

LD Training Services Limited Concerns and Complaints Policy

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1. Preamble

- 1.1 LD Training welcomes feedback from its students/learners because it is chiefly by listening to students/learners views that we can monitor the service we are providing and ensure that we continue to provide students/learners with the high level of service that they expect, but also better enable us to improve that service.
- 1.2 Students/learners are encouraged to let us know what we are doing particularly well or make suggestions about how to improve our service by informing the relevant Student/Learner Course Representative who will raise appropriate matters at Course Committee meetings.
- 1.3 It is recognised that from time to time a student/learner may feel concerned or dissatisfied with some aspect of his or her dealings with LD Training and when that happens it is important that the issue is dealt with as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.
- 1.4 However, it is also recognised that a student/learner, though concerned or dissatisfied, may not either want to or feel it necessary to make a formal complaint. Accordingly, LD Training has put in place procedures for dealing both with students/learners concerns which fall short of making a complaint as well as having a robust procedure in place for the handling of formal complaints.

2. Informal Student/Learner Concerns

- 2.1 If a student/learner has a concern about his/her individual experience at LD Training, they are encouraged to raise the matter with the relevant member of staff immediately, unless it is inappropriate to do so in which case the matter should be raised with the student/learner's Programme Leader.
- 2.2 If, however, the relevant member of staff cannot resolve the issue to the student/learner's satisfaction the issue will then usually be referred by that member of staff to the Programme Leader. It is anticipated that most student/learner issues /concerns will be resolved at this stage. Programme Leaders are required to submit details of all concerns/complaints to the Head of Quality.
- 2.3 In the event of the Programme Leader not being able to resolve the matter to the student/learner's satisfaction, the matter will be referred to a Head of Department.
- 2.4 The procedure for addressing student/learner concerns as distinct from complaints is in essence informal but with an emphasis upon prompt resolution of the matter in question. While it is recognised that matters of concern may involve exchanges of correspondence, what distinguishes this procedure from the formal complaints



procedure is that the student/learner is not making a complaint and the formal procedure for handling a complaint by definition does not apply.

2.5 The member of staff/Programme Leader will seek to resolve the matter and thereafter compile a record of the same and how it was dealt with, which must be forwarded to the Head of Quality for retention.

3. Formal Concerns and Complaints Handling Procedure

Definition

3.1 For the purposes of the LD Training Concerns and Complaints Handling procedure, a complaint is defined as:

‘The clear expression of a specific concern about the provision of the teaching and learning experience or related academic or non-academic service encountered by the complainant or of any alleged aggressive or abusive behaviour encountered by the complainant including but not restricted to behaviour of a racist, sexist or otherwise discriminatory nature attendant to or associated with their studies or interaction with LD Training.’

4. Timescale for Making a Complaint

4.1 A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the event, incident or issue giving rise to the dissatisfaction in question, to a maximum period of three months.

5. Complainants

5.1 The Complaints Procedure can be used by:

- individuals applying to LD Training – prospective students/learners;
- current students/learners; &
- students/learners who have completed their course or who have left LD Training within the previous three months.

5.2 In respect of prospective students/learners they are able to invoke the compliant handling procedure usually but not limited to any dissatisfaction they may have with how their course application is being handled or related matters. In particular, all prospective students/learners will be informed of the complaint handling procedure prior to them accepting an offer of a course place with LD Training.

6. Exclusions

6.1 Certain matters are excluded from the complaints procedure which are as follows:

- appeals against the decision of Assessment Boards – see Appeals Policy;
- appeals against the decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel – see Extenuating Circumstances Policy;
- complaints against the students/learners Representative Body – see Role of Student/Learner Representatives;
- appeals against decisions taken under disciplinary proceedings; or
- **complaints that relate to a matter of academic judgment.**



7. Conduct of Proceedings

7.1 LD Training in conducting its complaints procedure will always seek to carefully balance the rights of the complainant and those of any person complained against and will strive to ensure that all involved in the process are treated fairly and with dignity.

