

Complaints Policy

Introduction

This document sets out Occupational Awards Limited (OAL) Complaints Policy and is aimed at all OAL centres, organisations, learners, apprentices and any other interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from OAL.

If you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations, you should raise any concerns with us immediately. This will enable us to address any issues and see this as an opportunity to improve our services.

OAL will always endeavour to resolve complaints promptly, constructively, fairly and proportionately having due regard to the nature of the complaint and the guidelines set out in this policy.

Scope

This policy covers complaints that learners, apprentices, members of the public, approved centres or organisations may wish to make in relation to the qualifications, end-point assessments and associated services offered by OAL.

It is not to be used to deal with enquiries about services offered by OAL or appeals in relation to decisions made by OAL. These areas are covered by our Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered in accordance with our Appeals Policy.

- Making a complaint about an OAL approved centre

All OAL approved centres must have their own complaints and appeals policy which should state clearly how complaints relating to the delivery, including assessment, of OAL qualifications or Endorsed Programmes can be made. Complainants must first of all go through their centres own process before bringing the matter to the attention of OAL.

If, having exhausting the centres complaints process you are unhappy with the outcome, you can submit a formal complaint to OAL for review using the complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

If you are unhappy about the way an assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice may have occurred you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

- **Making a complaint about a service provided by OAL, including End Point Assessment**

If you have a complaint about OAL's service the best way to resolve it will usually be to contact the member of staff you have been dealing with. You can do this over the phone, by email or in writing.

If you feel that this is not the right way to resolve your complaint, or you are not happy with the outcome, or your complaint is about a member of staff, you can submit a formal complaint to OAL for review using the complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

Complaints relating to conduct or services relating to end-point assessment delivery should be submitted to OAL for review using the complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

- **Complaints outside scope**

Although it is not possible to provide a definitive list of complaint scenarios, the following outlines the areas that we are unable to take forward in line with the scope of this policy.

- Actions undertaken by training provider/centre staff during end point assessment delivery.
- Complaints that haven't firstly been raised with the relevant individual at an OAL approved centre.
- Complaints more than six months past the complaint incident date.
- Assessment decisions made by an OAL approved centre.

Note: Some such disputes can only be resolved through the courts or preferably, alternate dispute resolution. Where we identify at the outset that the nature of the complaint is not one which the policy is likely to resolve then we may signpost you to an appropriate body who can assist you.

The decision of OAL on whether a complaint is within the scope of this policy is final.

Complaints Brought to Our Attention by the Regulators

On occasion, the regulators may notify OAL about failures relating to the activities of another awarding organisation, or end point assessment organisation. These will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints. This will ascertain if the same issue could affect the provision of OAL qualifications/products/services in the future.

Before you Complain

Complaints under this policy should be made promptly and normally within one month of the complaint incident. OAL may at its discretion consider complaints made later than one month having regard to any unreasonable delay by any party involved, but will not hear any complaint which has been raised more than 6 months after the incident.

Please provide as much information as possible so that we can investigate your complaint promptly.

How to Make a Complaint

You must ensure you have read and understood all details of OAL's Complaints Policy, including what we can and can't investigate, how OAL will handle the complaint and expected timescales.

A full description of the nature of the complaint (including dates and times if known), the names of the people you have dealt with so far, copies of all correspondence between you and the named party relating to the complaint must be submitted using OAL's complaint form.

Note: OAL will not investigate anonymous complaints – however we may consider doing so where there is evidence to support an investigation and these will be taken forward in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.

What Will Happen to the Complaint?

OAL will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days, and will let the complainant know who is dealing with it. At all times we will ensure that personnel assigned have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

An initial review will be undertaken to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of this policy, the complainant will be informed of this within 10 working days and advised on the outcome or the next steps in the process. Where this is not possible, we will contact you to update you on our progress and provide a deadline by which we should be able to provide a further response.

What Happens if the Complaint is Upheld?

At the end of an investigation, we shall notify the complainant and the relevant individual or party of our decision. If a complaint is upheld, OAL will identify what went wrong and why, taking remedial action as appropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been upheld, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in processes, OAL will give due consideration to the outcome and will, as appropriate, take actions such as:

- Identifying and contacting any other learner who might have been affected by that failure.
- Correcting, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure; or
- implementing new procedures to ensure that the failure does not reoccur in the future.

Taking a Complaint Further

If you disagree with the decision taken by OAL or are unhappy by the way in which your complaint was handled, you can take the matter further and instigate an appeal in line with the arrangements outlined in our Appeals Policy.

If your complaint relates to a qualification or apprenticeship standard and, after you have exhausted our appeals arrangements, you are still not satisfied with the outcomes, you can complain/appeal directly to the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification (e.g. Ofqual in England, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and Qualifications Wales) or apprenticeship standard (e.g. Ofqual, or an EQA body). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle complaints and appeals.

Storage and use of information

All information and data collected regarding any complaints made to OAL will be stored securely on the database system. Depending on the nature of the complaint this information will be stored against either a centre or learner or within the OAL files. This information will only be made available to relevant persons.

Information may be used to review associated processes and policies to ensure that the 'failure' does not occur again or mitigate the situation as far as possible if the failure that occurred cannot be corrected.

Complaints Form

OAL has put in place policies and procedures that underpin high quality service delivery to all centres and other customers.

However, should a situation arise whereby you wish to complain about any aspect of OAL and/or the services we provide please contact our customer services team at info@oawards.co.uk or telephone 01904 236 483.

Please complete this form and return, using the email address above, to the OAL Responsible officer who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Name:

What's your role

Centre Name (if applicable):

Contact Details

Telephone:

Email:

Please give details about your complaint

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?

(Whom did you speak to, when and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork?

If so, please give details:

Date:
