

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYERS

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1. Introduction

London Metropolitan University is committed to ensuring a high-quality service for all apprentice employers. However, where an employer is dissatisfied and our service falls below the standard that might reasonably be expected, we will strive to reach a resolution within the best interest of all parties involved.

The University will deal with complaints fairly and apprenticeship employers can raise concerns, or express levels of dissatisfaction without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.

The University will process all information in accordance with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Complaints will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality, with information released only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Offer a channel for employers to voice their concerns about the service in relation to government and other stakeholder requirements
- Provide a systematic mechanism for the University to be considerate in each unique case
- Create an opportunity to reach a beneficial outcome for all parties involved.
- Align with the [Government Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#) for Apprenticeships

3. Scope

This policy and procedure can be utilised to raise concerns about the University's fulfilment of its obligations under the [Government Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#), Apprenticeships Training Services Agreement, Training Plan or other apprenticeship programme documentation.

The employer is accountable for apprentice complaints relating to the activities in the workplace, for which apprentices must follow their employer's complaint procedure.

For non-integrated apprenticeships, where the complaint relates to their apprentice's End Point Assessment process undertaken by an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), employers must follow the complaints procedures set out by the EPAO. The University will support you in this process.

4. Governance

The Apprenticeships Committee, which is a sub-committee of the University's Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, will monitor complaints to ensure prompt response and as appropriate, will amend institutional processes and procedures to avoid similar situations arising in future.

5. Complaints Procedure

5.1. Phase 1 – Informal

Before initiating a formal grievance, it is advised that an employer informally raises their concerns with the University. This enables effective dialogue between the University and the employer in order to seek early resolution.

The employer should therefore contact the Head of Work Based Learning, Policy and Practice at apprenticeships@londonmet.ac.uk to discuss the matter.

The Head of Work Based Learning, Policy and Practice will typically arrange an informal discussion with the employer within five working days of receipt, to address the concern and aim for resolution.

If the complaint remains unresolved after the initial discussion, the Head of Work Based Learning, Policy and Practice will ensure regular updates are provided to the

complainant whilst they seek to resolve the complaint. The Head will additionally update the employer on the timescale for further responses

If the complaint remains unresolved, the employer can escalate to the Phase 2 – Formal process.

The Head of Work Based Learning, Policy and Practice will log informal complaints and present periodic reports on their progress to the Apprenticeships Learning and Teaching Quality Committee Sub-Group.

5.2. Phase 2 – Formal

Should the employer remain dissatisfied after the informal process or believe their concerns have not been adequately addressed, they may officially refer the matter in writing to the Dean of Graduate Success at apprenticeships@londonmet.ac.uk.

This email should include:

- a) the nature of the complaint
- b) any relevant documentation
- c) include and update details of previous informal discussions as employers see fit
- d) any additional and relevant information

The Dean of Graduate Success will typically acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within two working days.

The Dean of Graduate Success will discuss the complaints raised with the Head of Work Based Learning, Policy and Practice regarding the informal phase of the complaints process. Following this, they will communicate with the employer to gain deeper insight into the concerns and request any additional information / clarification to fully understand the grievance. The Dean will additionally contact relevant departments within the University to gather further insight, as necessary. These processes aim to assist in determining any further steps required towards resolution.

A full and considered response will then be provided by email from the Dean within five working days.

If the review and response cannot be completed in this time scale, for example, due to the complexity of the matter, the Dean will advise the employer of a revised timescale.

5.3. Dispute Resolution

- Following completion of the Informal and Formal Stage of this Complaints Procedure, for any unresolved complaints the contract between the University and the employer should be referred to in the first instance.
- Dispute resolution typically follows the process and timelines below, unless alternative processes and timescales are outlined in the contract.
- If efforts by both parties' representatives cannot resolve the dispute within 21 days from the dispute notice, Senior Management from both parties must meet within the subsequent 10 working days to agree next steps.
- If a resolution is not met within the following 60 calendar days and the employer remains dissatisfied, the next phase would be for the employer to escalate the complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- The ESFA can be contacted at complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk, or through a letter to: Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT.
- Criteria for escalating a complaint to the ESFA is detailed at: [ESFA Complaints Procedure](#).

6. Complaints from Apprentices

Any grievances related to an apprentice's behaviour in relation to the apprenticeship experience within the employer's domain should be addressed using the employer's internal complaints policy. The University will support the apprentice in this matter, as required.

If an apprentice has a complaint relating to their University experience, they should follow the [University Students' Complaints Procedure](#) which is accessible to apprentices on the University's intranet. A copy can be sent to an employer on request, by emailing apprenticeships@londonmet.ac.uk