

Complaints Procedure for Employers of Apprentices

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Introduction

This document explains the procedure for making a complaint about services or facilities provided by the University for employers of apprentices. The University has a separate complaints procedure for students, which can be found on the University website (www.chi.ac.uk).

The University intends to manage complaints in a manner which:

- Encourages informal and early resolution;
- Is efficient and fair;
- Ensures our services improve as a result.

Complaints will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence, with due regard to any applicable legislation. In determining whether a complaint is justified or not, the standard of proof is on the 'balance of probability' rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. Where a matter is raised under this procedure but required referral on to another procedure such as a staff disciplinary procedure, for example, the employer will be advised.

This procedure does not replace any rights of the employer relating to any contractual agreements between the University and employer.

Definitions

An 'informal complaint' is defined as a matter an employer wishes to raise with a member of staff without using the formal complaints procedure.

A 'formal complaint' is a written statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

A 'review' is a request for a consideration of any outcome reached through the formal complaints procedure.

Guide to making a complaint

Stage 1 – informal complaints

Where possible, complaints should be notified to the relevant academic department or via the Apprenticeships Manager (Holly Hart, h.hart@chi.ac.uk) as the University's aim is to resolve the complaint as directly and informally as possible. Contact details are also included in your Commitment Statement and in your written agreement with the university. Acknowledgement of the complaint will be given within 48 hours and a full response provided within ten working days. If the employer is dissatisfied with the outcome, a formal complaint should be made.

Stage 2 – formal complaint

To make a formal complaint, the matter should be put in writing to the Director of Quality and Standards (Katie Akerman, k.akerman@chi.ac.uk). This notification should set out the matter in full, with any available evidence, and an indication of the sought resolution. The complaint will be acknowledged within 48 hours and a full response provided within 15 working days.

An Investigating Officer will be appointed, who has not previously been involved with the complaint, and will review the complaint. Mediation may be offered to resolve the matter, which may result in revised timescales, which will be communicated to the employer.

Stage 3 – review

If the employer is not satisfied with the outcome, a review may be requested by the employer. The University will appoint an independent reviewer to ascertain that procedures were correctly followed, as articulated. The complaint will not be re-investigated unless new evidence is provided.

Stage 4 – complaints (ESFA)

If after exhausting this process, the employer is still dissatisfied they may wish to take their complaint to the complaints adjudicator at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Please note that ESFA will not usually investigate complaints more than 12 months following the original decision. The ESFA cannot re-investigate a complaint you have made to the university. They will review whether we have investigated your original complaint in line with our procedure.

The ESFA Guide to making a complaint can be found on GOV.UK :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>

The employer may raise issues, concerns or complaints with the ESFA through the apprenticeship helpdesk:

08000 150400 or email nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

The University will record and review all complaints procedures to enable improvements to be made to its services and facilities.