

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

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Summary of Procedures

The complaints and appeals policy and procedure enable you to bring matters of concern to Clarkson Evans Training's (CET) attention and provide mechanisms for resolving those concerns. These procedures comprise an informal, formal, and review stage. At the informal stage, our aim is to resolve as many problems and difficulties as quickly and easily as possible.

There are time limits by which you must raise a complaint or appeal and by which you must escalate to the next stage if you remain dissatisfied. It is, therefore, important that you raise any concerns you may have as soon as possible.

No learner who brings a genuine complaint or appeal under this procedure will be disadvantaged by CET regardless of the outcome. We aim to promote a positive culture whereby learners can confidently raise concerns.

Scope

Who do these procedures cover:

- Apprenticeship learners
- Vocational learners
- Bespoke course delegates
- Formally registered learners who have trained with Clarkson Evans in the past five years.

We recognise that not everyone is classed as a learner; however, we use this term throughout this document to identify the above categories.

What these procedures do not cover

There are separate policies and procedures for learner misconduct in the Code of Conduct, CET Expectations and EDI Policy. Complaints or appeals will not be eligible if more than five years have elapsed since you last studied at CET.

Employment issues that do not form or contribute to the apprenticeship should be directed to the employee's manager or HR department.

Additionally, apprenticeship learners may also be able to report complaints to the [Complaints Portal of the Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) for investigation. Before presenting a complaint to the ESFA, we would recommend that learners discuss their concerns with the Apprenticeship helpline for guidance on whether this is an appropriate action (Telephone 08000 015 600; email helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk).

Where an apprentice wishes to appeal the grading of an End Point Assessment (EPA), they should follow the appeals procedure of the Registered Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation (RoAAO). All apprentices studying at CET undertake the EPA with [National Electrotechnical Training](#) (NET). Further information on the appeals procedure is available in the [FAQ section of the NET website](#).

Introduction

CET aims to provide an excellent learner experience that enables everyone to achieve their learning goals and full potential. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong; when they do, we welcome the opportunity to address them as soon as possible. The policy allows you to bring any concerns about your experience as a learner or decisions related to your access to learning to the attention of CET. This policy and procedure also enable CET to monitor and improve our services, ensuring we meet quality standards and enhance the learning experience.

If you are concerned about any aspect of your learning experience, you are encouraged to contact the [training management team](#) as soon as possible. The procedures consist of an informal stage (Stage 1), a formal stage (Stage 2), and a review stage (Stage 3) and are designed to be simple, clear, and fair to all parties. We aim to resolve most concerns as quickly and easily as possible at the informal stage; however, if you feel that your concern has not been appropriately addressed, you may escalate it to a formal complaint (Stage 2) and, if necessary, proceed to a review (Stage 3).

We will ensure that no learner who brings a genuine complaint or appeal under these procedures will be disadvantaged by CET, regardless of the outcome. Complaints and Appeals at all stages will be handled sensitively and with due consideration for confidentiality.

Learner complaints and appeals procedure

CET encourages learners to discuss any issues as and when they might arise during their training through their lecturer or assessor.

1. Definitions

- 1.1 An educational appeal is a request for the review of a decision made by an educational setting regarding matters such as admission, assessment, examinations, learner progression, or qualifications.
- 1.2 The educational bodies that set assessment and examination criteria that CET are required to adhere to are referred to as Awarding Organisations (AOs).

- 1.3 You cannot appeal against an educational decision because you disagree with the academic judgement of CET. You may only appeal against an educational decision where there are specific grounds relating to the fairness or adequacy of the procedures followed.
- 1.4 An administrative complaint is a learner's request for CET to review a decision made by an individual or group responsible for non-educational aspects of their learning experience. This includes decisions related to fees, exceptional arrangements, and the overall learning environment.
- 1.5 You may request an appeal of any decision where there are specific grounds relating to the fairness or adequacy of the procedures followed, including the consideration of all relevant evidence, the correct application of rules, how a decision was communicated, bias, and the overall reasonableness of the decisions made.

