

TITLE: Customer Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy and Procedure CUSTOMER	REF:CP001	VERSION:5
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VERSION	REVIEWER/APPROVAL	REVIEW NOTES
3. 24/03/2015	Governance/Quality Group	Full Review
4. 22/09/2015	Governance	Detail added to scope section
5. 26/10/2016	Group Executive Team	Changes to the procedure.following restructure to faculties

CUSTOMER COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Statement

Activate Learning aims to become renowned for achieving a high level of customer satisfaction and is committed to continually innovating and improving services for all its customers.

Activate Learning recognises the value of customer feedback and seeks out comments and suggestions that give insight into the customer experience and so inform service design and assist in achieving its goal of continuous improvement.

Where a customer feels that the service does not meet their expectations, there are customer-friendly processes for making a complaint. In recognising the potential to turn complainants into advocates, Activate Learning places great importance on complaint resolution. All employees are encouraged to take responsibility for resolving all informal complaints immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant. Where a complaint becomes formal, this will be resolved efficiently and within the specified time scales. Should a complainant not be satisfied with the resolution proposed, s/he has a right to appeal.

Purpose

To provide a clear and consistent framework for dealing with comments, suggestions and complaints so that they can be monitored and reviewed to ensure continuous improvement.

Scope

This policy covers all comments, suggestions and complaints by all Activate Learning customers, this includes customers from the colleges, higher education and Activate Enterprise.

Definitions

A comment/suggestion is an idea relating to a possible improvement in the customer experience.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on our behalf.

Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and follow all relevant policies and procedures.

Managers and directors are responsible for investigating and resolving complaints according to the timescales set out in the complaints procedure.

The Activate Learning group is responsible for the central overview of complaints and for monitoring compliance with standards. This is administered by the Group Administration service, under leadership of the Group Administration Manager.

The Group Director of Marketing and Customer Experience has group overview of comments, suggestions and complaints, monitors these for emerging themes and learning points and reports to the Group Executive Team on key trends.



COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To capture comments, suggestions and complaints in a consistent format to ensure that complaints are resolved quickly and satisfactorily and to enable the group to monitor customer satisfaction and make continuous improvements.

2.0 Complaints Process

Informal Customer Complaints

- 2.1 Most complaints can be resolved informally by discussing the issue with the person directly involved and taking immediate action to rectify any problem. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage, it will need to be progressed to the formal stage.
- 2.2 All informal complaints, along with details of the resolution, are passed to the Group Administration service for logging on the Complaint Tracker in order to extract learning points.

Formal Customer Complaints

- 2.3 If informal discussions do not resolve the problem, or if the complaint is raised in writing in any format, the complaint is deemed to be formal. It is logged on a Complaint Tracker by the Group Administration Manager and acknowledged within five working days of receipt.
- 2.4 If the formal complaint is received by a member of staff, s/he will pass the complaint to the Group Administration Manager to ensure that it is logged and responded to within the five day service standard.

- 2.5 In formulating the complaint, the complainant can be helped and accompanied by another student of Activate Learning, a member of the Students' Union or a member of staff.
- 2.6 Activate Learning will investigate complaints notified within three months of the incident giving rise to the complaint.
- 2.7 The Group Administration Manager ensures that the complaint is passed to the relevant manager for investigation.
- 2.8 The investigating manager sends a resolution of the complaint to the complainant within 10 working days of the acknowledgement.
- 2.9 If the investigating manager is unlikely to resolve the complaint within 10 working days of the acknowledgement, they will inform the Group Administration Manager who will keep the complainant informed of progress together with expected timescales for resolution.
- 2.10 If the complaint is against the corporation, a board member or the clerk to the corporation, the Procedure for Complaints against the Corporation, Board Members and the Clerk will be followed.
- 2.11 A complaint regarding the response to a Freedom of Information request is dealt with by the Clerk to the Corporation under the Procedure for Complaints against the Corporation, Board Members and the Clerk.

3.0 Appeals

- 3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the manager investigating the complaint, the complainant can appeal. The appeal is escalated to the relevant member of the Group Executive Team who assigns a director not associated with the case to carry out an independent investigation to review and seek a resolution.
- 3.2 Appeals must be made within 15 days of the response to the complaint.
- 3.3 The appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- 3.4 The investigator will consider all aspects of the complaint. The findings of the review will be communicated within 15 working days. If the review is complex and likely to exceed this timescale, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.
- 3.5 Following the conclusion of the appeals process, complainants will be issued a Completion of Procedure letter.
- 3.6 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the final recourse is to appeal to the Group Chief Executive.

4.0 Comments and Suggestions

- 4.1 All comments and suggestions are logged centrally by the Group Administration service, along with the actions that have resulted from the comment or suggestion.

5.0 Continuous Improvement

- 5.1 Activate Learning keeps one central log of all comments and suggestions and one central Complaints Tracker.
- 5.2 In order that we can ensure continuous improvement, the process and procedure is monitored for consistency, quality of response and compliance. The leadership team reviews and discusses suggestions and complaints together with the Corporation on an annual basis.
- 5.3 Reports on the outcomes of formal complaints are produced by the Director of Marketing and Customer Experience and are made available to managers providing a valuable input into the self-assessment reporting process.

