

Complaints Procedure

As a part of its commitment to ensuring the standard and quality of its training and assessments, Ash Training has established this procedure to deal with complaints given in confidence from its clients and delegates.

This complaints procedure sets out the process for handling complaints concerning training, training materials, assessments, awarding and certification.

This complaints procedure does not cover **appeals, mitigation, academic misconduct**, or the receipt of any anonymous complaints, which are covered by separate procedures.

Ash Training will treat all complaints seriously and will deal with them without recrimination. Where, however, a complaint is shown to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, action may be taken against the complainant.

First Stage: Informal

1. If clients and delegates wish to raise a complaint they should contact Ash Training immediately, disclosing all relevant information, in order that the matter may be resolved speedily without need for engaging in a formal process.
2. Clients and delegates will receive an acknowledgement via email within five days of complaints received by Ash Training and can expect a reply within fifteen days. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

Second Stage: Formal

3. A client or delegate may initiate a formal complaint by sending an email or letter stating that they are making a formal complaint. The information required to support the complaint is as follows:
 - a) details of the complaint;
 - b) a statement of the steps already taken to try to resolve the complaint informally and why the response has not been considered to be satisfactory;
 - c) form of resolution or redress sought.

Formal procedures can be invoked where you feel that the informal approach has not resolved matters satisfactorily.

4. Ash Training will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within five working days and will determine whether the complaint should be dealt with by the Ash Training or whether the complaint should more appropriately be investigated by a partner organisation.
5. Should any meetings take place, the complainant is allowed to be accompanied by a person of their choice or a member of staff from either the booking client or Ash Training.
6. The Investigator will attempt resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstances.

7. It is expected that the formal procedure should normally be completed and a written response sent to the delegate within twenty working days of receipt of the complaint. The possible outcomes at this stage include:
- a) a resolution, reached in co-operation with Ash Training, or following mediation if appropriate
 - b) provision to the delegate of information in explanation of the circumstances which led to the complaint
 - c) referral of the matter to Highfield Awarding Body if the complaint raises serious or complex matters that require further investigation and enquiry
 - d) dismissal of the complaint as being without foundation, with reasons given to the complainant in writing.

Review

8. If the client or delegate believes that the complaint has not been handled fairly or properly, they may request a review by writing to Ash Training within ten working days of receipt of the formal response and can expect an acknowledgement in writing within five working days.
9. The request should include details of why the delegate remains dissatisfied and what resolution they are seeking, and should include copies of correspondence exchanged during the preceding stages, and any other relevant papers.
10. In the course of the review, Ash Training will scrutinise all relevant documentation and may decide to seek further information from the complainant or more widely. Taking account of previous decisions about the complaint, the Ash Training will then decide on an appropriate course of action that could include:
- a) specific action to resolve the matter
 - b) referral to Highfield Awarding Body / NCFE Awarding Body
 - c) referral to the NMC & / or RCN
 - d) dismissal of the complaint as being without foundation, in which case reasons will be given to the candidate in writing and there will be no further opportunity for pursuit of the complaint within the Ash Training.

The client or delegate should be notified of the Ash Training decision within twenty working days of receipt of the request for Review.

External Assessment Investigation

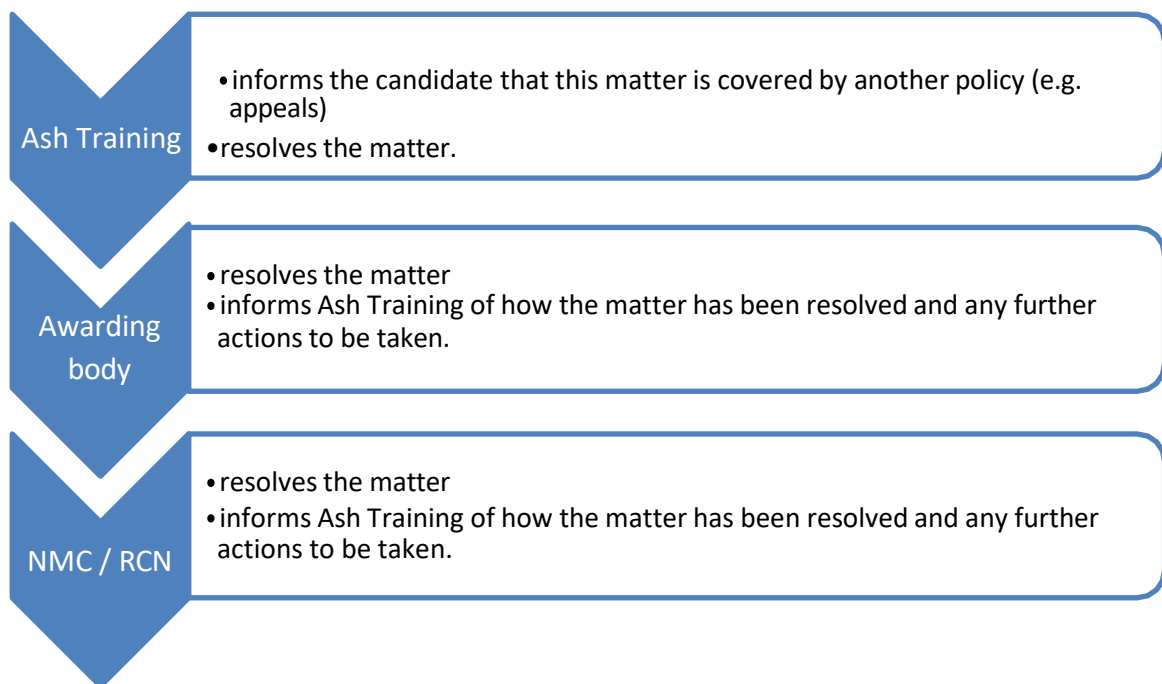
11. Where the matter is referred to our awarding body, NMC or RCN they will consider the substance of the complaint and the way in which the complaint had been handled in earlier stages.
12. The investigation by our awarding body, NMC or RCN will be handled by an individual who is not involved in the original complaint or its subsequent investigations.
13. Outcomes of the meeting may include:
 - a) the complaint is upheld, and recommendations are given relating to quality assurance or other procedural/ policy requirements and any appropriate redress to the complainant
 - b) the complaint is not upheld and the candidate is informed in writing with reasons for its dismissal.

The client or delegate will be notified of the conclusions and recommendations from our awarding body, NMC or RCN with reasons, which will be sent in writing.

An annual report relating to complaints will be performed, as a part of the annual review process.

In the first instance, the issue is raised by the candidate with Ash Training, who will either:

- (i) attempt to resolve the complaint themselves
 - (ii) pass the complaint to the relevant external body.
- If there is a failure to achieve satisfaction through the first process, the candidate may pursue the complaint through a formal process. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with by the formal process and can offer no guarantee of confidentiality.
 - The candidate must contact Ash Training with a request for a formal procedure for dealing with the complaint and must supply all relevant information necessary for the investigation of the complaint.
 - Consideration must be given to the possibility that the complaint is vexatious or malicious. Where it is acknowledged that the complaint is neither malicious nor vexatious, an investigation by Ash Training will commence.



Flow chart defining the process for dealing with issues relating to Ash Training; training, assessment, certification and awarding