



Apprenticeship Provision

Complaints Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

At Northcoders we care about complaints. Complaints matter for everyone using our services, who deserve an explanation when things go wrong and want to know that steps have been taken to make it less likely to happen to anyone else. They matter because every concern or complaint is an opportunity to improve. Complaints may signal a problem and we need to know as a business how to improve at all times and at all opportunities.

Complaints matter because they tell us about the quality of our delivery. They tell us about how responsive a member of staff is, how safe, effective, caring and well-planned they are.

Northcoders place feedback from people who use our services at the heart of our work, because every concern is an opportunity for us to improve the quality of our provision. We also want to hear about positive experiences so we can highlight good and outstanding services.

We take complaints seriously – and we expect our staff to do so too. All learner/apprentice inductions describes complaints handling. Poor practice will be found and acted on. Good practice will be shared.

We work to make it easier to give us good quality feedback, and work with our staff/associates to improve learners experience.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all apprenticeship provision provided by Northcoders. We want to provide good-quality services for everyone, but things sometimes go wrong. If they do, we need to know about them so that we can put them right and learn from them. This will help us to improve our performance.

HOW WILL WE DO THAT?

We will make it easy for apprentices to make a complaint by doing the following.

Giving you the chance to make a complaint:

- in person to their skills trainer or skills coach
- email: complaints@northcoders.com
- by using the complaint form (attached to this policy)

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us, or from someone providing the service for us, and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department. This will affect you and will need a particular response from us.

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Northcoders maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

RESPONSE FROM US

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days of receiving it. We will tell you the name of the person who is dealing with your complaint. You will receive a full response within five working days. If this is not possible, we will send you a letter explaining why there is a delay and saying when you will receive a full response.

SOLUTIONS

If your complaint is accepted, the person involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following.

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service, you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated
- Asking you to detail any recommendations of areas where we can improve our performance concerning the information, advice and guidance given

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Apprentices have the right to express dissatisfaction with the services they receive from Northcoders. Apprentices using this policy can expect to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

As part of the Prevent strategy we promote the Fundamental British Values to reflect life in modern Britain. These values are Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect and Tolerance, Individual Liberty.

Fundamental British Values underpin what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse Great Britain valuing our community and celebrating diversity of the UK.

Fundamental British Values are not exclusive to being British and are shared by other democratic countries as a way of creating an orderly society, where individual members can feel safe, valued and can contribute for the good of themselves and others.

These will mirror our principles and values and all the work areas that we support. These will occur throughout our programmes and will be promoted by all staff.

DISSEMINATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Complaints Procedure shall be:

- Discussed on training courses
- Included in the learner/apprentice induction booklet
- Available on the Northcoders website at the following link <https://bit.ly/3snzjqK>
- The web link will be given to every learner as part of the induction process

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STAGE 1

The Stage 1 procedure has three stages:

- Informal
- Formal 1 – Quality Manager
- Formal 2 - Panel

INFORMAL

Apprentices who wish to raise issues about the conduct of trainers, assessors and supervisors may request an informal meeting with the Quality Manager. The purpose of the meeting is to enable the apprentice to talk through and clarify any issues they have concerning assessment; a record will be kept of such meetings. The meeting should be requested within two weeks of the event occurring.

FORMAL 1

If this meeting fails to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the apprentice then the Quality Manager will conduct a meeting with the skills trainer/ skills coach or staff member in question to explore the substance of the learner/apprentice's complaint.

A record will be kept of action and timescale agreed and the Quality Manager will report this back to the apprentice within three working days. If subsequent action fails to resolve the matter, within the timescale, then the apprentice has the right to initiate the second stage of the formal complaint.

FORMAL 2

If an apprentice wishes to complain, the complaint is lodged in writing with the Operations Manager, within ten days of the previous stage of the procedure being completed or expiry of agreed informal action timescale. The Operations Manager:

- Formally acknowledges receipt of the complaint.
- Sets a date for the complaint to be considered by a complaint panel.
- Notifies the external verifier that a complaint has been lodged and gives details of how it will be heard, including the composition of the complaint panel.

