

Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1. Scope and purpose

The compliments and complaints policy and procedure applies to all of Blackpool Skills Academy's service users, including students, employers, visitors, parents and residents who wish to compliment, or express dissatisfaction with any aspect of BSA's activities.

The purpose of the policy is to provide all service users with the opportunity to provide feedback to support continuous improvements

2. Policy Overview

The compliments and complaints policy are designed to encourage an open and transparent approach to the management and resolution of both positive and negative feedback. This is applied to the full range of services provided by BSA with the exception of complaints relating to academic processes (see 3.c).

- BSA promotes a culture that is responsive to both negative and positive feedback
- Feedback about our services is actively encouraged and is viewed as an opportunity to continually improve our provision
- It is the responsibility of all BSA staff to take action and promptly deal with issues as they arise. They must communicate and discuss with line managers before recommending that individuals follow the formal complaints procedure

3. Matters beyond the scope of the Complaints and Compliments Policy

Some complaints will be more appropriately considered through alternative procedures. For example, the below will not normally be considered under this procedure:

- a. Staff disciplinary or grievance complaints
- b. Criminal convictions – which relate to concerns about professional suitability, should be dealt with under the relevant suitability procedures
- c. Academic matters that affect students' assessments, progression or awards will be considered under the Appeals Against Assessment Decisions procedure
- d. Concerns about the outcome or process of a disciplinary matter, will normally be dealt with under BSA's disciplinary procedure

Anonymous complaints: BSA will not normally consider anonymous complaints but may do so exceptionally where it determines that there are compelling reasons to do so.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Permission to Disclose: Before permission is given to share any information with others, the complainant should consider whether any response could potentially hold any sensitive information about

them. You will be required to complete a permission to disclose form (**Appendix 1**) and must contact us in advance detailing what can and cannot be shared.

Malicious and Vexatious Complaints: this is defined as complaints that are malicious and without probable cause, or not based on factual grounds but with the intention of the complainant to be vindictive, as can be reasonably determined. Where a complaint is found to be malicious and vexatious BSA reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint and may take further action against the complainant

Confidentiality: reasonable efforts will be taken to observe confidentiality when investigating a complaint. Where a complaint relates to specific individuals, BSA may seek permission to share such details with them. If permission is not given, it may not be possible for BSA to fully investigate or resolve the complaint

4. Procedure

4.1 Objectives

BSA recognises that there may be aspects of its service that exceed or fall short of its obligations and/or service users' expectations or requirements. The objectives of this policy and procedure are to:

- Identify areas for celebration, to share best practice and reward appropriately
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly
- Continuously improve the quality of service provided

4.2 Communication and reporting

All information regarding compliments and complaints will be recorded and held centrally. The Head of Centre will ensure that complaints are processed effectively and will report at least 3 times per year at team and management meetings.

The Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure will be made available to existing and prospective students via BSA's website and to staff via the staff SharePoint site. Staff and students will be provided with information on this policy and procedure via the induction process.

4.3 Making a Complaint or Providing a Compliment

Whilst it is disappointing that anyone would feel dissatisfied with the service that BSA provides, any feedback that individuals and groups are prepared to give is valued and welcomed.

Compliments and complaints should be made either by post, telephone or via email using the following details:

By Post

Blackpool Skills Academy
Unit A
Stanley House
Stanley Road
Blackpool
FY1 4QL

By Telephone

01253 922526

4.4 Complaints made against staff or students

When a complaint is made against an individual member of staff or student, the individual concerned will be informed of the nature of the complaint, but not the detail. At this point the name of the complainant will not be provided to the staff or student against whom the complaint has been made unless permission is sought from the complainant first.

If an investigation is undertaken to establish the facts of the complaint, we will endeavour to keep the name of the complainant and detail private, but it may not always be possible if the complaint is to be fully investigated. An independent and impartial member of the management team will be assigned to investigate the complaint.

If, following the investigation and in the interest of natural justice, formal action is to be taken against a student or member of staff, the full extent of the complaint will be provided, along with the name of the complainant to give the individual the opportunity to state their case.

The complainant will not be informed of any outcome of any action taken against a member of staff or student because of their complaint. The complainant will, however, be informed of any corrective actions that BSA has put in place within its processes or procedures to either correct the issue being complained about or to ensure it does not re-occur.

4.5 Responding to Complaints

There are 3 stages at which a complaint can be handled:

Stage 1: Informal complaints – within 5 working days

Stage 2: Formal complaints – within 10 working days

Stage 3: Appeal – within 20 working days

The aim is to deal with complaints and respond as quickly and effectively as possible. The expectation is that most complaints will be resolved informally at Stage 1.

4.6 Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

Service users are encouraged to resolve issues informally before they become a complaint, directly with the person who they feel is responsible for the problem.

Stage 2

Where a complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily through the informal route, it can be lodged as a formal complaint in writing by either post or via email (see 4.3). the complainant must clearly identify the nature of the complaint and provide as much detail as possible.

As part of a formal stage 2 complaint BSA may make a request for additional information and would expect to receive this information within 5 working days from the date of our request.

BSA aims to provide a response to the complaint within 10 working days. If we are unable to do so relevant parties will be kept informed of our progress.

Stage 3

The complainant must inform the Head of Centre in writing of their wish to request an appeal as a result of the stage 2 response, clearly stating the grounds for appeal and providing relevant evidence. This request must be received within 10 working days from the stage 2 response.

BSA will deem a complaint closed if the above request for appeal is not received.

5. Taking complaints beyond BSA

Complainants wishing to take their unresolved complaint beyond BSA may have recourse to the organisations who fund or approve their qualifications. Information and contact details for taking this course of action are set out below:

Learners studying on Further Education programmes may be able to take the complaint to one of the following agencies:

1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The complainant should contact the ESFA within three months of receiving an outcome to their complaint from the centre.
2. An awarding body.

6. Linked Policies and Procedures

Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Conflicts of Interest policy

Appeals Against Assessment Decisions Policy and Procedure

Data Protection Policy and Notice

Equal Opportunities Policy

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

7. Equality Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment for the 4 strands of Equality, Safeguarding, Health and safety and Sustainability	
Initial Form to be completed with Risk Assessments or as part of a proposal or change to a policy, plan or new way of working	
Title of Activity: Author and Date: Dionne McCann Nov 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> New or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision (Tick as appropriate) Expected Implementation Date: Nov 20 What is the Review Date: Every 2 Years
Equality and Diversity. Which of the characteristics may be impacted upon? And, if yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	None, no impact
Safeguarding: Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a Student/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Health and Safety: Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Sustainability: Are there expected benefits or impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Evidence: What evidence do you have for your conclusions and expectations for these conclusions? How will this impact be monitored for all these considerations?	Quality is monitored through both internal and external reviews
Is this policy of a high/medium or low risk? :	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low