

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPRENTICES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out the process for apprentices and their employers to make a complaint about the service provided by The London Institute of Banking & Finance (LIBF). We have a separate complaints policy and procedure for students and apprentices who wish to make a complaint and that policy is applicable to any apprentices whose complaint can not be resolved via their apprenticeship programme team or their employer.
- 1.2. We are committed to delivering a high quality service and take feedback from students, apprentices and employers very seriously. It is our aim to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interest of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. We are keen to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded.
- 1.3. Through our complaints process we ensure that:
 - a. complaints and appeals are treated fairly, consistently, transparently, and in a timely manner;
 - b. matters of concern can be raised without risk of disadvantage and any matter raised that may be considered in line with the principles of Whistleblowing will receive the same protections available to Whistle Blowers;
 - c. where complaints or appeals reveal any failure on our part, we take appropriate action to rectify this for the complainant and to identify any others who may have been adversely affected by the same issue
 - d. we review aspects of our service in the light of any complaints or appeals; and
 - e. we maintain duties of confidentiality to third parties, or other legal duties, in responding to complaints and appeals.
- 1.4. Complaints are logged centrally so that oversight of any emerging trends in complaints or concerns can be assessed by our Complaints and Appeals Review Group (CARG).

2. Definition

- 2.1. An **'informal complaint'** is defined as an issue which an employer wishes to raise with a member of our staff, without using the formal complaints process. Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.
- 2.2. A **'Complaint'** in this policy is defined as *'The expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of an apprentice's learning opportunities, our action or lack of action or the standard of service provided by, or on our behalf'*
- 2.3. An **'Appeal'** is *'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions about apprentices' progression, assessment and awards'*

3. Guide to making a complaint

Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

- 3.1.** Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant department at the source of the complaint, or via the Head of Apprenticeships at LIBF or, for apprentices, your workplace line manager. The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner.
- 3.2.** Complaints should be raised within 12 months of the event occurring where possible and will only be accepted for investigation following this timeframe where evidence can be provided of why it was not reasonably possible for the complaint to have been raised earlier.
- 3.3.** You should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days, with a full response given within 4 weeks. If it is not possible to meet these timeframes you will be contacted and told why and what timeframe you will receive your response in.
- 3.4.** Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to you and copy in the Head of Apprenticeships and HEcomplaints@libf.ac.uk who will record the details of all informal complaints.
- 3.5.** If, as employer, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, LIBF will arrange for a representative from your organisation, the Head of Apprenticeships and a senior member of LIBF staff, who is independent of the original complaint, to review the complaint together. If following these discussions, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may approach the Complaints Adjudicator as detailed in Stage 4.
- 3.6.** If, as an apprentice, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, you may follow the below stages:

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

- 3.7.** If your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily through the informal process or within the timescales agreed, or you do not feel that it is appropriate to speak to one of the above members of staff, you may raise a formal complaint with your workplace Programme Manager.
- 3.8.** To make a formal complaint you should write to your workplace Programme Manager copying in the Head of Apprenticeships at LIBF.
- 3.9.** The email should be titled as a complaint, and set out the details of the complaint in full, include any evidence you have supporting your concern, what action has been taken to date regarding attempting an informal resolution of your complaint and what would be an appropriate resolution.
- 3.10.** The workplace Programme Manager will log the complaint and confirm receipt. The workplace Programme Manager will initiate an investigation of the complaint and provide an outcome in writing, copying in the Head of Apprenticeships at LIBF and HEcomplaints@libf.ac.uk. If the workplace investigation is unable to find a solution to the complaint within the work environment

or in consultation with us, the workplace Programme Manager should detail in their outcome letter that the complaint is being referred to our Student Complaints and Appeals process.

Stage 3 – Escalation

- 3.11.** On receipt of the workplace Programme Manager’s outcome letter the Head of Apprenticeships will log the receipt of a formal complaint and provide a confirmation letter within five working days. The complaint will now follow the steps detailed in the [LIBF Complaints and Appeals policy](#) including being investigated by our designated Complaints Officer who will investigate the complaint and present the complaint details to CARG for consideration.
- 3.12.** If you are unhappy with the outcome of CARG and you have grounds, as per the Complaints and Appeals policy, you may escalate your complaint to a review panel.
- 3.13.** If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint following our internal Complaints and Appeal process, you may request us to supply you with a Completion of Procedures letter, which you can use to support escalation of your complaint to the ESFA complaints team.

Stage 4 – Complaints Adjudicator

- 3.14.** If after exhausting this process, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can escalate your complaint to the Complaints Adjudicator at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 3.15.** The ESFA can be contacted via the National Apprenticeship helpline by calling 0800 015 0400 or 0247 682 6482 or emailing nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

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