

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Complaints Policy



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Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

As an Ofqual regulated awarding body, ABBE must abide by its regulators' Conditions of Recognition. In terms of complaints handling, ABBE must meet the following conditions:

D4.1 An awarding organisation must answer accurately, fully and within a reasonable time, any reasonable enquiries received by it from Users of qualifications.

D4.3 An awarding organisation must establish, maintain, publish and at all times comply with a written complaints procedure.

D4.4 The complaints procedure must in particular include procedures and timescales for:

- (a) responding to complaints, and
- (b) dealing with the subject matter of complaints.

Where a complaint is raised, ABBE will follow the process outlined in this policy to handle the complaint sensitively and efficiently.

2. Definition

A complaint is as an expression of dissatisfaction with the level of service delivered by ABBE or an ABBE Approved Centre.

Where a learner wishes to make a complaint in relation to their centre, they are advised that before making a formal complaint to ABBE, all aspects of the centre's complaints policy must be exhausted. ABBE will require evidence of this, before undertaking an investigation into the learner's complaint. If, after exhausting their centre's complaints policy, a learner can then make a complaint to ABBE.

Where a complaint involves suspected malpractice or maladministration, please refer to the ABBE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how a complaint can be made to ABBE. It also explains how ABBE will handle the complaint to ensure that all complaints are dealt with professionally, and in timely manner.

The policy details the process of how complaints are handled and the steps we will take to resolve them.

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4. Making a Complaint

We aim to ensure that the service provided by ABBE is of the highest standard. However, we recognise that there may be instances where a centre or learner may want to make a complaint to ABBE.

Should a centre or Learner need to raise a complaint, we will investigate and respond quickly, fairly and consistently. All complaints will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt, providing a timescale for when a formal response to our investigation into the complaint will be provided.

Formal complaints should be made in writing and sent to:
ABBE,
Birmingham City University,
Curzon Building,
4 Cardigan Street,
Birmingham
B4 7BD

E: abbeenquiries@bcu.ac.uk

The complaint needs to include the following information:

- ❖ Full details of the complaint being made
- ❖ Dates and times it happened
- ❖ Names of individuals involved
- ❖ Name, address and contact details of complainant
- ❖ Centre number or learner number of complainant
- ❖ Any evidence or relevant correspondence to support the complaint

Where a complaint is made by a learner in relation to their centre, they are advised that ABBE will contact the centre to check that their complaints policy has been exhausted and to request evidence, details of their response to the learner and the outcome.

4.1 Whistleblowing

We understand that sometimes a complainant may wish to remain anonymous, further details about making an anonymous complaint can be found in our Whistleblowing policy.

Where complaints are made anonymously, we shall always try to hold a separate investigation to confirm the allegation, before taking up the matter with those responsible. Please be aware that with an anonymous complaint, we will be unable to provide the complainant with any information on the outcome of the investigation and what action we have taken.

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5. Investigation into a Complaint

All complaints will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt, providing a timescale for when a formal response to our investigation into the complaint will be provided. If the complaint is complex, we may need clarification on what the issues are, so we may ask for further information.

The Compliance Manager will investigate the complaint or will allocate an appropriate member of the ABBE team to investigate on their behalf. The allocated investigator must not have been involved in the complaint.

6. Response to the Complaint

Following the investigation, we will provide the complainant with a response which details our investigation. We will also give an outline of any actions and steps which will be taken to resolve the issue.

7. Outcome of the Investigation

Where necessary, ABBE will put arrangements in place to ensure that any issues identified will not recur and will notify others who may be affected by any changes made.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and the response to the complaint, they can request an Appeal against the complaint outcome (see ABBE Appeals Policy for details). If they are still not satisfied following an Appeal, where the qualification is Ofqual regulated, the complainant can contact The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

8. Procedure

Step One

To raise a formal complaint with ABBE, send the full details of the complaint in writing, to ABBE via email or letter.

Step Two

ABBE will acknowledge the complaint within two working days of receipt and will provide a timescale for when a formal response will be given.

Step Three

The Compliance Manager will investigate or appoint an investigator to investigate the issue raised.

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Step Four

The outcome of the investigation and any actions to be taken will be communicated to the complainant.

Step Five

Where necessary, ABBE will put arrangements in place to ensure that the issue will not recur and notify others who may be affected by any changes made.

Step Six

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and/or the response to the complaint, they can request an Appeal against the complaint outcome.

