

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Introduction

Crossfields Learning has comprehensive quality assurance procedures. In the event that these systems fail a complaint or appeal may be made by a learner or their representative.

The aim is:

- To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision or make a complaint in relation to the qualification or associated activities
- To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor or centre at the earliest opportunity
- To review and record any complaint or appeal to ensure openness and fairness
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of complaint or appeal to the awarding organisation, where appropriate
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification

In order to do this Crossfields Learning will:

- Inform the learner at induction of the Complaints and Appeals Policy and procedure.
- Record, track and review any complaint or appeal
- Forward the complaint or appeal to Crossfields Institute when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal complaints or appeals process has been exhausted
- Keep complaints and appeals records for inspection by Crossfields Institute for a minimum of 18 months
- Have a staged complaints and appeals procedure
- Take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results
- Monitor complaints and appeals to inform quality improvement

Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Complaints

If a learner has a complaint or grievance about any matter, academic or non-academic, he or she is encouraged to raise the matter at an early stage with an appropriate member of staff. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the learner may take the matter to the Programme Director or Head of Centre.

Learners are encouraged to approach the person/people in question for an informal discussion. The usual first person to discuss a complaint with would be the learner's tutor, mentor, supervisor or assessor. This should normally happen within two weeks of the cause for complaint.

If the learner feels that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily they are asked to write a letter stating the problem and details of any discussion taken with a tutor, mentor, supervisor or assessor and addressed this letter to the Head of Centre or Programme Director.

The letter will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt and a written response will be sent back to the learner within 5 working days. The learner may be invited to a meeting to discuss their complaint and the proposed resolution.

If the learner is not satisfied with the response they can raise the complaint with Crossfields Awarding. Crossfields Institute will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days, letting the learner know who is investigating their complaint.

A relevant member of Crossfields Institute staff will lead the investigation and establish whether or not there is cause for complaint and if appropriate response has been made by the centre. Crossfields Institute will ensure that personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and that they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

Crossfields Institute aim to investigate the complaint within 5 working days. If the complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, they may need to extend this. Crossfields Institute may contact the learner or staff within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances they may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation Crossfields Institute will write/email to inform the learner and centre of their decision.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made concerning your complaint or you wish to make an appeal against an assessment decision/mark, you may appeal the decision by notifying the Programme Director or Head of Centre in writing within 20 working days of the decision you are appealing, giving full details of why you wish to appeal. If you need more time, you should notify the Programme Director or Head of Centre within the 20 working day period.

The Programme Director or Head of Centre will appoint a suitable person to investigate your appeal. (S)he may call for copies of all relevant documents. The appointed person may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss your appeal and will inform you in reasonable time of the timing and the location of the meeting. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. You have the right to be accompanied: a colleague or friend may accompany you to the appeal meeting.

The person who is appointed to consider your appeal will look at:

- Whether there are grounds for upholding your appeal
- Whether the decision was taken fairly and correctly in accordance with the qualification specification and Centre's policy and procedures
- Whether all the appropriate information was taken into account

The appointed person's decision is final and will be confirmed to you in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your appeal within (the centre), you may contact Crossfields Institute for more information on how to pursue your complaint or appeal. Please go to www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/resources.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Programme Director or Head of Centre will:

- Make sure that all the points you raise are properly and impartially considered, and that there is no potential conflict of interest
- Explain the outcome clearly, and ensure that you know what further steps are open to you
- Allow a colleague or friend to accompany you to any hearing
- Respect confidentiality by disclosing only the information that is necessary to consider and respond to your appeal, and only to staff who need it for those purposes

The appointed person may rule that there are no grounds for the appeal to be considered, and you will then be advised accordingly. Once your appeal has been considered you will be sent a reply directly from the person appointed to consider your case.

Following the outcome of your appeal, if you remain dissatisfied, you can ask the Awarding Organisation to review your case.

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by Crossfields Learning's Director and/or Head of Centre.

