

# London Academy For Applied Technology



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## ***Complaints Policy***

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	REVISION HISTORY			
Review	DATE	VERSION	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR
Review Frequency	ANNUALLY			
Review	18-05-2021	0.1	Procedure to handle complaints – <a href="https://laatedu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Complaint-Procedure.pdf">https://laatedu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Complaint-Procedure.pdf</a>	Managing Director -
Last Review	16-05-2022	0.2	Procedure to handle complaints – <a href="https://laatedu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Complaint-Procedure.pdf">https://laatedu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Complaint-Procedure.pdf</a>	
Next Review	16-05-2023			

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Policy Statement

The London Academy For Applied Technology aims to provide high quality services which meet your needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we are not getting it right please let us know. In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which one can let us know of for any reason one is not satisfied with the dealings with the institute.

This policy offers guidance as to what to do if one wishes to complaint about the courses or services provided by the institute or about certain institute related matters. This policy outlines who to contact and how to seek further advice .

## 2. Definition

'An expression of dissatisfaction with any individual, service or lack of service where a response is reasonably expected and has not been resolved by an informal approach'.

Before one decides to make a formal complaint, it should be noted that:

1. Informal resolution of the complaint should always be the preferred option:
  - Matters can frequently be resolved quickly and informally by talking directly to the person providing the service. If this is not possible or if one fails to receive a satisfactory response, then discuss the issue(s) with the person with overall responsibility for the service concerned (usually a Head of Department or director).
2. If one decides to submit a formal complaint it must be in writing and signed either by the person making the complaint or on their behalf by a person recognised as having a legitimate interest.
  - A frivolous, malicious, libellous or vexatious complaint can jeopardise the effective use of the procedure and may not be considered. Nor may a complaint be considered if it is in, or accompanied by, an unacceptable form of behaviour.

### 3. Types of Complaints covered

There is a single complaint procedure to cover different types of complaints or grievance, which can be used to complaint about any service the institute provides. The list is not exhaustive, but is likely to fall under the following categories:

- The behavior of another customer ie. Student or member of staff
- Complaints arising from the learner's educational experience eg, poor teaching or supervision
- Complaints in respect of academic and/or administrative support or other services
- Complaints regarding funding which will be investigated as per the Education and Skills funding Agency's procedure.

### 4. Methods for making complaints

- a. To make a formal complaint through telephone or in person. For this the complainant can be asked whether they will themselves be filling the complaint form or whether they would like the form be completed on their behalf.
- b. The complainant who wishes to fill the form on his own will be sent a copy of this policy along with the Complaint form.
- c. In case the complainant asks the officer or the representative to fill the form, the form should be filled by the officer and also he should explain what happens next in the procedure.
- d. In writing: Candidates can also express their discontent about the services in writing. Where such a letter is received, it should not be treated as formal complaint in the first instance. Normally, the officer responding to the letter should attempt to resolve the matter in their reply, as this is assumed to be the equivalent of trying to immediately resolve the issue to the customer's satisfaction" as applied to telephone or personal complaints.
- e. The reply to the letter should always explain to the complainant that if they are not satisfied with the response they are able to submit a formal complaint and should explain to the complainant how to do so.
- f. At any stage of the complaints process a customer may make a complaint through a representative or an agent authorised to act

on their behalf. These may include, for example, customer representative, Member of Parliament, local Councilor, solicitor or Citizens' Advice Bureau staff.

- g. The customer's representative can either advise the customer about the complaints procedure, or take up the complaint on the Candidates' behalf, acting as their advocate. In the latter case, the representative should help the customer complete the complaint form and refer the complaint to the appropriate person according to the stage the complaint has reached. Any responses should be copied to the customer representative as well as the complainant.

## 5. Process for formal complaints

When one makes a formal complaint this is recorded and it is the responsibility of the institute to respond and provide an acknowledgement within 5 working days. It is the institute's aim that most complaints will be resolved within 20 working days. Complainant will be informed if there is likely to be any delay in the process. Complainant may be asked to provide further information in person or in writing. The institute may also request to attend a meeting, if further discussion is required. Unless one agree to an informal resolution of the complaint, they will receive a written response, which will address the issues raised.

## 6. Stages of Complaint

### Step 1: Local resolution

Where appropriate, learner should attempt to raise a concern with the responsible staff member. If one do not feel comfortable raising the matter with this person then they should speak or write to the Responsible Officer or the person responsible for the Faculty, Department or Service (learner handbook may have more information). You should raise your complaint as soon as it occurs or at least within 28 days of the matter arising. Many issues can be resolved easily and quickly if one communicate their problem to someone.

### Step 2: Formal resolution

If the response from the department, faculty, service or staff member has not resolved the complaint, or the complaint is so serious that one feels that they

can't raise it with them, complete and submit the **Formal Complaint Form**, within 28 days of the matter arising or within 28 days of the response you received from the department, faculty, service or staff member. If the complainant have valid reason for not raising a complaint within this timeframe, for example, complainant have a disability that causes them to take longer to do things and need a reasonable adjustment to process times, or the impact of the matter was such that he felt unable to come forward until now, then complainant should include this information within the complaint form and the case handler will consider this. Complainant should not include unnecessary information about other people in their complaint.

### Formal resolution process

Complainant will be appointed a Case Handler who will screen the complaint to make sure it can be considered under the [Student Complaint Procedure](#). The Case Handler will confirm the outcome of the screening within 7 days of receiving the complaint. If the complaint is eligible, the Case Handler will then conduct an investigation; the staff involved in the complaint will be sent a copy of the information provided by complainant and will be requested to provide a response.