2. Grounds for an appeal or complaint

- 2.1 The following are acceptable grounds for an academic appeal request:
 - the assessment process/judgement was affected by bias.
 - there was an administrative error or some other irregularity in the conduct of the assessment which impacted on the assessment.
 - the learner's performance in the assessment was affected by relevant exceptional circumstances, which, for valid reasons, were not made known to the lecturer or assessor.
- 2.2 The following are acceptable grounds for a complaint;
 - Poor facilities and learning resources
 - Educational issues: Dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching, course design, assessment, or resources
 - Support services: Issues with administration, facilities, or supervision
 - Conduct: Inappropriate behaviour by staff, bullying, harassment, or discrimination
 - Wellbeing: Learners do not feel safe in the learning environment.

3. Stage 1: Informal complaint or appeal

- 3.1 In the first instance, where possible, you should raise your concerns with the lecturer or assessor responsible for the training or with a member of the support team. If they are unable to provide a satisfactory outcome, they will advise you on how to initiate a complaint or appeal.

- 3.2 If you have cause for concern about any aspect of your time as a learner or have grounds to believe any decision relating to your learning is wrong and have not been able to resolve this through discussion with the training team, you should notify us. You must do so as soon as possible and no more than 28 calendar days after the event. If we receive your complaint or appeal more than 28 calendar days after the event, it will likely be considered out of time unless there are exceptional circumstances for extending the time limits. At informal (Stage 1), concerns will be taken seriously.
- 3.3 You should start your complaint or appeal by using the [online form](#) to ensure that you are put in touch with the right area of CET. Telephone numbers are also provided if you prefer to raise your concern over the telephone (please refer to the [Further Clarification](#) section for contact details).
- a. If you are making a formal complaint or appeal as defined in [1.1 Learner complaints and appeals procedure](#), you should explain your reason(s) for dissatisfaction, providing appropriate evidence such as correspondence with CET, medical evidence or a witness statement. You should explain what you think CET could do to put the matter right.
 - b. You cannot query a decision simply because you do not agree with it; you must show why the decision was not made in accordance with the relevant CET policies, procedures, or regulations.
- 3.4 Within ten working days of receipt of your complaint or appeal, the member of staff reviewing it will send you an Outcome Message, which will include a full and detailed response to your complaint(s) or appeal(s). The Outcome Message will contain a reference number. You will need to quote this reference number if you wish to escalate your complaint or appeal. If you have not received the Outcome Message within the ten working days, and you have not received an explanation for the delay, you should contact the [Training Management Team](#) to discuss the escalation of the complaint or appeal to the formal stage

4. Stage 2: Making a formal complaint

- 4.1 After receiving the [Outcome Message](#), you may escalate your complaint or appeal to the formal stage of the Learner Complaints and Administrative Appeals Procedure if:
- a. you do not consider that reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the complaint matter or
 - b. the decision you appealed has not been managed in accordance with the relevant policies, procedures and regulations; or
 - c. you have not received an Outcome Message within the time limit (or extended time limit)

- 4.2 To do this, you must:
- a. Email the [training management team](#) within 28 calendar days of the date of the [Outcome Message](#).
 - b. Explain why the outcome to the informal stage has not resolved the complaint or appeal.
 - c. If you are making a complaint as defined in [sections 1 and 2](#), you should also set out what you believe CET could reasonably be expected to do to resolve the complaint.

You should also set out one or more of the following grounds on which you believe CET should review its decision:

- that relevant evidence has not been taken into account; or
- that irrelevant evidence was taken into account; or
- that any relevant CET regulations, policies or procedures have not been applied correctly; or
- that CET has not followed the assessment or examination criteria set by the awarding organisation; or
- that the reasons for the decision were not fully and clearly communicated to you; or
- that there was bias or the likelihood of bias in making the decision; or
- that a person made the decision without the necessary responsibility or authority; or
- that the procedure followed was not fair or adequate; or
- that the decision was not one which, in all the circumstances, was reasonable for CET to have made.

