



notebookassessmentservices

Notebook Assessment Services Ltd (NAS) Complaints Policy

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Policy Statement

Notebook Assessment Services Ltd (NAS) strives for excellence and aims to continually improve its standards of provision. The Company is committed to providing a high-quality assessment experience for all Apprentices, Employers and Training Providers and will treat all fairly and consistently.

Reason for the Policy

NAS aims to provide a suitable assessment environment that maximises the academic, social, and personal opportunities for all its Apprentices. It is recognised that on occasions, problems arise, and Apprentices (and other stakeholders) may wish to express concern, disappointment, or dissatisfaction with aspects of the quality of services.

Policy Objectives

This policy is aimed at any individual or organisation involved in the delivery or assessment of a standard where NAS is providing the End-Point Assessment. This includes employers, providers and apprentices, and other stakeholders, and covers any complaints these individuals or organisations may wish to make. This policy ensures that all complaints are dealt with seriously, fairly, and consistently.

The policy is in place to ensure that NAS staff are aware of the process to be followed should a complaint arise and to ensure that complaints are handled sensitively and in line with the NAS's Equality and Diversity policy ensuring a complaints procedure that is transparent and provides clear, accessible routes for those wishing to make a genuine complaint.

This Policy does not cover:

- appeals about decisions made by NAS, which is covered by our Appeals Policy and Procedure
- any complaint about possible malpractice or maladministration, which is covered by our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Policy

- All complaints will be dealt with seriously, fairly, and consistently
- All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding policies
- All complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to the confidentiality of both staff and the Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider
- All complainants will be kept informed, whatever the outcome
- Complaints will be recorded, monitored and analysed
- Appropriate actions will be taken to prevent the recurrence of complaints where possible
- Documentation will be filed in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy

Confidentiality and whistleblowing

We recognise that there are occasions where a complainant wishes to remain anonymous. Whilst our preference is that all complaints reveal their identity and provide contact details, if there is concern about negative consequences a complainant may request that their identity is not divulged. There may be occasions where the withholding of this information inhibits NAS from conducting a complete investigation.

Whilst we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously, we will always try to confirm a complaint using a separate investigation before pursuing the matter with those to whom the complaint relates.

At all times we will investigate such complaints from whistle-blowers following relevant whistle-

blowing legislation and guidance.

Definitions

A complaint is a serious expression of dissatisfaction with services provided by NAS that require investigation and response.

Responsibility

This policy is relevant to all company staff, associates, customers, and stakeholders.

All staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedures set out below.

The Operations Manager has a responsibility to receive all formal complaints and to log and monitor the complaints in accordance with the procedures below.

All staff have a responsibility to take a role in resolving complaints through investigation and response to the complaint.

Complaints Procedure

Stage One (Informal)

All concerns should be raised in the first instance with the Operations Manager within 10 working days of the incident.

If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the complainant, the Independent Assessor (if appropriate) and the Operations Manager to try and resolve the issue.

If a complaint is about a member of staff, it must be referred to the Head of NAS.

At this informal stage, complaints may be made in person, by phone or by e-mail. The complainant must be kept informed of progress at all stages with a written or verbal response to the complaint within 10 working days. If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the complaint will move to Stage 2.

All records of conversations and correspondence must be held on file.

Any complainant who does not feel it appropriate to follow the Stage One process due to a conflict of interest may go directly to Stage 2.

Stage Two (Formal)

If a complainant has been through Stage One (or does not feel it appropriate) then the complainant must submit their complaint in writing using the NAS Complaints Form

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days by the Operations Manager. The Head of NAS will allocate a senior member of NAS not involved in the complaint to investigate.

There will be two possible outcomes:

- Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving full reasons for the decision
- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint and take appropriate steps to avoid a similar problem arising in the future

In situations where a complaint is upheld, or where an investigation indicates a failure in our

assessment processes, we will take appropriate action, for example by:

- informing the relevant External Quality Assurance Organisation (EQAO) or regulator (where required) if an apprentice's assessment has been affected
- identifying any other apprentice who has been affected by that failure
- correcting or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure
- ensuring that the failure does not recur in the future
- amending procedures and notifying relevant stakeholders of any changes that affect them and why, and
- arranging staff training

We aim to resolve complaints within 10 working days, however, should the issue be complex the Operations Manager will inform the complainant if a resolution is not possible within that timeframe.

Once the investigation is complete the Operations Manager will provide a response that explains what went wrong, why it went wrong and what action will be taken to resolve the situation.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they request a review of it within 20 working days of the date of the decision letter.

The request will be referred to the Head of NAS who will either allocate a senior member of NAS staff or an independent competent expert who has not been involved in the original complaint or its response to complete the review or undertake the review themselves.

A review will only be conducted if the complainant provides clear reasons for making the request and sets out areas of concern. The reasons must relate only to the way that we have or have not investigated your complaint and not the details of the complaint itself.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with NAS's response after exhausting the Complaints Policy, they should seek advice from the appropriate External Quality Assurance Organisation.

Complaints brought to our attention by an External Quality Assurance Organisation

Where an EQAO notifies NAS of a complaint about our assessment arrangements that it has received, we will follow the same process as any other complaint.

If NAS is notified of a failure that has been discovered in the assessment process of another End-point Assessment Organisation via a complaint, we will review our procedures in accordance with this policy to ascertain if the same failure could affect our arrangements.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed as part of NAS's continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements. It may be reviewed earlier should any feedback or concern be brought to the attention of NAS to ensure it remains fit for purpose and the process and its outcomes are deliverable.

Policy version and owner

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