

## Our Responsibilities

We are committed to providing a high-quality service for our learners, clients and the community we serve. We will process legitimate complaints in a fair, prompt and objective manner. Complaints will be dealt with without recrimination and learners will not be disadvantaged by raising a complaint.

We will be fair in the treatment of all those who complain irrespective of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, race, pregnancy/maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly and constructively. All complaints will be treated with confidence but shared with any person who may be the subject of a complaint. The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any staff involved. Complaints which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious may result in disciplinary action.

## Scope of Complaints Procedure

The Procedure deals with complaints arising from:

- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of services for education and training including course content, tutoring, assessment, feedback on progress and learner support during learning programmes.
- Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the Blackford Centre.
- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of support services provided by the Blackford Centre including administration of fees, enrolment processes and learner resource services.
- Unacceptable actions or behaviour by the Blackford Centre staff.

### Separate procedures exist for:

- Assessment appeals. See: [inst.org/policies](http://inst.org/policies) > Appeals Procedure.

## How to complain

If you would like to make a complaint or discuss any other failing on our part, please email [support@inst.org](mailto:support@inst.org). We will deal with your request promptly. If the issue relates to your tutor, we will contact your tutor and try and resolve the complaint. If the

complaint relates to any other aspect of the service you have received from us, we will likewise seek to resolve it.

If the Support Team is unable to resolve the issue, or you are dissatisfied with the resolution, we will send your complaint to Kit Sadgrove, the CEO.

### **Informal resolution of complaints**

Most complaints should be resolved by discussion between the complainant and the appropriate member of staff. The initial complaint should be made in writing and the member of staff receiving the complaint should respond within 10 working days, orally or in writing.

It is expected that staff will be tactful and courteous in dealing with a complaint. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, they should then be guided to using the formal procedure.

### **Formal Procedure**

A formal complaint should be made in writing within 15 working days of an incident or action from which the complaint arises, or from the date when the complainant received a written reply to an informal complaint (see above). Please complete the form on the website <https://www.inst.org/appeals.htm>.

In exceptional circumstances, a longer period will be considered. The complaint should be sent to the CEO Kit Sadgrove. If the complaint involves the CEO an alternative senior manager will be appointed to manage the process. The complaint will be logged and its receipt will be acknowledged to the complainant within 5 working days.

The CEO will carry out an initial assessment of the complaint within 5 working days. In most cases, complaints will be referred to the appropriate staff for investigation and report. More serious or unusual complaints will be investigated personally by the CEO.

An appropriate member of staff will carry out an investigation of the complaint and may interview the complainant; the respondent; witnesses to the matter or events; and anyone they believe may have a role in establishing or disproving the complaint, as necessary. They will prepare a summary and report back to the CEO within 10 working days of the initial assessment.

The CEO will record the outcome of the complaint and arrange a video meeting or conference call to deliver the outcome or notify all those involved in writing as appropriate. All outcomes will be confirmed in writing to all those involved.

If the complaint involves a learner, they will be offered support at the meeting. All learners will be encouraged to bring a supporter to the meeting. Vulnerable adults must have the support of their care worker, or a person of their choice, who can act as their advocate.

The formal complaint should be resolved within 25 working days of the receipt of the original formal complaint. If it appears that a decision will not be reached within the due period, those involved will be advised of the need for a longer period.

The decision will be final but this will not affect an individual's legal rights.

### **Escalation to the Awarding Body**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to escalate the complaint to the course endorsing organisation Quality Licence Scheme:  
<https://qualitylicencescheme.co.uk/>

### **Review of the Complaints Policy and Practice**

Once a year the Blackford Centre's Senior Management Team will review the Complaints Policy and Practice to include:

- Number of complaints of each type
- Time taken to process complaints
- List of outstanding complaints
- Outcomes to complaints
- Results of appeals
- Analysis of complaints and outcomes by age, gender and ethnicity of complainant

If changes are required the complaints policy we will re-write the policy and inform all staff and learners. We will make a record of all complaints for the previous three years available to the relevant authorities for audit purposes.



Complaints log

Date	Learner name and number	Complaint details	Evidence submitted	Outcome	Sign and date