

Employer complaints policy and process

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Purpose

The University of East Anglia (UEA) is a lead higher education institution (HEI) provider for higher and degree apprenticeships. As such, we are responsible for resolving issues and disputes with and between employers relating to these apprenticeships.

The Department for Education (DfE) requires lead HEI providers to have a written complaints and dispute resolution policy and process. This policy sets out the framework for employers to raise and resolve complaints and disputes with UEA.

Scope

This policy can be used for all complaints that employers wish to raise with UEA in relation to higher and degree apprenticeship provision, including with any sub-contracted provision. Apprentice complaints are outside the scope of this policy.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that the decision-making processes for complaints and disputes are fair and transparent to the complainant.
- Give all parties a clear procedure for escalating concerns that cannot be resolved at the level where they arise.

Complaints and dispute resolution procedure

1. If a dispute arises between the UEA and an employer, the parties shall discuss it in good faith in an attempt to reach a resolution.
 - a. For the UEA, the initial point of contact for discussions is:
John Nelson (Apprenticeships Manager)
Email: apprenticeships@uea.ac.uk
2. If the dispute continues for a period of five working days (excluding bank holidays and university closure days), either party may formally refer the dispute in writing to the Lead Contact nominated for their organisation.
 - a. The Lead Contact for the UEA is:
Gavin Tash (Associate Director of Partnerships)
Telephone: +44(0)7770 961001
Email: G.Tash@uea.ac.uk

The referral notice must include the following information:

- The name and job title of the Lead Contact to whom the referral is being made.
- Sufficient details of the nature of the dispute or complaint.
- Copies of any supporting documents.
- What steps have already been taken to resolve the dispute or complaint.
- What outcome(s) the referrer would like to address the complaint or resolve the dispute.
- Whether there are any special circumstances which need to be taken into account, including any reasonable adjustments which any party wishes to make to the complaints-handling process to ensure it is accessible and fair to those involved.

The Lead Contact and employer will discuss the dispute within five working days of the date of referral and attempt to resolve the dispute or agree the next steps for working out a solution.

3. If no resolution can be reached, either the Lead Contact or the employer may refer the matter to the relevant Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor on behalf of the University and an alternative representative of the employer. The Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor and the alternative representative will seek to resolve the dispute within ten working days thereafter.

- a. The Authorised Officer for the UEA is:

Professor Zoe Butterfint (Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor of Partnerships and Apprenticeships)

Telephone: +44(0)1603 591669

Email: Z.butterfint@uea.ac.uk

4. If the UEA and the employer cannot reach a satisfactory resolution within thirty working days after commencing discussions, either party may refer the matter to mediation in accordance with the model procedure of the Centre for Dispute Resolution, London ("CEDR"). Such mediation to be completed within thirty working days of signature of the CEDR Mediation Agreement.

- a. CEDR <https://www.cedr.com/contact/>

Telephone: +44(0)20 7536 6000

Email: info@cedr.com

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles are relevant to the complaints and dispute resolution process:

- **Head of Apprenticeships or Apprenticeships Manager:** The initial point of contact for employers to raise issues and seek early resolution.
- **Associate Director of Partnerships:** The Lead Contact and operational policy owner responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy, advising Authorised Officers on individual complaints and disputes, with responsibility for keeping under review the effectiveness of the policy.
- **Authorised Officer for UEA:** The Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor or a senior member of staff of UEA responsible for signing off changes to contract agreements and senior level resolution of disputes.
- **Lead Contact for the Employer:** The person nominated by the employer in the Apprenticeship Agreement as responsible for oversight of the apprenticeship arrangements.

Definitions and Abbreviations

- **CEDR:** The Centre for Dispute Resolution, London
- **HEI:** Higher Education Institution
- **DfE:** Department for Education*
- ***ESFA:** Education and Skills Funding Agency (*now defunct and part of the DfE*)

Associate Documents

The Complaints Policy and Process has been drafted with reference to the following documents:

- **Department for Education:** [Apprenticeship Funding Rules](#)

Review

This policy is subject to annual review to ensure it continues to meet the University's needs and the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and contract.