- 4.3 Failure to meet these requirements will result in the complaint or appeal not being accepted.
- 4.4 A member of the Training Management Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint or appeal within five working days and will advise whether your complaint or appeal meets the requirements in 4.2 and has been accepted or not.
- 4.5 If your complaint or appeal has not been accepted, we will advise you of the reasons for that decision and give you a further opportunity to resubmit your stage 2 appeal request. You must resubmit your appeal request within 28 calendar days of the Decision Letter or ten working days of the acknowledgment of your request by the Investigating manager, whichever is longer.
- 4.6 If your complaint or appeal is accepted, we will refer it to a senior member of the management team with no prior involvement in the response to the stage 1

concern and will investigate the complaints or appeals you have made. They will consider your grounds for complaint or appeal, review the evidence you submitted, check your learning records, consult relevant CET and awarding body policies, and seek staff reports as needed. In most cases, this should be no more than 15 working days from the date of the acknowledgement. However, we will notify you if a time extension is required and the reasons why.

- 4.7 Once your complaint or appeal has been fully investigated, the investigating manager will send you a [Decision Letter](#). The Decision Letter will set out the matters of the complaint or appeal, a timeline of events, details of the information or evidence taken into consideration and the outcome of the complaint or appeal. Where evidence not previously available to you has been considered by the investigating manager, this will be provided to you as long as this would not breach data protection legislation. If your complaint or appeal is not upheld, the investigating manager will inform you of the reasons for this decision.
- 4.8 If your complaint or appeal is upheld or partly upheld, they will inform you of the actions being taken to implement the decision or put the matter right and what CET will do to prevent similar issues from arising. The investigating manager may also recommend quality assurance of procedures or policies. These recommendations will be reported to any relevant areas of CET and the training management team to monitor their implementation. We will ensure you are aware of these recommendations.

5. Stage 3: Requesting a Formal Review

- 5.1 If having received the [Decision Letter](#), you do not consider that your complaint or appeal has been managed in accordance with the relevant CET, procedures and regulations, you may escalate the complaint or appeal to the Review Stage of the Learner Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
- 5.2 Stage 3 Formal Reviews are carried out by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). To request a review, you must:
 - a. email the CEO, [Lindsey Young](#), within 28 calendar days of the date of the Decision Letter and
 - b. explain why you consider that the decision has not been made in accordance with the relevant CET policies, procedures and regulations, and
 - c. set out one or more of the following grounds on which you believe CET should review its decision:

- That relevant evidence was not taken into account; or
- that irrelevant evidence was taken into account; or
- that any relevant CET regulations, policies or procedures have not been applied correctly; or
- that the reasons for the decision were not fully and clearly communicated to you; or
- that there was bias or the likelihood of bias in making the decision; or
- that the decision was made by a person or body without the necessary responsibility or authority; or
- that the procedure followed was not fair or adequate; or
- that the decision was not one which, in all the circumstances, it was reasonable for CET to have made.

d. Submit any evidence, or any additional evidence which has not previously been submitted in support of your appeal, such as correspondence with CET, medical evidence or a witness statement. Where new evidence is introduced at the review stage, to be eligible for further consideration, you should provide a valid reason why this could not have been provided earlier in the process.

- 5.3 Failure to meet these requirements will result in the request for review not being accepted.
- 5.4 The CEO will acknowledge the request within five working days of its receipt. Within ten working days of the acknowledgement, the CEO will write to advise you whether or not the review request has been accepted.
- 5.5 If the request for review is not accepted, we will explain the reasons for that decision and issue you a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 5.6 If your request for a review meets the requirements in paragraph 4.6, the CEO will convene a Panel with no prior involvement with the concern to conduct a review.
- 5.7 CET will make every reasonable effort to meet the time limits stated in this procedure. For complex cases, additional time may be required to ensure a thorough review of a submission. We will notify you in writing if an exception to the standard time limit is needed, and we will keep you informed of when you can expect to receive an outcome response.