Process & Procedure

Stage One

7.2 If, in the student/learner's view, a complaint cannot be resolved informally then he or she may make a formal complaint by invoking the formal complaints procedure as described below.

- a) Complete a LD Training Complaints Form setting out clearly the nature and origin of the complaint detailing what steps, if any, have been taken to resolve it informally and explaining why the outcome of the informal procedure if utilised was not considered appropriate or satisfactory.
- b) The Complaints Form can be obtained from the Registrar and/or Head of FE Delivery or downloaded from the LD Training website. The completed form should be returned to the Registrar and/or Head of FE Delivery who are responsible for forwarding the same to the Head of Quality.
- c) The Head of Quality will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt and will nominate an Investigating Officer and let the complainant know who will be dealing with the complaint.
- d) The Investigating Officer will be responsible for investigating the complaint diligently and comprehensively. To do so it may be necessary for the Investigating Officer to arrange a meeting or meetings with the complainant or discuss the matter by telephone or through letters or emails. Written updates must be provided to the Head of Quality.
- e) The person dealing with the complaint (Investigating Officer) will, within five working days of the referral from the Head of Quality, contact the complainant and indicate what action they plan to take, and the date by which they expect any investigation to be completed. The actions must be agreed in advance with the Head of Quality. If the investigation cannot be completed by the expected date, the person dealing with the complaint will advise the student/learner of the delay. The Head of Quality must be copied into all written correspondence of any form.
- f) The person dealing with the complaint (the Investigating Officer) will respond in writing to the complainant when any investigation is completed with details of the findings, and if the complaint is upheld will indicate what the outcome will be. The Head of Quality must approve the release of the response in advance but in doing so cannot influence or change the findings.



- g) The response to the complaint will be copied to the Head of Quality who will maintain a central record of complaints and who will report on a bi-annual basis to the LD Training Governing Board as to the nature and volume of complaints being received.
- h) If the Head of Quality is the subject of the complaint, then a student/learner should follow the same procedure except that the form should instead be sent to the Head of Academics or Head of FE Delivery/MIS.

Stage Two

7.3 The formal procedure outlined above should ensure that a complaint is investigated thoroughly. However, occasionally a student/learner may not be satisfied, and in that case she/he can request a **formal review** by a member of the senior management team. This is, in essence, the appeal stage.

- a) The request for a review must be submitted in writing, setting out clearly the basis of dissatisfaction with the findings of the formal investigation at Stage One. The request for review should be submitted to the Head of Quality within ten working days of the date of the written response to the formal complaint.
- b) The Head of Quality will acknowledge the request within five working days of receipt and will let the student/learner know who will be dealing with the review.
- c) If the Head of Quality, together with the Head of Academics/FE Delivery, decides that the case for review is not well-founded then she/he will dismiss it and will inform the complainant normally within two weeks.
- d) If the Head of Quality, together with the Head of Academics/FE Delivery decides that the case for review is well-founded then she/he will initiate an appropriate investigation and will let the complainant know, normally within two weeks, when he can expect a response. Should the complaint be required to follow external processes, the complaint will be advised of the same, and the process supplied. Otherwise the following steps will apply.
- e) When the investigation is complete the Head of Quality will respond in writing to the complainant with details of the findings, and if the complaint is upheld, will indicate what the outcome will be.
- f) The response to the complaint will be held by the Head of Quality who will maintain a central record of complaints and will table a report on an annual basis to the LD Training Advisory and Governing Boards.

Stage Three

7.4 Upon completion of the formal review stage there is one remaining stage available for a complainant to pursue in the event that she/he is still not satisfied. It is to apply to the Board of Governance seeking a further review as set out below:

- a) The request for a further review must be submitted in writing, setting out clearly the basis of dissatisfaction with the findings of the Stage Two review process. This request should be submitted to the Head of Quality within five working days of the date of receipt by the complainant of the outcome of the Stage Two review.



