

# **Complaints and Compliments Policy**

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## VERSION

<i>Release Date</i>	<i>Version No.</i>	<i>Summary of Main Changes</i>	<i>Owner</i>
June 2023	V2.2	Change to appeals guidance and underpinning principles	Business Support Manager
September 2021	V2.1	Contact telephone number updated (Section 6)	Business Support Manager

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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NCUK is committed to delivering the highest standards throughout our products, services and communications.

This document sets out NCUK's Complaints and Compliments Policy and is aimed at Study Centres, students and all interested parties who access a direct or indirect service from NCUK.

NCUK values all the Study Centres who deliver our qualifications and the students who undertake them. We are confident of providing a high-quality service and we would be extremely disappointed if this was not the case.

Should you feel that you have encountered a poor level of service, either on the part of NCUK or one of our Study Centres, it is important that you tell us immediately so that we may address your issue and improve what we do. Likewise, if we have exceeded your expectation, we would be delighted to know.

NCUK's Complaints and Compliments Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- a) Ease of access
- b) Clarity of purpose
- c) Timeliness
- d) Fairness and transparency of the process
- e) Clear and appropriately regular communication with the complainant(s)
- f) Independence of decision-making

## COMPLIMENTS OR COMMENTS ABOUT OUR SERVICE

Compliments and comments are valuable, welcome and important. When they are received, they will be recorded. Compliments enable NCUK to understand that our service is being provided to the customer's satisfaction and to provide feedback to our staff.

Compliments or comments can be submitted to [complaints@ncuk.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@ncuk.ac.uk).

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT OUR SERVICE

We intend that our customers will have no cause to complain about the quality of the service they receive. We will act fairly, courteously, legally and without bias or prejudice in all such matters and those who have cause to submit a complaint will not be disadvantaged in any way by doing so. NCUK will endeavour to resolve all problems quickly, efficiently and fairly.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding the quality of service provided by NCUK, or one of our Study Centres. A complaint may be academic in nature (such as a complaint regarding delivery of a module/programme) or non-academic in nature (such as a complaint regarding late receipt of results, missing information etc.).

The following issues are covered by other NCUK policies and do not come under the Complaints and Compliments Policy:

### Enquiries About Results

Students and Study Centres may submit Enquiries About Results to ensure that NCUK's awarding processes and procedures have been followed correctly and that any result issued to a student is fully justified.

If a student wishes to submit an Enquiry About Results, they should speak to their Study Centre for guidance. To submit an Enquiry About Results or Appeal, the Study Centre should follow the NCUK *Enquiries about Results Policy*, which is part of the Academic Handbook.

Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an Enquiry About Results, we will respond to inform the complainant of the correct process to follow and offer instruction on how to do so.

### Appeals

If an individual wishes to challenge a decision NCUK has made, including the outcome of an Enquiry About Results or even the outcome of a complaint (see Section 5 below), they may appeal the decision.

For full information, please consult NCUK's *Appeals Policy*.

### Whistleblowing

If an individual wishes to disclose information relating to potential or actual malpractice or wrongdoing and/or the covering up of malpractice or wrongdoing, they should refer to a separate Whistleblowing Policy which is available on the NCUK website.

## STUDY CENTRE RESPONSIBILITY

Study Centres must ensure that they operate an internal complaints-handling procedure to deal with complaints from students about the services they provide and should take all responsible steps to ensure that their staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and students, are aware of the contents of NCUK's Complaints and Compliments Policy. If a student or parent is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by a Study Centre, they must first go through the Study Centre's own complaints process before bringing the matter to NCUK.

NCUK expects Study Centre's internal complaints processes to adhere to the same principles that underpin our own, as set out above. Study Centre's internal complaints processes may be audited from time to time by NCUK to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet requirements.

## 2 HOW SHOULD I COMPLAIN?

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If you are unhappy with the service you or someone else has received from NCUK, you should first try to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity by speaking to the member of NCUK staff who you have been dealing with. If they cannot help or you wish to speak to someone else, you can also ask to speak to their manager.

If this is not possible or you are not satisfied with the help provided by the manager, please send a written complaint, within one month of the event you are complaining about, using the contact details outlined at the end of this Policy, clearly stating that you wish the issue to be treated as a complaint.

Please note that a complaint made verbally, such as in a face-to-face meeting or over a phone/online call, will not be treated as a formal complaint until it is put received in writing.

## 3 WHAT DETAILS DO I HAVE TO GIVE?

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Please give your full name and contact details along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known);
- any names of the people you have dealt with so far;
- copies of any correspondence relating to the complaint.

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us. NCUK will always treat any complaint in confidence.

If you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity. Your complaint may be considered whistleblowing if we are unable to confirm your identity or role in the matter.

## 4 WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY COMPLAINT?

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We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 working days, letting you know who is investigating your complaint. Your complaint will be investigated by a senior member of staff at NCUK who had no involvement in the matter or event about which the complaint is concerned. For academic complaints, this is likely to be a member of the Quality Assurance team. The investigator may contact you during their investigation to seek further information or clarification.

We aim to investigate the complaint within 7 working days. However, complaints can vary greatly in complexity and seriousness, and if your complaint is more complex or requires input from people or groups who are not immediately available, we reserve the right to extend this and will contact you within 7 working days to let you know. If at any point it becomes apparent that the scope of the investigation into your complaint is likely to mean NCUK cannot provide an outcome within the timeframe we initially told you, we will inform you of this at the earliest opportunity.

At the end of the investigation, NCUK will write/email to inform you of our decision.

If any part of a complaint is upheld, we will respond to you accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements. Examples of this may include reviewing our procedures or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of our staff is deemed inappropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

- identify any other student who has been affected by that failure;
- correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and;
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

## 5 WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE RESPONSE?

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If you disagree with the outcome of a complaint that you make, you may appeal NCUK's decision within 5 working days from the date that we have responded to you with our decision. An Appeal against the outcome of a complaint will may be made on grounds alleging:

- Failure to adhere to NCUK's published Complaints Policy;
- Failure to base the outcome of an investigation on the evidence submitted / collected;
- Reasonable perception of bias in the decision made as the outcome of a Complaint.

Please see NCUK's *Appeals Policy* for full information on the Appeals process and what you can expect to happen after submitting your appeal.

## 6 HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT OR COMPLIMENT

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Complaints or compliments can be made in the following way:

By email: [quality@ncuk.ac.uk](mailto:quality@ncuk.ac.uk)

By post: NCUK  
WeWork, No. 1 Spinningfields, Quay Street  
Manchester  
M3 3JE

### **Review Arrangements**

*This document will be reviewed annually as part of the NCUK self-evaluation arrangements. It may also be revised as and when necessary, in response to feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities (where applicable) or external agencies or changes in legislation.*

### **NCUK – The University Consortium**

WeWork, No. 1 Spinningfields, Quay Street  
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[www.ncuk.ac.uk](http://www.ncuk.ac.uk)

**NCUK**  
THE UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM