

ABMA Education Complaints Policy

Introduction

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from ABMA Education (hereafter 'ABMA').

We value all the centres delivering our qualifications and the learners who undertake them and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

We are confident of providing a high quality service and would be extremely disappointed if this is not the case.

Therefore, it is important should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations, that you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn lessons.

Scope

This policy covers complaints learners, members of the public or centres may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered directly or indirectly by ABMA.

It is not to be used to cover appeals in relation to decisions made by ABMA. These areas are covered by the ABMA Education Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, we will respond to the relevant party that the issue is being considered, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in the appropriate policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred, you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Centre responsibility

As a centre, you should take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and your learners, are aware of the contents of this policy and that your centre has a complaint

handling procedure and an appeals process in place to deal with complaints from learners about the services they receive from your centre. If an individual is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by a centre, they must first of all go through your centre's complaints process before bringing the matter to ABMA.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established by Ofqual) and any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of complaints received.

If you would like to feed back any views please contact us via the details provided at below.

Complaints about a centre

Learners and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by the centre at which they have taken an ABMA qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to us. However, learners can make the complaint directly to us in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a significant breach by the centre of our various procedures (contact details are contained at the end of this policy).

How do I register a concern?

All of our staff have been trained to help our customers and they all like to help, so you should first try to sort out any problem within 10 working days of the event by speaking to your dedicated ABMA contact.

How should I complain?

If you are not satisfied and need wish to make a formal complaint, please complete and submit the ABMA Education Complaints Form (available on our website), **within 6 weeks** of the event you are complaining about.

What will happen to my complaint?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days, informing you who will be investigating your complaint.

We aim to investigate the complaint within 4 weeks. If your complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, we may extend this to 8 weeks. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation we will write/email you to inform you of our decision.

If I complain what details do I have to give?

When you contact us please give us your full name, contact details, including a daytime telephone number, along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known),
- any names of the people you have dealt with so far, and
- copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint.

Complaints brought to our attention by Ofqual

Where Ofqual notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with our Complaints Procedures to ascertain if the same issue could affect ABMA qualifications.

Confidentiality and whistleblowing

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. Although, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, you can request that we do not divulge your identity. If it helps to reassure you on this point, we can confirm that we are not obliged (as recommended by Ofqual) to disclose information as to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously and/or by whistleblowers¹ we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the complaint/allegation relates.

Successful complaints and/or issues brought to our attention by Ofqual

¹ At ABMA, we define 'whistleblowers' as being current or ex members of staff (both permanent or contracted) or third party suppliers of a centre or ABMA and/or current or previous learners.

If any part of the complaint is upheld we will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration as to how we can improve our service and arrangements. For example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our qualification development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process (if relevant), or by arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of our staff is deemed inappropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from Ofqual indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

- identify any other learner(s) who has been affected by that failure,
- correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you are unhappy with the decision taken by ABMA in reviewing the complaint, you can, where relevant, take the matter through our appeals arrangements which are outlined in our Appeals Policy.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Quality Department at:

ABMA Education
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Lyndhurst Road
Ascot
Berkshire
SL5 9FE
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8733 7000
E-mail: quality@abma.uk.com
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