6. Lecturer Marked Assessments (LMA) mark appeals procedure

- 6.1 Marking LMA's fairly depends on your lecturer exercising their academic judgement, taking into account the marking guidance, to determine how well you have answered the question set. CET closely monitors the marking of LMAs by moderating all question papers to ensure fairness between all the lecturers and by qualitative monitoring of the marking and feedback for work sampled by the internal quality assurer.
- 6.2 If you believe there has been a mistake in marking your LMA or given you a score that does not reflect the standard of work you have submitted, you may submit a query or appeal for any LMA.

7. Anonymous Complaints and Appeals

- 7.1 We cannot accept or respond to anonymous complaints and appeals, as complaints and appeals can only be appropriately investigated when full background information can be gathered.

Glossary

Decision Letter

A Decision Letter is a response from the investigating manager reviewing your Stage 2 formal complaint or appeal. The Decision Letter will detail a full response to your complaint or appeal, the decision made, and, if appropriate, any action that will be taken to resolve the concern.

Outcome Message

An Outcome Message is a response sent by the CET Staff members who investigated your stage 1 complaint or administrative appeal. The Message details a full response to your complaint or appeal, the outcome, and, if appropriate, any action that will be taken to resolve the concern.

Further Clarification

If you have any questions about the content provided in this document and how to interpret it, and you are a current Clarkson Evans Learner, please contact the [training management team](#) or call the Head of Training, Sharna George on 07707 546662.

Appendix 1: Learner overview of complaints and appeals.

CET aims to provide an excellent learner experience that enables everyone to achieve their learning goals and full potential. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong; when they do, we welcome the opportunity to address them as soon as possible. The Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure allow you to bring any concerns about your experience as a learner or decisions related to your access to learning to the attention of CET. A copy of the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures is available on the [Clarkson Evans website](#).

CET's complaints and appeals process and procedure provide a structured way for learners to raise concerns or challenge decisions related to their learning experience. It typically includes the following stages:

1. **Informal Complaint or Appeal** – Learners are encouraged to first discuss their concerns informally with relevant staff (e.g., a lecturer or assessor). Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage.
2. **Formal Complaint or Appeal** – If the issue isn't resolved informally, the learner can submit a formal complaint using an online form. A member of the training management team will review the complaint, investigate as necessary, and issue a response.
3. **Formal Review** – If the learner is dissatisfied with the formal complaint response, they can request a review. This review is conducted by the CEO, ensuring a fresh look at the complaint's details.

Grounds for an appeal or complaint generally fall into the following categories:

- **Educational Decisions:** Appeals can be made against educational decisions, such as grades, examinations or assessments, if the learner believes there was an error, bias, or unfair treatment in the evaluation process. Grounds may include procedural errors, inconsistent application of grading criteria, or extenuating circumstances not previously considered.
- **Quality of Teaching or Support:** Complaints may arise if a learner feels that the quality of teaching, access to resources, or learning support services was inadequate or did not meet expected standards.
- **Administrative Errors or Miscommunication:** Learners can file complaints if they experience administrative errors (such as incorrect billing or enrolment issues) or miscommunication that negatively impacts their learning or access to training resources.
- **Discrimination or Harassment:** Complaints can be made about discrimination, harassment, or bullying by staff or other learners based on protected characteristics (e.g., race, gender, disability) that affect a learner's well-being and learning environment.
- **Unfair Treatment:** Appeals or complaints may be lodged if a learner feels treated unfairly or subjected to bias by faculty, staff, or fellow learners in matters like disciplinary actions or educational assessments.
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Learners can complain about health and safety issues that affect their physical or mental well-being, such as unsanitary conditions, lack of appropriate facilities, or unsafe learning environments.

If you would like to make a complaint or appeal, please scan the QR code and complete the form.

