



RETROFIT
ACADEMY CIC

Complaints & Whistle Blowing Policy

December 2024

1. Introduction

The Retrofit Academy Group (TRA) is committed to ensuring that the period that any learner spends with the Academy, is done so in an environment which is conducive to them achieving their learning aim.

It is important that learners make TRA aware of any problems that arise during the course or training programme so that it is not allowed to develop into a major issue.

Learners should not feel that by complaining, they are jeopardising their employment or their place on the training programme. TRA cannot resolve a problem if it is not aware that one exists. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is a means for learners to highlight any issues or problems they may have.

This policy is aimed at learners enrolled on TRA provision. It sets out the basis on which complaints can be made, the process involved, and the way in which TRA will respond to such complaints.

It is also for use by TRA staff to ensure they deal with all complaints in a consistent manner.

This policy is also aimed at meeting the centre requirements of any Awarding Organisations' centre requirements in delivering their approved qualifications.

The policy is intended for access by both the learner, TRA staff and the Awarding Organisation.

2. TRA centre responsibilities

It is important that TRA centre staff involved in the management, assessment, and

quality assurance of its qualifications are aware of the contents of this policy.

All complaints in relation to decisions taken by TRA must go through its complaints

process before the matter can be referred to the relevant Awarding Organisations' or regulators complaints process.

3. Scope

This policy covers complaints made by learners. It also covers instances where TRA may wish to make a complaint to an Awarding Organisation.

If a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made by TRA, these should be referred to the Appeals Policy and Procedures process. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, TRA staff will confirm the basis on which the issue is being addressed.

Where a TRA staff member is unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and if malpractice be suspected or have occurred, staff should send their concerns, in the first instance, to the IQA in accordance with the arrangements in TRA's Malpractice Policy.

4. Confidentiality and whistle blowing

TRA acknowledge that occasionally a complainant may wish to remain anonymous. It is always preferable, however, for them to reveal their identity and provide TRA with full contact details so TRA can properly investigate a complaint.

If a complainant is concerned about any possible adverse consequences, they must inform TRA that they do not wish for TRA to divulge their identity. If it helps to reassure them on this point, TRA can confirm that it is not obliged (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information, and to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

TRA is prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously, however, it will always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the complaint/allegation relates. At all times TRA will investigate such complaints from whistle-blowers in accordance with relevant whistle blowing legislation. More information can be obtained from this link: Whistleblowing for employees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

5. Complaints Process: How to make a complaint.

5.1 Making a complaint about TRA's services

In the first instance, if a learner has a complaint about any aspect of TRA,

they should discuss it as soon as possible, informally, with the person who they originally dealt or usually deal with at TRA. This includes any TRA or Awarding Organisation issues.

It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved at this stage. If they cannot help, or learners wish to speak to someone else, they can ask to speak to the manager in charge of that team.

If that is not possible, or if the learner is not satisfied with the help provided by the manager, the learner should send a written complaint within one calendar month of the event they are complaining about, using the contact details at the bottom of this page.

5.2 Making a complaint about the Awarding Organisation's services by TRA staff

In the first instance it is recommended that TRA staff address any issues or complaints at the earliest opportunity by speaking to the person who they originally dealt or usually deal with at the Awarding Organisation.

If they cannot help, you should refer the matter to the TRA IQA or Head of Qualification and Learning to progress the issue or complaint through the Awarding

Organisations' complaints procedures.

If the matter is still not resolved, the complaint may be referred to the Qualifications

Regulator, who will investigate the complaint and make a judgement as to its validity

5.3 If a learner complains, what details do they have to give?

When a learner contacts TRA, they need to give their full name, contact details

including a daytime telephone number along with:

- A full description of their complaint (including the subject matter and dates and
- times if known).
- Any names of the people they have dealt with so far.
- Copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint, or any other relevant
- documentation.

5.4 What happens to a learner complaint?

The receipt of the learner's complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days.

TRA will aim to respond to the learner's complaint within 20 working days.

Note

In some cases, the complaint response may take longer, for example if an Awarding Organisation centre visit is required. In such instances, we will keep all parties fully informed of revised timescales and progress.

Learners may be contacted within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances TRA may recommend a meeting).

5.5 What happens if a learner complaint is upheld?

If any part of a complaint is upheld, TRA will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements, for example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our arrangements and assessment process (if relevant) or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of TRA staff is deemed inappropriate. In situations where a complaint is justified and indicates a failure in any aspect of TRA processes, we will take appropriate actions such as:

- a. Identifying any other learner who has been affected by that failure,
- b. Correcting, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the
- c. effect of the failure,
- d. Ensuring that the failure does not recur in the future.

5.6 What if a learner is not happy with the reply?

If a learner is still unhappy with the decision taken by TRA in reviewing the complaint they can then take the matter through TRA's appeal policy and process, which can be downloaded from TRA's website.

If the matter is still not resolved to the learner's satisfaction, they can put their complaint into the appropriate Awarding Organisation (TRA will advise which one), who will investigate their complaint and make a judgement accordingly.

If the matter is still not resolved, the complaint can be referred to the Qualifications Regulator, who will investigate the complaint and make a judgement as to its validity.

5.7 Policy review arrangements

TRA reviews its complaints policy and its associated procedures regularly as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to staff, learner or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the regulators) and any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of complaints received. If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided below.

Contact us

Anyone who would like to feedback on this strategy, or have any queries about its

content, please contact us on:

T: 0330 055 7629

E: info@retrofitacademy.org

Related Policies

- Appeals policy and procedures.
- Any other policy that may be affected by examination and invigilation