- b) The Head of Quality will acknowledge the request within five working days of receipt and will let the student/learner know which Board Director will be conducting the review.
- c) **It is anticipated that only the most serious cases of complaint will ever come to the Board of Governance.**
- d) The relevant Director will review all the evidence, representations made and examine the conduct of the proceedings at the two earlier stages to ensure, inter alia, that they were conducted in accordance with the relevant procedures. This stage will usually not involve any meetings between the Director and the complainant.
- e) It is anticipated that the Director conducting this final review will complete the process within three weeks from the date when the Head of Quality advised the complainant which Director would be conducting the final review.
- f) When the review by the relevant Director is complete, she/he will respond in writing to the complainant with the conclusions and indicate what the outcome will be. **This will be the end of the internal process.**

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 If specific information within a complaint is to be kept confidential, the complainant should make that clear when filing his/her complaint.
- 8.2 However, it should be noted that in exceptional circumstances it may be difficult for confidentiality to be respected e.g. where a criminal offence or gross misconduct has been alleged/disclosed or if there are safeguarding issues.

9. Representation

- 9.1 It is a requirement of the procedure that the student/learner making the complaint must be present at any meetings that may be called in respect of the consideration of the complaint or of the review of the decision made by the Investigating Officer.
- 9.2 The complainant at such meetings can be supported by another student/learner of the institution or by an accredited Student/Learner Representative of his/her course but cannot be represented in their absence.
- 9.3 If the complainant does not attend a meeting without explanation, the person dealing with the complaint has a discretion to proceed in his/her absence. However, this discretion would usually only be exercised by way of exception.
- 9.4 External representation of a complainant including representation by a solicitor, barrister or other person with legal qualifications is prohibited. In similar vein, LD Training will not be externally represented.



10. Anonymous Complaints

10.1 To be able to be dealt with under the LD Training complaint handling procedure, we must receive from the complainant a contact name and address/telephone number/email address in order to be able to proceed. Anonymous complaints will only be investigated in very exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of three members of the Senior Management Team.

11. Communication of the Complaints Policy & Procedure

11.1 Details of the LD Training complaints policy and procedure can be accessed through a wide range of communicational channels, namely:

- LD Training website
- The Learning Wall
- The Student/learner Handbook
- The Staff Handbook
- Student/learner Representatives meetings

11.2 Further, students/learners and staff are also informed about the Complaints Policy & Procedure at: Staff induction and at the start of each academic year. Student/learner induction to their course. Student/learner Representative meetings

12. Staff Responsibility & Guidance

12.1 Staff who are involved in the complaint handling process are required to deal effectively, fairly and in full compliance with this procedure with any complaints they may be required to investigate.

12.2 Staff are provided with support and guidance regarding handling complaints in the form of in-house training sessions, the staff handbook and through briefing notes that may from time to time be provided to them during staff meetings. Staff are briefed on how the informal stage of student/learner concerns/informal complaints relate to the formal complaints stage – and the processes and opportunities available to students/learners to provide feedback.

12.3 Relevant staff are informed of the vital importance of keeping accurate and full notes of meetings and outcomes of discussions with complainants.



13. Complaint Record Keeping

13.1 The Head of Quality is required to compile an identification anonymous report of the number and nature of complaints received and dealt with and table the same on a bi-annual basis to the Governing Body of LD Training.

14. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (HE only)

14.1 If on completion of the internal LD Training procedure, a complainant wishes to take the matter further and seek an independent external review she/he should apply within 12 months of the internal processes being completed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (www.oia.org.uk)

15. Awarding Bodies (FE Only)

15.1 If on completion of the internal LD Training procedure, a complainant wishes to take the matter further and seek an independent external review on the processes applied she/he should follow the relevant Awarding Body process for the same. LD Training are able to provide this upon request or the complainant may make direct contact with the relevant Awarding Body.

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