

Complaints Policy

1. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all clients, staff and Apprentices / Learners (both funded and commercial) of Didac Limited (hereafter referred to as Didac.).

1.1 Definitions

A complaint:

'Any expression of dissatisfaction, whether oral or written, and whether justified or not, from or on behalf of an eligible complainant about the companies treatment of them and /or a failure to provide the appropriate support or service.'

2. Policy

2.1 Statement of key principles

- Learners, employers, parents/guardians, partner organisations, members of the public and Didac staff should be able to escalate a concern or make a complaint about any issue which is of concern to them and to have the procedure they need to follow explained to them.
- A complaint may be in writing or made verbally.
- All complaints will be formally logged and promptly considered.
- All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and sensitively.
- Where possible an informal solution will be sought. If that cannot be achieved, then formal procedures will commence.

2.2 Complaints from Learners

'Didac has an obligation to advise learners about the procedure and grounds on which they can make an appeal (a complaint about a decision), and to allow all relevant records of appeals to be inspected by its management and by the EQA or EPA organisations.'

2.2.1 Appeals Concerning Assessment

- If a learner is unhappy with any aspect of their training/assessment, they should discuss this initially with their trainer.
- We aim to solve all problems at this level. If not, the learner should contact the Curriculum and Performance Manager and advise them that they wish to make an appeal which they must submit in writing.
- Appeals should be made within six weeks of the date that you first raised the issue with the Curriculum and Performance Manager.
- The grounds on which a learner can appeal are based on the contravention of any of the criteria for the Didac's approval where this has resulted in them being treated unfairly.

2.2.2 Possible grounds for an appeal

- Administrative shortcomings - for example, inaccuracy in recording your progress or unreasonable delays
- Inadequate resources - for example, inappropriate or insufficient physical resources, or inexperienced and unqualified staff
- Shortcomings in the conduct of training/assessment - for example, non-availability of alternative training/assessment methods or the use of extraneous criteria by their trainer/assessor
- Barriers to access - for example, the imposition of unreasonable requirements as a precondition to assessment
- Lack of equal opportunities - for example, discrimination against age, gender, race or creed, or other contraventions of Didac's equal opportunities policy
- If a learner feels that their trainer/assessor has made an unfair judgement or decision about the learner's competence or evidence, they must give clear information about this and relate it to the published standards or the assessment process.
- If the appeal is forwarded to the panel of the awarding organisation or EPA'O, their decision will be final. The learner will receive notification of any decisions from Didac.

2.2.3.1 Appeal upheld

- If the appeal is upheld at any stage during its hearing, the learner will receive a written apology from the centre and, if appropriate, their record will be amended. They may be given opportunities for further training/assessment at no additional cost. Lessons learnt from the decisions will be immediately notified to other staff and quality personnel of the company to prevent similar errors from occurring.
- If the appeal was on the grounds of discrimination, the learner will receive a written apology and the situation will be rectified at the earliest possible date to ensure that they have fair access to their chosen programme. As appropriate, staff will receive a full briefing on the issues, and receive any additional training required to ensure they are fully conversant and supportive of the equal opportunities policy.

2.2.3.2 Appeal not upheld

- If the appeal is not upheld, the learner will receive written notice of this with the reason for the decision.
- The EQA or EPA'O assurer will be provided with all the relevant documentation on the appeal and may review the case as part of their monitoring procedures on the company. This will not normally involve conducting re-assessments or speaking with the learner.

2.3 Complaints from parents/guardians, employers or members of the wider community

- It is Didac's policy to encourage learners, and their parents/guardians, employers or members of the wider community to resolve issues and disagreements informally without reference to the Curriculum and Performance Manager and to make a formal complaint only when informal discussions have not resolved the issue(s). However, it is the right of any party to require a concern to be dealt with as a formal complaint at the outset if they so wish.
- In the event of the Complaints Procedure below being put into operation, a record of the complaint must be kept at each stage in a central 'Complaints' file held by the Curriculum and Performance Manager.
- Didac will endeavour to resolve matters informally wherever possible and it is hoped that the majority of disagreements will be resolved in this way. If this is not possible, the formal procedure (3.2 Internal Procedure) will be invoked, and the Curriculum and Performance Manager will be involved.

2.4 Complaints by a Member of Staff

- If a member of staff has an issue of concern, they will be encouraged to deal with this informally through the normal channels of line management.
- If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, then the member of staff may invoke the Complaints Procedure (3.2 Internal Procedure) or formal Grievance Procedure if they so wish.

2.5 Unresolved Complaints

- Where complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved through internal complaints procedures, advice will be sought from external bodies such as the Commission for Equality and Human Rights or External HR Consultant/Specialist.

3. Implementation

3.1 Personnel

- The Curriculum and Performance Manager will oversee each formal complaint and may wish to delegate where appropriate. Complaints against the Curriculum and Performance Manager will be addressed by a nominated director.
- Complaints against a Director will be dealt with by the other Director or, in the case of a complaint against this Director, will be dealt with by the opposite nominated Director or Operations Manager.
- Complaints against Didac's practices are to be referred to external agencies where appropriate, e.g. OFQUAL, Awarding organisations, EPAO

3.2 Internal procedure (formal procedure)

In the absence of an informal resolution, the formal procedure will be invoked, and procedures followed:

- A complaint log form should be obtained and will be available from the office or from the Trainer. These forms will be numbered and logged.
- The form should be completed by the recipient of the complaint, any written evidence attached, and the complaint referred to Curriculum and Performance Manager who will decide whether to deal directly with the complaint or oversee this or delegate to a member of the SLT.
- If the complaint concerns a member of staff, the person concerned should be informed and given the opportunity to respond fully either verbally and/or in writing. From the outset, they should have access to all relevant correspondence or documentation. The member of staff's comments will be noted. The member of staff should be informed of the outcomes of the complaint.
- The Curriculum and Performance Manager will respond initially, in writing, to the complainant. This initial response acknowledging the complaint should take place within 2 working days and preferably by return. Further investigations, if needed, should be completed and the complainant informed of the outcomes within 7 working days if possible.
- If a complainant is not satisfied with the findings, then they may wish to pursue the issue with the Curriculum and Performance Manager or make an independent approach to the Operations Manager. If so, the complainant should make this known within 10 days of receipt of the outcome.
- If a complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, then they can request that the issue be raised through the Board of Directors whose decision is final. This request must be made within 10 days of the complainant being notified of the previous stage.
- Confidential notes should be kept, and details of the complaint stored in a central 'Complaints' file. These records will be used on an annual basis to monitor the number and type of complaints and the response and resolutions rates. Other details will remain confidential.

Contact Addresses

Didac Limited
Gavin Lewis
Curriculum and Performance Manager
Woodwise Academy
Crews Hole Road
Bristol. BS5 8BB

Email: gavin.lewis@didac.co.uk

Phone 0800 773 4230