

Complaints Policy



SafeCert Awards Ltd
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Introduction

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from SafeCert Awards Ltd (SafeCert).

We value all the centres delivering our qualifications and the learners who undertake them and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of our customers.

We are confident of providing a high quality service and would be extremely disappointed if this is not the case.

Therefore, it is important should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both yours and our expectations that you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn lessons.

Scope

This policy covers complaints learners, members of the public or centres may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by SafeCert.

It is not to be used to cover enquiries about services offered by SafeCert or appeals in relation to decisions made by SafeCert. These areas are covered by our Enquires and Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered in accordance with our Enquiries and Appeals policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice may have occurred, you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice Policy.

Centre's responsibility

We suggest that centre staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, along with your learners, are aware of the content of the policy and that your centre has a complaints handling procedure and appeals process in place to deal with issues raised by learners about the services provided by your centre.

Further Education Colleges and Local Authority Centres in Scotland are required to follow the guidance provided by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). See contact details in Appendix A.

Review arrangements

We'll review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback (eg to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the regulators) and any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of complaints received.

If you would like to provide feedback on your experience, please contact us via the details provided below.

How should I complain?

Our staff have been trained to help our customers, so you should first try to sort out any problem at the earliest opportunity by speaking to the person who dealt with you.

If they cannot help or you wish to speak to someone else, you can ask to speak to the office manager.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the manager, please send a written complaint, normally within one month of the event you are complaining about, and address it to us at the contact details outlined at the end of policy.

Learners and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by the centre at which they have taken a SafeCert qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to us. However, learners can make the complaint directly to SafeCert in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a significant breach by the centre of our various procedures.

If I complain what details do I have to give?

When you contact us, please give us your full name, contact details including a daytime telephone number along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known);
- any names of the people you have dealt with so far;
- copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

Where the regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain if the same issue could affect SafeCert's qualifications.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, and if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity. If it helps to reassure you on this point, we can confirm that we are not obliged (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the complaint/allegation relates. At all times we will investigate such complaints from whistleblowers in accordance with relevant whistle blowing legislation.

What will happen to my complaint?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours (two working Days), letting you know who is investigating your complaint.

We aim to investigate the complaint within 5 working days. If your complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, we may extend this to 10 working days. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

If any part of your complaint is upheld we will of course respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements. For example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our arrangements and assessment process (if relevant) or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behavior of our staff is deemed in appropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been successful and indicates a failure in our assessment processes we will as appropriate take actions such as:

- (a) identify any other learner who has been affected by that failure,
- (b) correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- (c) ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you disagree with the decision the first point of contact is the Office Manager to make us aware of your disagreement.

We will organize a review of the proceedings to ensure that we have followed the processes and procedures correctly. If the processes and procedures have been followed the outcome will stand.

Once all of these stages have been exhausted and if you still disagree with the decision taken by SafeCert you may wish to contact the qualification regulator in relation to the outcome.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact our Office manager on Tel: 0845 500 2 100 or Email: info@safecertawards.com

SafeCert Awards Ltd,
38 Main Street, Gortin, BT79 8PH
Fax: 0845 500 2 101

If the case is still unresolved, you may wish to contact the appropriate qualification regulator.

For our centers operating in Scotland

SQA Accreditation
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ
Tel: 0345 213 5249
E-mail: accreditation@sqa.org.uk
Website: <https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home>

For our centers operating in Northern Ireland

CCEA Regulation
29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast, BT1 3BG
Tel: +44 (0)2890 261200 fax: +44 (0)2890 261234
E-mail: info@ccea.org.uk www.ccea.org.uk

Appendix A

Information for approved centres in Scotland

Contact details for the SPSO

On line: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form/start/>

By phone: Freephone **0800 377 7330** or call 0131 225 5300

In Person: if you would like to visit us in person, you must arrange an appointment first by phoning 0800 377 7330.

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

We are open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9am-5pm; Tuesday 10am-5pm.

We do not offer home visits as part of our investigation process. However, we will make reasonable adjustments if deemed appropriate.

By Post: Freepost SPSO

SPSO information for Centres

Website: <http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/>