

GEM Partnership Complaints Policy and Procedure

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 GEM Partnership are committed to ensuring our directors, employees, contractors, work seekers, temporary workers, learners and apprentices receive the best possible service. GEM Partnership do however recognise that issues may arise and are committed to rectify any problem as soon as it is brought to our attention. This policy sets out expectations regarding GEM Partnerships complaints policy.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 GEM Partnership is committed to providing the best possible service, and we recognise that occasionally stakeholders may feel that they have cause to complain about the service they have received. We encourage feedback from all stakeholders, including complaints and how we can do things better. If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, this will be dealt with as a failure of service under the terms of our Complaints Policy.

3 Aim

- 3.1 GEM Partnership aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. GEM Partnership will;
 - 3.1.1 Aim to put things right quickly for our stakeholders when they go wrong.
 - 3.1.2 Keep our directors, employees, contractors, work seekers, temporary workers, learners, apprentices and clients informed of the progress of their complaint and result of any investigation.
 - 3.1.3 Seek to learn from each complaint to continuously improve our performance.
 - 3.1.4 Set performance targets for responding to complaints and monitor our performance against these targets.
 - 3.1.5 Advise our stakeholders of the right to complain to the relevant regulatory body if they remain dissatisfied after their complaint has been through all stages of the internal complaint's procedure.

4 Monitoring

- 4.1 GEM Partnership is committed to continuously improvement in its service and delivery.
- 4.2 GEM Partnership will;
 - 4.2.1 Make it simple to make a complaint.
 - 4.2.2 Endeavour to respond to complaints within the timescales stated and keep all informed.
 - 4.2.3 Ensure that there is a full explanation to the conclusion of the complaint in a preferred format.
 - 4.2.4 Provide information of any changes made to our service following the complaint.
 - 4.2.5 Review our policy annually.

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 The Board of Directors are responsible for developing and encouraging the highest quality of service and experience for all stakeholders.

6 Communication

- 6.1 GEM Partnerships Complaints Policy and Procedure will be readily available to all directors, employees, contractors, work seekers, temporary workers, learners, apprentices and clients and can be found at www.gempartnership.com, and in the learner handbook, employer handbook and the commitment statement. Please request a copy from info@gempartnership.com this also includes a copy in another language or braille.

7 Complaints Procedures for Internal Staff

- 7.1 If an internal staff member has a problem or concern about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues they are encouraged to refer to GEM Partnerships Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. This is saved on GEM Partnerships shared drive SharePoint.

8 Complaints Procedure for External Complaints

- 8.1.1 All complaints should be made in writing to Julie Hunter, HR Manager:
- 8.1.2 Email: Julie.Hunter@gempartnership.com
- 8.1.3 Postal address: 2 Cook Way, North West Industrial Est, Peterlee SR8 2HY
- 8.1.4 Stage 1 - GEM Partnership will send you written acknowledgement (email or letter) of receipt of your complaint and advise you of the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. We will advise you of any further information or clarity that we require at this stage and how we intend to obtain this information. You can expect to receive our acknowledgement within [2-5] days of us receiving your complaint.
- 8.1.5 Stage 2 - We will record your complaint in our central register within a day of having received it.
- 8.1.6 Stage 3 - Should further information be required in relation to the complaint, we will contact you as stated in our correspondence sent at stage 1 of the process. You can expect to receive our acknowledgement letter within 5 days of your reply.
- 8.1.7 Stage 4 - We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps;
 - 8.1.7.1 We may ask the member of staff who dealt with you to reply to your complaint within 5 days of our request.
 - 8.1.7.2 We will then examine the member of staff's reply and the information you have provided for us.
 - 8.1.7.3 If necessary, we may ask you to speak to them. This will take up to 4 days from receiving their reply.
- 8.1.8 Stage 5 - Julie Hunter will then contact you, to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. This will happen within 5 days of the end of our investigation.
- 8.1.9 Stage 6 - Within 2 days of the meeting, Julie Hunter will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions that have been agreed with you. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, Julie Hunter will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include suggestions for resolving the matter, within 5 days of completing the investigation.
- 8.1.10 Stage 7 - If you are still not satisfied you can write to us again, and a Director of the company will review the decision within 10 days
- 8.1.11 Stage 8 - We will let you know of the outcome of this review within 5 days of the end of the review and we will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
- 8.2 If we have to change any of the time scales above, we will let you know and explain why.

9 The Appeals Process (Recruitment)

- 9.1 If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Fair Work Agency at:
 - Email: contact@fairworkagency.gov.uk
 - Phone: 0345 161 6000
 - Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (except public holidays)
 - Online form: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pay-and-work-rights-complaints>
- 9.1.1 The Recruitment and Employment Confederation, REC:
 - 20 Queen Elizabeth Street, London, SE1 2LS, 020 7009 2100,
 - <https://www.rec.uk.com/recruiters/compliance/complaints>

10 The Appeals Process (Training)

- 10.1 Stage 1 - All appeals must be made in writing, clearly stating why the appeal is being made. Apprentices / learners - can make an appeal against an assessment decision on their qualification or end point assessment within 20 days of an assessment decision being made. The written appeal can be handed to the relevant Trainer or sent directly to training@gem-training.com.
- 10.2 Stage 2 - If Stage 1 is not resolved by the Trainer, the appeal will be passed to the Internal Quality Assurance Team (IQA's) within 5-working days

- 10.3 Stage 3 - If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 2, the IQA will meet with a Director, who will investigate further and if necessary, talk to the complainant within 5 working days.
- 10.4 Stage 4 - If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 3, it will be passed to the relevant awarding body / awarding organisation or the qualification regulator. Following their investigation, the decision is final.

11 Awarding Organisations

- 11.1 Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance - info@highfield.co.uk
- 11.2 Ofqual - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure>
- 11.3 EAL - <https://eal.org.uk/>
- 11.4 Innovate - <https://innovateawarding.org/policies-and-important-information/>

12 End Point Assessment Organisations

- 12.1 Highfield Assessments - info@highfieldassessment.com
- 12.2 UCE - info@UCE.org.uk
- 12.3 DSW - info@dswlearning.co.uk
- 12.4 Qualitrain - info@qualitrain.co.uk
- 12.5 If you are dissatisfied with your final outcome on a complaint or assessment decision you may contact the ESFA in writing to:
Complaints Team Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT.
For further details please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure#complain-about-a-post-16-training-provider-college-or-employer-we-fund>

13 Supporting Policies

- 13.1 GEM Partnership Whistleblowing Policy
- 13.2 GEM Partnership Counter Fraud and Error Prevention Policy
- 13.3 GEM Partnership Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- 13.4 GEM Partnership Quality Assurance Policy
- 13.5 GEM Partnership Awarding Body Appeals Procedure
- 13.6 GEM Partnership Bribery & Corruption Policy