

Complaints Policy

Introduction

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from BCS.

We value the way in which our qualifications are delivered and the learners who undertake them and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of our customers.

We are confident of providing a high quality service and would be extremely disappointed if this is not the case.

Therefore, it is important should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations that you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn lessons.

Scope

This policy covers complaints from learners, members of the public, centres or any other associated third parties who may wish to make a complaint in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by BCS.

It is not to be used to cover appeals in relation to decisions made by BCS. These areas are covered by our Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in our Client Support Statement or Appeals Policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Centre's responsibility

Centres should take all responsible steps to ensure that their staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and learners, are aware of the contents of this policy and that centres have a complaints handling procedure and appeals process in place to deal with complaints from learners about the services provided. If an individual is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by a centre the individual must first of all go through the centre's complaints process before bringing the matter to BCS

Review arrangements

We will review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback (eg 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.

How should I complain?

All BCS our staff are trained to help our customers and they all like to help, so you should first try to sort out any problem at the earliest opportunity by either contacting the Customer Service team by telephone or emailing using the contact details provided at the end of this policy.

Where necessary your complaint will be directed to the relevant team and further investigations will be undertaken.

If, after receiving a response you are not satisfied, you can request by email to be contacted by the team manager.

Learners and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by a centre at which they have received training for a BCS qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to BCS. However, learners can make the complaint directly to BCS in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a significant breach by the centre of our various procedures (contact details are provided at the end of this policy).

If I complain what details do I have to give?

When you contact us, please give us your full name, contact details including an email address (where applicable) and a daytime telephone number 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 supporting documentation to do with the complaint.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

Where the regulators notify BCS about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain if the same issue could affect BCS qualifications.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal identity and contact details to us, and if there is concern about possible adverse consequences BCS must be informed that identity must not be divulged. If it helps to reassure on this point, BCS we can confirm that there is no obligation (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information if it would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

While BCS is prepared to investigate issues which are reported anonymously and/or by whistleblowers¹ we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the complaint/allegation relates.

What will happen to my complaint?

BCS acknowledges receipt of your complaint within a maximum of 2 working days, indicating who is investigating the complaint and the ongoing status. Your complaint will be investigated by someone who has no personal interest or involvement in the matter of the complaint.

If your complaint is more complex, you will be kept updated on timescales which will be dependent upon the complexity of your complaint. We may contact you to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). In the event of complex cases; timescales may exceed 10 working. We commit to providing an update to

¹ BCS defines whistleblowers as being current or ex members of staff (both permanent or contracted) or third party suppliers of a centre or BCS and/or current or previous learners

customers every 5 working days throughout the investigation process. At the end of the investigation we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

Successful complaints and/or issues brought to our attention by Ofqual

If any part of the complaint is upheld BCS will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how service and arrangements can be improved. For example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our qualification development, delivery or awarding 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 in question is deemed in appropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in BCS processes, BCS will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

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

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you disagree with the decision the first point of call is the Customer Services Manager.

If you are still unhappy with the decision taken by BCS in reviewing the complaint you can, where relevant, take the matter through our Appeal arrangements which are outlined in our Appeals Policy.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Customer Services team on +44 (0) 1793 417424 or email them at www.bcs.org.uk/contact