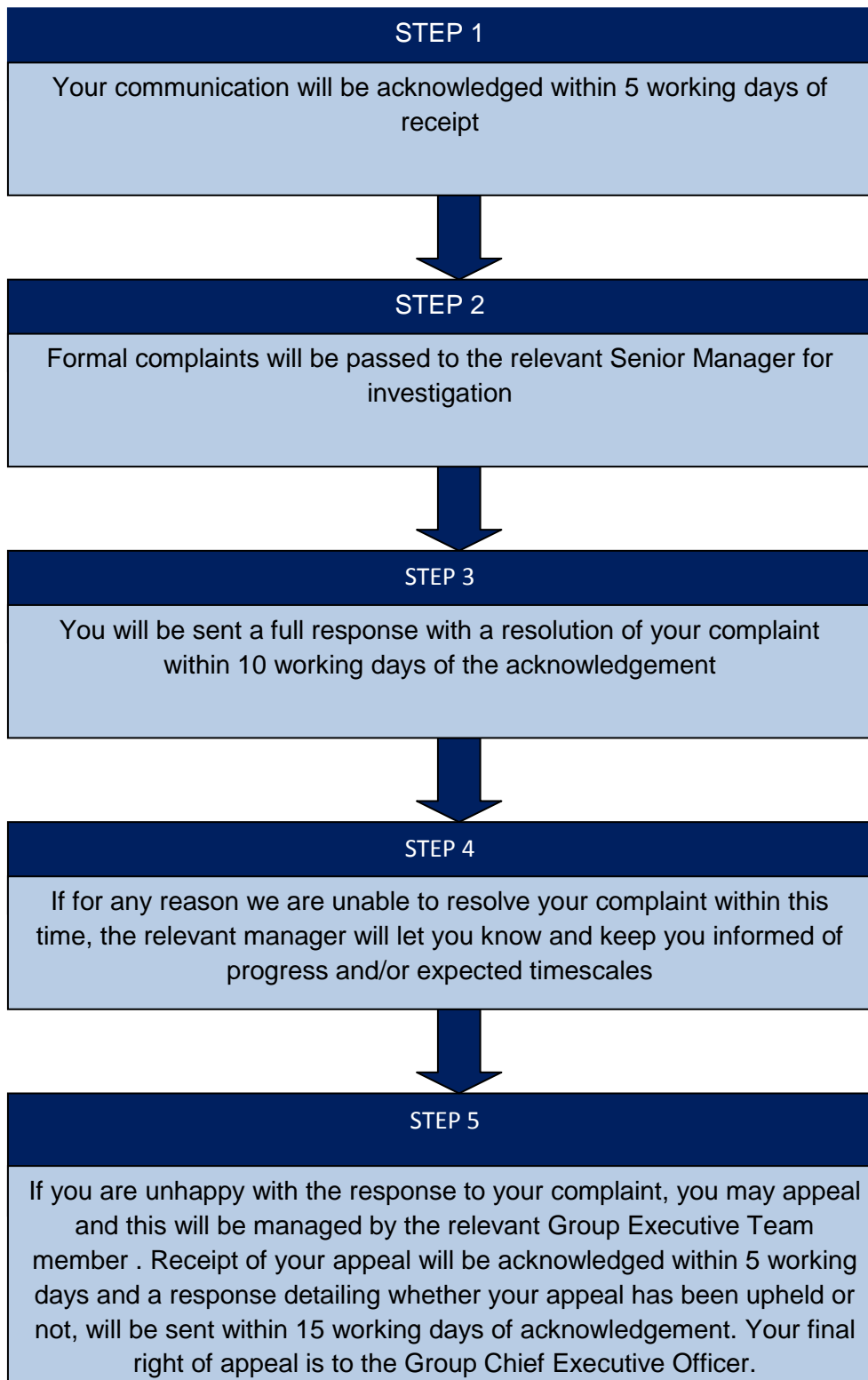
6.0 Independent Review

- 6.1 In those rare cases where the internal complaints procedure has not resolved the matter, and depending on its nature, the following external organisations may review unresolved issues:

Contact	Area	Contact Details
Ofsted Complaints	Nurseries Only	enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
University partners	University awarding bodies provide an opportunity for students to avail themselves of the university complaints procedure.	
Office of the independent adjudicator (OIA – Higher Education)	The OIA for Higher Education provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity for an independent review by the OIA must submit their application within 3 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter.	www.oia.org.uk
Education Funding Agency	Students up to the age of 18 years	www.gov.uk
Skills Funding Agency (SFA)	The SFA can investigate complaints about quality or management of learning provision, undue delay or non-compliance with published procedures, poor administration by the Provider, equality and diversity issues (except where there is a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with the matter	www.gov.uk

	through the court or tribunal or other organisations), health and safety concerns and complaints made by learners following HE courses in FE colleges.	
National Apprenticeship Agency	Students on traineeships and apprenticeships	www.apprenticeships.org.uk
National Union of Students	Students recognised union representation	www.nus.org.uk
Information Commissioners Office (ICO)	The ICO can investigate the results of your internal appeal regarding Freedom of Information requests.	https://ico.org.uk Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (National rate number)

Appendix 1 - COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS STEP BY STEP GUIDE



Appendix 2

COMPLAINTS ADMINISTRATION OFFICE CONTACTS

Location/Contact	Telephone	Email	Address
Activate Enterprise	01865 550550	Feedback@Activate-Enterprise.co.uk	Group Administration Office Activate Learning, City of Oxford College, Oxpens Road Oxford OX1 1SA
Activate Learning	01865 550550	Feedback@ActivateLearning.ac.uk	Group Administration Office Activate Learning, City of Oxford College, Oxpens Road Oxford OX1 1SA
Higher Education	01865 550550	HE@ActivateLearning.ac.uk	Group Administration Office Activate Learning, City of Oxford College, Oxpens Road Oxford OX1 1SA
Clerk to the Corporation	01865 550550	Clerk@ActivateLearning.ac.uk	Clerk to the Corporation Activate Learning, City of Oxford College, Oxpens Road Oxford OX1 1SA