

Complaints Policy

Abstract

This complaints policy establishes a fair and transparent and accessible framework for raising and addressing concerns raised by centres, learners and all interested parties

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1. Introduction

This document sets out Active IQ's complaints policy and procedure. It is aimed at our centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from Active IQ for accredited qualifications.

Active IQ values all centres delivering our qualifications and the learners who undertake them, and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of our customers. Equally, we expect our approved centres to achieve the same in line with these values and alongside their undertakings as contained in the Approved Centre Agreement, as well as in accordance with Active IQ's policies.

We are confident of providing a high-quality service and would be disappointed if there were occasions on which this was not the case. It is important, therefore, that 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 without delay and consider the implementation of appropriate changes.

1.1. Scope

This policy covers complaints that learners, approved centres or other relevant stakeholders may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by Active IQ.

It is not to be used to address appeals regarding assessment or any other decision covered by our appeals policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered in accordance with our appeals policy and/or enquiries policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was conducted, or you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred, you should notify Active IQ as soon as possible in accordance with the guidance set out in our malpractice and maladministration policy.

If you are raising an enquiry rather than a complaint, centres should contact our Customer Service team on:

E: csteam@activeiq.co.uk

T: +44(0)1480 467 950

T: +44(0) 845 688 1278

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If you enquire on behalf of your learners, please obtain the learners' permission in the first instance.

We will aim to respond to all enquiries within two working days. If we are unable to respond within this timeframe, we will provide you with an estimated response date.

Please note in reporting on our findings, we are not obliged (as recommended by the regulator) to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty. Please also refer to our customer service statement.

1.2. Centre's responsibilities

Staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Active IQ qualifications, and learners, should be aware of the contents of this policy.

Centres must also have in place both an internal complaint handling procedure and appeals process to deal with such issues and/or complaints that may arise from learners about the services they receive from the centre.

Centres are required to report to Active IQ, without delay, any complaints that they receive relating to equality and diversity in the delivery of qualifications, the processing of personal data or compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018), the integrity of the qualifications or their award, and/or any matter that may give rise to a potential adverse effect (as defined by the regulators).

2. Procedure

2.1. How should I complain?

NB If a complaint is made that relates to, or is connected with, the substance or management of an appeal, and either the appeal is ongoing or the content of the complaint is substantially similar to that of an appeal (as determined by Active IQ), then the appeal will take precedence in terms of hearing and timing. The two processes will not run alongside each other and the appeal will be given priority.

Learners who wish to complain about a level of service provided by the centre at which they have undertaken an Active IQ qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to Active IQ. However, learners can make the complaint directly to Active IQ in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a

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significant breach of our procedures or published requirements by the centre. Active IQ reserves the right to refer a complaint back to the relevant centre for initial consideration.

The initial aim for all complaints should be to try to resolve any problem informally at the earliest opportunity. This may include the complainant speaking to the person who dealt with the issue at the outset, if they feel comfortable doing so.

If the complaint directly relates to a service provided by Active IQ, the complainant should request contact with the manager in charge of the relevant department at Active IQ in the first instance, to see if an informal resolution can be found prior to raising a formal complaint.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the department manager, please send a written complaint to us using the contact details outlined at the end of the policy.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a complaint should normally be made within 20 working days of the event you are complaining about.

2.2. Details required

When you contact Active IQ to make a complaint, please provide your full name and contact details (including a daytime telephone number and email address) along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the subject matter plus dates, times and any reference numbers if known)
- names of the people you have dealt with so far
- copies of any documents or letters connected with the complaint

2.3. Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators (Ofqual, CCEA or Qualifications Wales)

Where the regulators 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 the procedures below, to ascertain if the same issue could affect Active IQ qualifications.

2.4. Confidentiality and whistleblowing

Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. If you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, you may

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request us not to divulge your identity as far as possible. Active IQ is not obliged (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty; however, to progress an investigation, it may sometimes not be possible to entirely anonymise individuals. If this were to be the case, this would always be discussed in advance with the whistleblower/person who made the allegation.

While we are prepared to investigate issues that are reported to us anonymously, other than in exceptional circumstances, we will try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the allegation relates.

2.5. What will happen to my complaint?

Active IQ will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and aim to investigate the complaint within 20 working days. If your complaint is more complex, involves people who are not available at the time, or relies on awaiting further information or evidence from a third party, we may extend this timeframe. We will inform you of any changes to the timeframe for handling your complaint. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification, and in some instances, we may recommend a meeting.

At the end of the investigation, we will write (usually via email) to inform you of the outcome and to describe the reasons for our decision.

2.6. What happens if my complaint is upheld?

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

- identifying any other learner who has been affected by that failure
- correcting, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure
- if necessary, notifying Ofqual or other relevant regulators of the failure
- reviewing its procedures and/or its approach to developing, delivering or awarding qualifications
- ensuring that the failure does not recur in the future

If the complaint was directed to Active IQ, and if any part of the complaint is upheld, we will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve

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our service and arrangements. This may, for example, include a review of our procedures or arranging for staff training.

In exceptional circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of our staff is deemed inappropriate. However, the details of internal disciplinary procedures will not be shared externally other than the description of the outcome where confidentiality requirements permit.

2.7. What if I am not happy with the outcome?

If you disagree with the decision, please contact the Head of Quality Assurance who will review the complaint.

2.8. Awarding regulators' contact details

If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint after following our appeals process, you can contact the appropriate regulator, with evidence that Active IQ's complaints process has been exhausted

- Ofqual (England) 0300 303 3344 public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk
- Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Regulation (Northern Ireland) 02890 261 200 complaints@ccea.org.uk
- Qualifications Wales 01633 373 222 report@qualifications.wales

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3. Initial Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy, and no concerns were raised.

4. Implementation and dissemination

This policy will be implemented immediately upon approval and is available on Active IQ Website.

5. Monitoring arrangements

We will review this policy and its associated procedures annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements, revising it as and when necessary in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established or revised by the regulators), or as a result of any trends that may emerge in relation to specific themes within complaints received. If you would like to feed back with any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

6. Data retention

Active IQ will securely store information provided as part of your appeal submission. Active IQ will not keep personal data for longer than we need it. Once the retention period is over, and it is no longer justifiable to hold personal data any longer, data will be securely destroyed or anonymised.

7. Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our support team on:

E: csteam@activeiq.co.uk

T: +44(0)1480 467 950

T: +44(0) 845 688 1278

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