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<b>Author / developer</b>	EPAO Assurance and Delivery Officer
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## EPAO Complaints Policy

### 1. Purpose and Scope

Awarding UK is the end-point assessment service based within Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU).

The following is the Awarding UK policy for dealing with complaints by an Employer, Training Provider or Learner in relation to an end-point assessment.

This policy outlines the process for Learners who have undertaken or are undertaking an end-point assessment with Awarding UK, or Employers and Training Providers who wish to make a complaint about the service provided by Awarding UK. It is not to be used to cover enquiries regarding appeals in relation to assessment decisions made by Awarding UK. That is covered in the Appeals Procedure for end-point assessment.

Awarding UK aims to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interest of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. Awarding UK works to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly considered.

Awarding UK aims to handle complaints in a manner which:

- encourages informal conciliation nearest to the source of the complaint;
- is efficient and fair;
- treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, empathy and confidentiality;
- facilitates early resolution;
- where relevant, ensures that its practice improves as a result.

### 2. Definitions

An **'informal complaint'** is defined as an issue that an Employer, Training Provider or Learner wishes to raise with a member of Awarding UK staff, without using the formal complaints process. Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.

A **'complaint'** is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about Awarding UK's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of Awarding UK'.

The process, by responsibility, for raising a complaint by an Employer, Training Provider or Learner is detailed below and in Annex A.

### 3. Stage1: informal complaints

Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant staff member at the source of the complaint, or via the [enquiries@awardinguk.com](mailto:enquiries@awardinguk.com) email address. The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated, that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner.

If the Employer, Training Provider or Learner is unable to raise the complaint at the source, or is dissatisfied with the outcome, they should raise the complaint to the Assurance and Delivery Officer as an informal complaint prior to Stage 2 formal complaint (see Stage 2 below).

Acknowledgement of the complaint will be provided within 5 working days, and a full response given within four weeks.

Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to the Employer, Training Provider or Learner as complainant, copying in the EPAO Manager, who will record the details of all informal Employer, Training Provider or Learner complaints.

#### **4. Stage 2: Formal complaints**

To make a formal complaint an Employer, Training Provider or Learner should put the matter in writing to Awarding UK by email to [enquiries@awardinguk.com](mailto:enquiries@awardinguk.com). The email should be titled as a complaint, and set out the details of the complaint in full and what would be an appropriate resolution.

Awarding UK will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days, and the complaint will be forwarded to an 'Investigating Officer' who has not been previously involved with the complaint. The Investigating Officer will normally be a member of the Awarding UK delivery team, or the EPAO Responsible Officer, or be of equivalent seniority.

The Investigating Officer will review all information submitted, and meet with relevant members of staff to review the complaint. The Investigating Officer will also speak with the Employer, Training Provider or Learner complainant to clarify facts where required. As part of the process, mediation may be offered to resolve the complaint. If mediation is offered, revised timescales for the resolution of the complaint will be agreed in writing between Awarding UK and the complainant.

A written response relating to the findings of the inquiry will be issued by the Investigating Officer within a maximum of four weeks from the date of receipt of the original complaint.

If the Employer, Training Provider or Learner complainant is not satisfied with the action taken, they may proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

#### **5. Stage 3: Review**

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the response provided by Awarding UK at Stage 2, they should request a referral of their complaint to the Bishop Grosseteste University Registrar, who will consider the complaint for review where:

- there was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the complaint procedures;
- clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the Formal Stage have not been effectively communicated to the complainant;

- new evidence is now available which was not available upon reasonable enquiry or application at the time of the investigation during the Formal Stage;
- the decision reached was of such nature that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

The Review Stage will not normally consider issues afresh or involve further investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the Formal Stage before it can be escalated to the Review Stage.

The Registrar may dismiss a complaint in writing to the complainant within 10 working days. In such cases, a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued by the Bishop Grosseteste University Governance and Compliance Office.

If the Registrar considers the complaint to be well founded, they will allocate a request for review to a senior member of the University, normally a member of the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG), who has had no previous involvement with the case. The Registrar will normally respond to the complainant within 10 working days, detailing the process for the Review Stage and confirming the identity and contact details of the member of VCEG who will be conducting the Review.

When the review has been undertaken the Employer will be issued with a letter/report from the VCEG member detailing the final decision. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, information will be provided on how and when the University will implement any remedies where appropriate and whether this includes an apology.

The Review Stage should normally be completed within 21 working days. Where there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescales at the Review Stage then the complainant should be notified in writing of the reason for the delay and the revised timescale for bringing the review to a conclusion.

The outcome of the Review stage represents the Final Stage of Awarding UK and the University's internal procedures. The Employer will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter by the Governance & Compliance Office within 28 working days of the conclusion of the Review. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be directed to pursue the matter through the procedures of the External Quality Assurance Organisation (EQAO) – the details of which will be included in the Completion of Procedures letter.

**Annex A  
Complaints Process**

