

# UK Professional Development Academy



## Complaints Policy and Procedure

Complaints Policy and Procedure	Last Review:	January 2026
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Amended Date:	N/A
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Next planned review in 12 months, or sooner as required
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# **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

## **1. Policy Statement**

UKPDA is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and responsive environment in which learners and stakeholders are treated with respect and professionalism. The organisation recognises that concerns or dissatisfaction may arise from time to time and is committed to addressing complaints promptly, consistently, and impartially.

This policy provides a formal framework for handling complaints relating to matters other than assessment decisions. Complaints concerning assessment outcomes are dealt with separately under the Appeals Policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and accessible process through which complaints may be raised, investigated, resolved, and, where necessary, escalated.

## **2. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on programmes delivered by UKPDA, as well as staff, applicants, and other stakeholders interacting with the organisation.

A complaint under this policy may relate to concerns involving an individual, a service, an organisational decision, or the implementation of a centre policy. Grounds for complaint may include dissatisfaction with learner support, administrative services, staff conduct, access to facilities, delays in communication, discriminatory treatment, or the application of institutional procedures. This policy applies only to complaints that fall outside formal academic appeals or malpractice procedures.

## **3. Principles Governing Complaints**

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

1. Complaints will be treated seriously and investigated fairly.
2. All parties involved will be treated with dignity, impartiality, and confidentiality.
3. No learner or complainant will suffer disadvantage for raising a genuine complaint in good faith.
4. Complaints should be raised as early as possible to allow prompt resolution.
5. Anonymous complaints will only be considered where sufficient evidence exists to permit investigation.

UKPDA aims to resolve concerns at the earliest reasonable stage while maintaining procedural fairness.

## **4. Timeframe for Submitting a Complaint**

A complaint must normally be submitted within twenty working days of the event, incident, or matter giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after this period may only be considered where there is a valid reason for delay and where evidence remains available for proper review.

## **5. Stages of the Complaints Process**

- **Informal Resolution**

UKPDA encourages complainants to seek informal resolution wherever possible before making a formal complaint. In many cases, concerns can be resolved quickly through direct discussion with the relevant staff member, tutor, department, or service area concerned.

At this stage, the complainant should raise the matter verbally or in writing with the appropriate individual or department within ten working days of the incident. The staff member receiving the concern is responsible for listening to the issue, clarifying facts, and attempting resolution promptly.

Informal complaints should normally be resolved within five working days from the date they are raised.

If the matter is resolved at this stage, no further action is required.

- **Formal Complaint Submission**

Where informal resolution is unsuccessful, inappropriate, or not possible, the complainant may submit a formal written complaint.

The formal complaint must include the nature of the complaint, relevant dates, persons involved, details of any attempts at informal resolution, and supporting evidence where applicable. Complaints must be submitted to the designated Complaints Officer or authorised administrative representative.

Upon receipt, UKPDA will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five working days.

The Complaints Officer is responsible for reviewing the complaint, determining whether it falls within policy scope, and assigning it for investigation.

- **Investigation and Outcome**

A formal investigation will be undertaken by an appointed investigating officer who has had no direct prior involvement in the matter, where possible. The investigating officer is responsible for gathering evidence, reviewing documentation, interviewing relevant parties, and establishing findings objectively.

The investigation will normally be completed within twenty working days of acknowledgement of the complaint. Where the matter is complex and requires additional time, the complainant will be informed in writing of the delay and revised timescale.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant will receive a written outcome stating:

- The findings of the investigation,
- Whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld,
- Any corrective action or recommendations arising.

- **Internal Review and Appeal Against Complaint Outcome**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the formal outcome, they may request an internal review within ten working days of receiving the decision.

The request must clearly explain the grounds for dissatisfaction, such as procedural irregularity, failure to consider evidence, or unreasonable conclusions.

The internal review will be conducted by a senior officer not involved in the original investigation. The reviewing officer is responsible for examining whether the complaint process was properly followed and whether the decision was reasonable based on available evidence.

A final internal review decision will normally be issued within fifteen working days and shall represent UKPDA's final internal position.

## **6. Responsibilities of Those Involved**

The complainant is responsible for submitting clear, honest, and timely information supported by relevant evidence. Staff members receiving complaints are responsible for responding professionally, cooperating fully with investigations, and maintaining confidentiality. The Complaints Officer is responsible for registering complaints, coordinating investigations, monitoring timelines, and maintaining complaint records. Investigating officers are responsible for impartial fact-finding, evidence review, and preparing written findings. Senior management is responsible for overseeing policy compliance, reviewing escalated complaints where required, and monitoring trends for quality improvement.

## **7. Escalation Beyond UKPDA**

A complaint may only be escalated externally after all stages of UKPDA's internal complaints process have been fully exhausted.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving the final internal review decision, they may refer the matter to the relevant external awarding or regulatory body where applicable.

External escalation must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Failure to follow the published procedure,
2. Procedural unfairness,
3. Evidence of maladministration,
4. Failure to reasonably address the complaint.

UKPDA will guide the appropriate escalation route where external referral is permitted. No complaint will be considered externally unless internal procedures have first been completed.

## **8. Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in resolving the matter.

UKPDA maintains accurate records of all complaints, including submitted evidence, correspondence, investigation findings, decisions, and outcomes. Records are securely retained in line with institutional retention and data protection requirements.

Complaint records are reviewed periodically to identify recurring issues and support continuous service improvement.

## **9. Policy Compliance**

All learners and staff are required to comply with this policy. Failure to cooperate with complaint investigations, misuse of the complaints process, or submission of malicious complaints may result in disciplinary or procedural action under relevant UKPDA regulations.