

Introduction

B-Skill recognises that valuable lessons can be learned from critical feedback from stakeholders. Feedback about programmes and services offered by B-Skill is encouraged and all matters raised where we may not have performed as well as we would prefer, is used to review, revisit and take immediate action to make improvement. The definition of a complaint is a statement or comment expressing dissatisfaction made to a manager or another person of authority within B-Skill Ltd that requires action or response.

Aim of Policy

To provide a framework and guidance for B-Skill staff about how to handle complaints. To outline the procedures to be followed when a complaint is received to ensure all complaints are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. B-Skill will treat every complaint seriously and aim to resolve any complaint effectively and efficiently and to find ways to eliminate areas of dissatisfaction.

Principles

- When a complaint is received by a member of staff, that individual must immediately inform the Executive Team and the Head of Quality and Curriculum by e-mail, including details of the nature of the complaint.
- B-Skill will not usually accept anonymous complaints, possible exceptions may include where matters may involve allegations of safeguarding including Prevent, Equality, Diversity or bribery.
- Complaints must be responded to immediately by the operational manager responsible for that provision. The operational manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint communication, and a copy of their response must be copied to the Head of Quality and Curriculum. The email will advise the complainant that their concern will be investigated and that they will be contacted again with further information/update within five working days.
- The operational manager must immediately discuss the complaint issue with the Head of Quality & Curriculum and agree who will carry out the investigation, so that an initial response may be communicated to the complainant within the allocated five working days. The Head of Quality & Curriculum will make the decision whether the operational manager will continue with a full investigation once more details are known, and the appropriateness of that operational manager continuing with the investigation.
- Where there may be a serious allegation involving the operational manager or staff, then the Head of Quality & Curriculum will carry out the investigation or organise a neutral person to manage the investigation.
- Staff will ensure they have no conflict of interest or bias, excusing themselves from the investigation of the complaint where this is the case.
- Confidentiality will be respected within the constraints of investigation.

- All e-mail correspondence relating to the complaint must be sent with 'request delivery receipt' and 'request a read receipt' notifications attached.

Policy Statement

B-Skill is committed to providing a safe and effective learning and working environment for all learners, apprentices, staff, associates, partners and subcontractors. B-Skill views complaints as an opportunity to review and improve its policies and practices and gain an insight into levels of satisfaction. We will respond to a complaint in a prompt and efficient manner.

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementing this procedure shall lie with the Head of Quality and Curriculum and the Executive Team.

Informal Stage

In the first instance the member of staff involved should attempt to resolve the problem informally by talking with the complainant. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complainant, then the formal procedure should be followed.

Formal Stage

- A The complaint will be notified to the Executive Team and the Head of Quality and Curriculum as soon as possible upon receipt of the complaint, in writing via e-mail, with a brief overview or a copy of the complaint.
- B The Operational Manager for that area of provision will liaise with the recipient of the complaint, to establish the nature and seriousness of the complaint and to ensure that information has been captured accurately and thoroughly. The Head of Quality and Curriculum must be informed throughout of progress.
- C The Head of Quality and Curriculum will log the complaint for monitoring purposes, in the B-Skill central record for complaints and chase up progress to encourage a timely and mutually agreeable resolution for all parties.
- D The Head of Quality and Curriculum will keep the Executive Team advised of the progress of the investigation into the complaint to ensure that adequate resources and support are in place to carry out a full investigation into the matter.
- E The Head of Quality and Curriculum will also ensure that the manager/member of staff involved is keeping the individuals/learner(s) advised on progress of the investigation so that they are confident that their complaint is being addressed
- F When the Executive Directors are satisfied that the complaint has been investigated to a satisfactory conclusion and that everything possible has been done to investigate and resolve the issue, the Head of Quality and Curriculum will formally close the complaint on the central record.

- G The Head of Quality and Curriculum will make recommendations for the implementation of improvements to prevent re-occurrence of any similar complaint.
- H The Head of Quality and Curriculum will record recommended improvements on the Continuous Improvement Plan as appropriate.
- I If the matter is deemed serious and/or there may be a conflict should the operational manager carry out the investigation, then the Head of Quality & Curriculum will carry out the investigation or nominate a neutral person to lead the investigation (investigating officer).
- J The investigating officer will liaise closely with the Head of Quality & Curriculum throughout the investigation ensuring interviews, information and evidence is carefully collected and managed so that a full and thorough investigation is undertaken, and all aspects are considered. Regular contact must be maintained with the complainant.
- K If the complaint is not resolved at this stage the complainant has the right of appeal.

Appeal

Upon receipt of a notice of appeal by the complainant against a decision made at the Formal Stage, the operational manager/investigating officer shall inform the Head of Quality and Curriculum immediately, who will then notify the Director responsible for Quality.

The Director responsible for Quality, or an Executive Director shall consider the appeal and reply within 10 working days.

Should the complaint not be resolved at this stage the Head of Quality & Curriculum or Director responsible for Quality/Executive Director will provide the complainant with information on any further steps which may be taken.

Time Scales

Unless the complaint goes to an appeal the complainant should be informed within 20 working days of the result of the complaint. If more time is needed for the investigation, this must be relayed to the complainant immediately with the reasons for the additional time required.

Follow Up

If the complainant does not write to appeal against the response within 4 weeks of receiving a reply, we will assume that the complainant is happy with the response and close the complaint.

Records of Complaints

The Head of Quality and Curriculum shall ensure that records of every formal complaint are kept securely. The Complaints Log must be updated accordingly.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by any learner, apprentice, parent, employer or other stakeholder accessing the services of B-Skill.



This policy does not over-ride the candidate appeals procedure which would normally be followed in relation to appeals against assessment decisions.

Internal complaints, such as B-Skill staff wishing to complain of unfair treatment at work will be dealt with through B-Skill's internal grievance procedure, the details of which are contained in the staff Personnel Rules. Please contact the Human Resources Manager for information or email hr@b-skill.com.

Related Policies

Complaints Process Appendix – QSP 028a Flow Chart detailing Complaints Policy Process
Learner Appeals Procedure – QSP 028a