



Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy

Introduction

DRL Services Ltd (“DRL”) is committed to providing high-quality training and services to all learners, employers and partner organisations. We welcome complaints, concerns and appeals as opportunities to learn, adapt and continuously improve. All matters will be handled promptly, fairly, consistently and with due regard to confidentiality.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on DRL programmes, all employers and partner organisations, and all staff, contractors and associates acting on behalf of DRL. It covers complaints about any aspect of DRL’s services or training delivery, and appeals against academic or assessment decisions. It applies equally across online and face-to-face delivery contexts.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following DRL policies; this document does not repeat their content:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy

Raising a Complaint

DRL aims to resolve most concerns informally and promptly. The procedure below sets out the stages available to learners, employers and partner organisations.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

In the first instance, concerns should be raised directly with the Tutor or a member of the management team. DRL will aim to resolve the matter immediately and a discussion record will be completed. This stage applies to all parties, including employers and partner organisations.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

Where a concern cannot be resolved at Stage 1, or where it is not appropriate to raise the matter informally, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the Training Manager by email to info@drlservices.co.uk with the subject line “COMPLAINT”.

DRL will log the complaint, acknowledge receipt and initiate a full investigation. A written response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt.

Stage 3 – Escalation to Managing Director

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 2, the matter may be escalated in writing to the Managing Director at engagement@drlservices.co.uk, clearly stating why the response is unsatisfactory and including any further information. A full and final response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt. The Managing Director's decision is final in respect of DRL's internal process.

External Escalation – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

Where a complaint relates to government-funded delivery and the complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting DRL's internal process, the matter may be referred to the DfE. Complaints must be submitted to the DfE within 12 months of the issue arising. The DfE does not handle employment complaints. Details of the DfE complaints process are available at www.gov.uk.

Awarding Organisation and Qualification Regulator

Where a complaint relates to assessment, verification, centre approval or certification, the relevant Awarding Organisation's own complaints and appeals procedures apply. DRL cannot confirm that a qualification will be issued until the Awarding Organisation has standardised and verified the outcome. Any views expressed by DRL staff prior to external verification represent a qualified opinion only and do not constitute a guarantee. DRL accepts no liability where any external agreement dependent on a qualification outcome has been entered into prior to external verification.

If dissatisfied with the Awarding Organisation's response, the matter may be escalated to the relevant Qualification Regulator; this information will be provided by the Awarding Organisation upon request. Details of the relevant Awarding Organisation for any programme are available from info@drlservices.co.uk.

Appeals Against Academic Decisions

A learner who believes that an academic or assessment decision was not made in accordance with programme regulations, or that the correct process was not followed, may appeal. An appeal may be raised on the following grounds:

- DRL has not applied its own procedures consistently, or procedures were not followed properly or fairly.
- The conduct of the assessment disadvantaged the learner.
- The assessment environment or conditions disadvantaged the learner.

In the first instance, the learner should raise the matter with their Tutor. Where this does not resolve it, a formal written appeal should be submitted to the Training Manager by email to info@drlservices.co.uk with the subject line "APPEAL". The appeal should clearly state the decision being challenged and the grounds for appeal.

Where a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made during a complaint investigation, the complaint escalation process set out above applies.

Appeal Timescales

DRL will acknowledge receipt of a written appeal within seven working days and will aim to resolve it within 28 days. Each case will be considered on its merits. DRL will consult with relevant organisations, including the Awarding Organisation, where appropriate.

If the learner remains dissatisfied following DRL’s appeal decision, they may contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Details are available from info@drlservices.co.uk.

Confidentiality and Conduct

All complaints and appeals will be handled confidentially. The privacy of all parties will be respected; however, it may be necessary to share relevant information with others in order to investigate the matter effectively, and parties will be informed if this is the case.

No learner, employer or partner organisation will suffer disadvantage or recrimination as a result of raising a complaint or appeal in good faith. Where a complaint or appeal is judged to have been made frivolously, aggressively or with malice, DRL may take action under the relevant policy. Where a party is invited to discuss a complaint or appeal, they may be accompanied by a friend or colleague acting in a non-legal capacity.

Cooperation of Staff

All staff are required to cooperate fully with any complaint or appeal investigation. Failure to do so will be addressed under the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

Records and Continuous Improvement

DRL maintains records of all complaints and appeals, including outcomes and any actions taken. These are reviewed regularly to identify trends and inform continuous improvement. Findings are discussed at management meetings and are incorporated into the quality review cycle as set out in the Quality Assurance Policy.

Compliance

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current and accurately reflects DRL’s practices and all relevant requirements. All staff are responsible for being familiar with this policy and for applying it consistently, fairly and in a timely manner.

Policy Record Details

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