The complaint and any responses will be considered by a Complaint Officer; an academic staff member who is not connected to the institute or Faculty who has no knowledge of the case. The Complaint Officer will make a decision about the complaint and consider a remedy, where this is appropriate. The Case Handler will send the Complaint Officer's decision and any staff responses.

Occasionally the Case Handler or Complaint Officer might want further information during the investigation, if so, the complainant will be sent the staff responses at this point, before being asked to provide a written statement or to attend a meeting.

### Step 3: Review

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Complaint Officer's decision, they can request a review of the decision on the following grounds:

- procedural irregularities that occurred during Formal Resolution, which were material or potentially material to the decision reached;
- the Formal Resolution decision is unreasonable, in that no reasonable person could have reached the same decision on the available evidence;

- the availability of new evidence, which materially impacts the complaint outcome and which, for valid reasons, could not have been submitted at an earlier stage.

In order to request a review, you will need to complete and submit the **Review form** within 14 days of receiving the Complaint Officer's decision. Providing the request for review is eligible, it will be considered by a Reviewer who can either uphold or dismiss the request. Where a request is upheld, a remedy can be put in place. The complainant will receive a Completion of Procedures letter with the Reviewer's decision. This letter confirms the completion of the Institute's internal procedures.

## **Appendix 1: Increasing your confidence with complaint**

Do you appreciate the value of complaints? You should. Complaints provide vital information on where things are going wrong, allowing us to improve our service.

The points below will help you in effective complaint handling and let you manage customer complaints with confidence and consistency.

### **1. Stay Calm:**

It might be extremely difficult to do, you must stay calm when handling a customer complaint. This can be hard, especially since your business is probably a point of immense pride for you. But don't take the complaint personally; it's not a personal attack. Often, a customer complaint will highlight an area that you can improve upon within your business.

### **2. Listen:**

Frequently, if a customer comes to you with a problem, it means that they want to be heard. Even if the complaint seems trivial to you, it clearly has some significance to them because they are taking their time to reach out to you. Active listening techniques can, and should, be used with your customers all the time. Don't assume that you know what the customer wants or needs, and don't dismiss them as trivial either. Hear them out and pay close attention to what they're saying.

### **3. Be Kind:**

In most instances, you can diffuse anger and frustration by remaining kind and understanding. You can tell your customer straight away that you appreciate them reaching out about their concerns and that you want to understand exactly how they are feeling. A statement such as this from the get-go lets your customer know that you truly care and that you are ready to listen. When a customer knows that you truly care, you are well on your way to finding a reasonable resolution to the customer complaint.

#### **4. Acknowledge the issue:**

After you've heard them out, acknowledge the problem and repeat it back to the customer. Paraphrasing what your customer has said and repeating it back to them lets them know that you listened and that you understand what the problem is.

#### **5. Apologise and thank you:**

It may feel difficult, but swallowing your pride and apologizing for your customer's poor experience will put you miles ahead of the game. As with acknowledgment, apologizing does not mean that you agree with the customer, nor are you taking the blame.

#### **6. Ask Questions:**

After you've listened to your customer's complaint and the individual has had a chance to calm down, it's your turn to take the initiative and get all the facts. Now is the time that you can calmly start asking questions for clarification. Start a genuine conversation with your customer. Between being kind, listening, acknowledging, and apologizing, you will have started gaining your customer's trust.

#### **7. Make it speedy:**

Once you've gathered all of the information you need, now is your chance to find a solution that makes everyone happy, especially your customer. The



faster you find a reasonable solution that everyone can agree on, the happier your customer will be and you get to breathe a sigh of relief.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **Referring Complaints Upward**

Whenever possible try to resolve the complaint yourself. But never refuse to help Candidates take their complaints higher up within the organisation if they wish to do so.

It is important to have a clear understanding of the type of complaint you can handle, and which you are to refer to someone else. You also need to have a clear idea of how much authority you have in resolving complaints. When you are going to refer a complaint your manager, following these 5 steps:

- Have all the facts and information about the problem on hand. All of this data should be confirmed by the customer as being correct.
- Have a clear idea of what the customer wants and what they are asking to be done about the problem.
- Be ready to give an account of your conversation with the customer and tell your manager what you said to the customer. Explain the alternatives you offered and the customer's reactions to them. Be honest and accurate and don't distort the facts of the situation to make yourself look good in the eyes of your manager. If you try to fake it, you may make the situation worse.
- Next, make sure you inform your manager of any promises you made to your customer. Be ready to recommend to your manager what you feel should be done now.
- Lastly, you should come away from your meeting with your manager with a clear idea of what your role is going to be from this point onwards. Are you going to keep working on the problem or turn it over to your manager entirely? If you are to turn it over entirely, agree with your manager as to when and how you will be told about the final outcome.

# COMPLAINT FORM

## STUDENT COMPLAINT

<b>Full Name</b>		<b>Male/ Female</b>
<b>Student Status</b> Current Student/Past Student/Other ( <i>please specify</i> )		<b>Date of Birth</b>
<b>Student Number</b> <i>Current/Past students only</i>		
<b>Contact Address</b>		
<b>Postcode</b>		
<b>Telephone</b>		
<b>E-mail</b>		
<b>Complaint to be directed to (if known)</b> <i>(Name, Position, School/Service/Unit/Department)</i>		
<b>Statement of Complaint</b> <i>(Please explain the nature of your complaint here or attach a statement of your complaint)</i>		
<b>List of documents</b> <i>(Please list all documents which you have attached)</i>		<b>Received</b>