Where the qualification is Ofqual regulated, the complainant can contact The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), if they are not satisfied with the Appeal outcome.

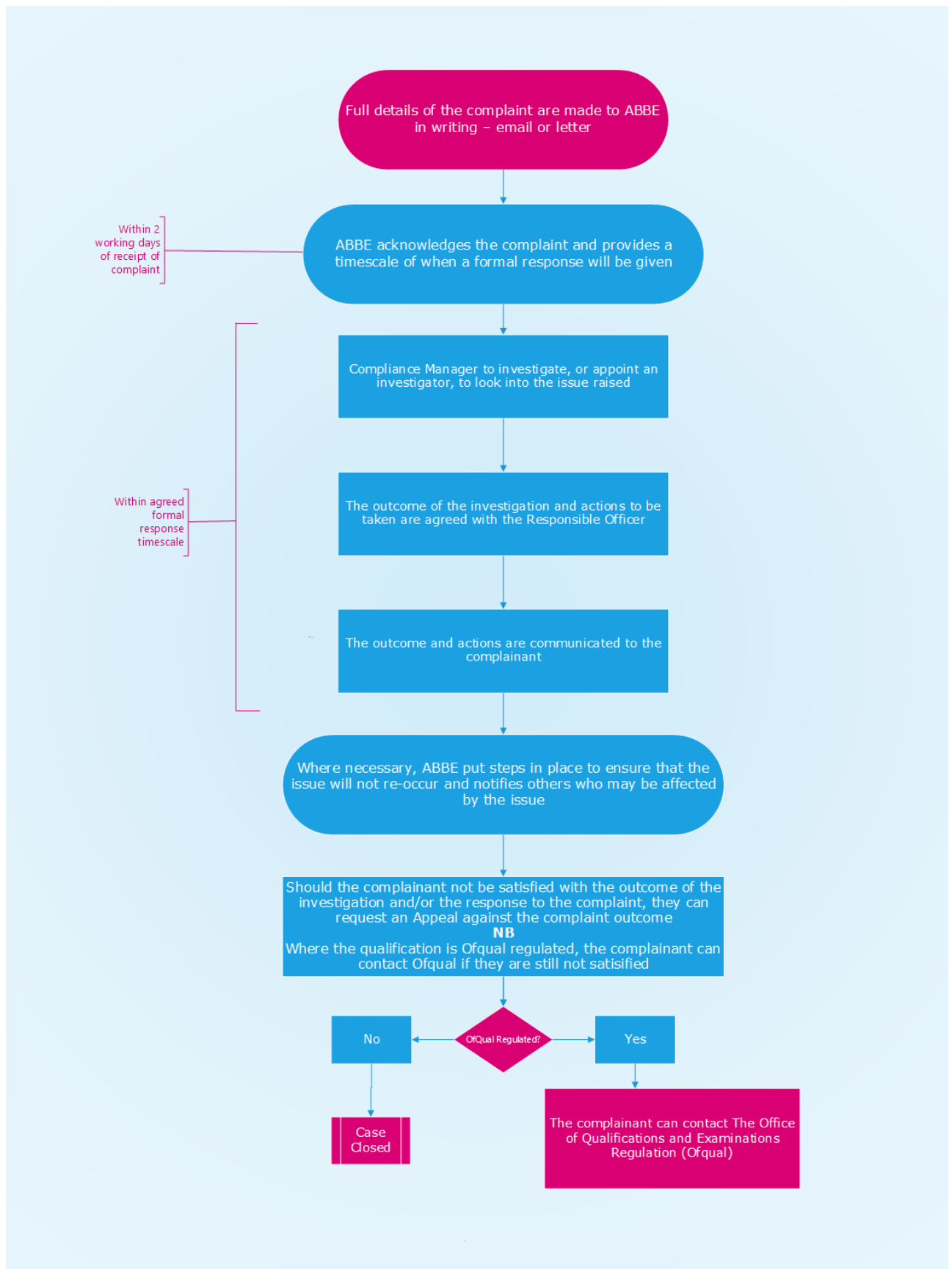
A flow chart detailing the complaints process can be found in appendix one.

9. Continuous Improvement

To ensure that this policy remains fit for purpose and that the procedures and its outcomes are achievable, it is subject to a three-year review cycle, or earlier should any feedback or concern be brought to the attention of ABBE. This policy is also reviewed as part of ABBE continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements.

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Appendix One – Complaints Flow Chart



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