We would request that you substantiate any complaints or allegations with as much written factual evidence as you can. It might be that we contact you for further information if required in order to investigate any complaint raised, please ensure you enclose contact details. This will assist in reaching a speedy conclusion to the complaint.

The complaint panel meets to consider the complaint within 28 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint form.

COMPLAINTS PANEL

The panel shall be small and formed so as to be objective and independent and will normally consist of:

- A member of the Senior Management Team
- A skills trainers/ skills coach for the relevant apprenticeship and or award (if applicable)
- An Internal Quality Assurer

The panel will ensure that:

- It has full accounts from all parties involved. The Internal Quality Assurer can support the learner in the preparation of the written report/account of the issue/complaint.
- It will not have as members anyone involved in the complaint.
- They will inform the learner that they have the right to be accompanied in the panel meeting.

OUTCOME

The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, with the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- Complaint resolved informally.
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
- Complaint upheld and the appropriate action deemed to be one of:
 - Counselling
 - Training
 - General supervision
 - Other management action including disciplinary

FURTHER INFORMATION

Education and Skills Funding Agency Complaints:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaintsprocedure#complain-about-a-post-16-training-provider-college-or-employer-we-fund>

Awarding Body Complaints:

Contacts for each awarding body available from the Quality Manager.

ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION OR EPA DECISION APPEALS

Northcoders aims to provide a high-quality service to all our apprentices. However occasionally, individuals may be unhappy about some aspect of their training or assessment which may give rise to concern. Each apprentice has the right to appeal against an assessment decision if he/she feels that a decision is unfair.

This process is designed to ensure concerns are dealt with effectively and in the shortest possible time.

HOW DO I APPEAL?

- If you feel that you have been wrongly or unfairly treated, you should, in the first instance, speak to the trainer concerned to try and resolve the problem informally within 2 weeks of the assessment/feedback taking place.
- If the issue remains unresolved then the learner should submit a formal letter of appeal to an Internal Quality Assurer (within two weeks of feedback provided), with the details of the qualifications and any supporting evidence.
- If the appeal remains unresolved as a result of the internal Quality Assurer's review of the evidence provided, the appeal will then be referred to the Operations Manager.
- A panel made up of Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the internal quality assessor and tutor will meet to judge the evidence within 30 days of escalation.
- Within seven days of receipt of the decision made by the above the Operations Manager will advise the apprentice of the decision in writing.
- Should the apprentice remain unhappy with the decision then the apprentice has the right to appeal to the relevant awarding body/EPA, within 7 days.
- The awarding body/EPA decision is final.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Quality Manager will monitor the appeals procedure, in order to ensure that quality standards and the effectiveness of the procedure are maintained.

The Quality will ensure that records on any matters related to the Appeals Procedure are maintained. These records will be held securely and remain confidential to the parties involved.

FURTHER POINTS TO RAISE

- If at any stage of the appeal you require any guidance, support or further assistance you should speak to a member of the senior management team. Alternatively, you could speak to your line manager or mentor (if appropriate). Any help you seek will be in the strictest confidence.
- It is important that if you make the decision to appeal you appreciate that no one will proceed further without your agreement. If you feel your concern has been resolved, you can withdraw at any stage.
- Any apprentice who thinks that there are circumstances outside the course. Such as health or personal problems, which could adversely affect their performance in any form of assessment should bring these to the attention of the skills trainer as soon as possible before the relevant assessment.
- Any apprentice who believes that the assessment is taking place in conditions, which could significantly adversely affect their performance, should bring these to the attention of the tutor at the time of the assessment.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS FORM

Name:	
Email:	
Company Name: (if applicable)	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Which service is your complaint about?	
Type of complaint:	
How do you think we should respond to your complaint? (please use this section to tell us what you think we should do about your complaint)	
Please detail any recommendations of areas where we can improve our performance concerning the information, advice and guidance given	

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date complaint received:	
Complaint to be dealt with by:	

Date complaint resolved:	
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