitting your complaint or appeal and our initial response

All formal complaints or appeals regarding an assessment decision to S&A Group are dealt with by our Operations Director. You can address your complaint or request to appeal to them directly. Our preference is that you do so by email (**Rachael.burns@thesandagroup.com**) but you can also write to the postal address at the top of this document.

If you are making a formal complaint or you wish to appeal, we will need to know your identity and how we should contact you so please include these in your



correspondence. If you are making a complaint and you wish to remain anonymous, please submit your complaint by post and we will respect this wherever possible. If during the course of investigating your complaint we have no option but to reveal your identity we will discuss this with you first so that you can:

- a. give permission to reveal your identity,
- b. withdraw the complaint or
- c. agree to allow us to manage the complaint informally as well as possible without revealing your identity. However, this may impact on the outcome we are able to achieve.

Our first action in responding to your complaint or your appeal will be to acknowledge it. We will do this in writing within 5 working days.

At the same time, we will usually contact you to have a discussion about your complaint or appeal in order to develop a fuller understanding of the circumstances and your concerns. Wherever possible we will seek to resolve your concerns at this stage. If we are able to do so we will write to you following the discussion to confirm what actions we have taken/are taking to address your concerns and ask you to write back to us to confirm you are happy with the proposed resolution.

Stage 2: investigating your complaint / appeal

If we are unable to immediately resolve your concerns we will give you as much information as possible about the actions we will be taking to investigate your concerns. In doing so we will:

- a. describe the actions we will be taking and
- b. give you a timescale for these actions and a date by which we will report back to you

Once we have completed our enquiries, we will report back to you in accordance with the timescale given above and advise you of our conclusions and any further action we will take in order to address your concerns. If you are happy with our response, we will ask you to confirm this in writing.

Stage 3: appealing against our conclusions

If you are not satisfied with our response you can raise a formal appeal. Your appeal will be passed to our Managing Director for review. They will:

- Review the evidence file relating to the case



- Speak to staff involved in the first 2 stages of the procedure
- Call you to discuss your concerns further, including the reason you are not happy with the resolution proposed by the Operations Director. Following this our Managing Director will advise you whether she believes further investigation is justified.
- If yes, they will confirm this in writing and give you a date by which those investigations will be completed and she will call or write again on or before that date to confirm the outcome of those investigations
- If no, our Managing Director will confirm this in writing outlining the rationale for not pursuing the matter further.

Stage 4: taking your complaint further

If you remain unhappy with the conclusions reached by our Directors you can then seek further redress from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

You must contact the ESFA within 3 months of getting a decision from us. Complaints can be e-mailed or posted to the ESFA complaints team, as follows:

ESFA@education.gov.uk or

Complaints Team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

The ESFA will acknowledge the complaint within 5 days.

If the complainant is still unsatisfied after the ESFA response they can write to the complaints adjudicator to decide on the case.

Accessing this policy

A copy of this policy can be found on our website at
<https://www.thesandagroup.com/training/>