

**University of Essex
Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
Employer Complaints Procedure**

1. Introduction

1.1 University of Essex (Essex) is committed to providing high quality education and services to all its apprentices. Employers of apprentices we work with to deliver the apprenticeship provision are important stakeholders. We value your views and will be responsive to your concerns when they are raised. The purpose of this Procedure is to create a supportive environment for stakeholders to raise and manage complaints in a way which is sensitive to the needs of each specific case and to the benefit of the apprentices.

2. Purpose

2.1 As a provider of higher and degree apprenticeships, Essex seeks to resolve any complaints that may arise from an employer of an apprentice registered on a course with the University of Essex in an appropriate manner for the benefit of all concerned.

2.2 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requires all training providers to provide employers with a written complaints and dispute resolution procedure. This procedure addresses that requirement by setting out the framework for employers to raise and resolve complaints and disputes.

2.3 Action taken as a result of complaints will help the University to improve the quality of the education that it provides to apprentices.

3. Scope

3.1 This procedure can be used for all complaints that employers wish to raise with the University in relation to higher and degree apprenticeship provision. Complaints from apprentices are outside the scope of this procedure. Where an apprentice is dissatisfied with any aspect of their apprenticeship they should raise relevant matters with the University via the University's Student Complaint Policy and Procedure <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/complaints.aspx>

4. Complaints and dispute resolution procedure

4.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

4.1.1 The employer should try to resolve any dispute with the University informally in the first instance. This provides the opportunity for the University and the employer to discuss the concerns in good faith in an attempt to bring about an early resolution. The employer should, in the first instance, make contact with the Apprenticeship Lead of the department / school delivering the training, to discuss the issue of concern on an informal basis.

4.2 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

4.2.1 Should the employer be dissatisfied following the informal discussion with the department /school or feel that their concerns have not been adequately resolved,



the employer may refer their concerns, in writing (**Dispute Notice**), to the Senior Apprenticeships and Summer Schools Manager at:

Email: apprenticeships@essex.ac.uk

Telephone: 01206 873840

4.2.2 The dispute notice should include:

- Details of the nature of the concerns / dispute or complaint;
- Copies of any supporting documents;
- Details of discussions undertaken with the department / school and the reasons why the complaint has not been adequately resolved; and
- Any further information that would be useful for the University to be aware of

4.2.3 The Senior Apprenticeships and Summer Schools Manager and the employer shall discuss the dispute / concerns within five (5) working days of receipt of the written complaint in an attempt to resolve the issues raised or agree further steps required to enable parties to come to an agreed solution.

4.2.4 Confirmation of the outcome of the complaint, including actions, shall be provided to the employer in writing within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the Dispute Notice.

4.3 Stage 3 – Escalation

4.3.1 Where the parties are unable to agree a satisfactory resolution, or the employer is not satisfied with the resolution offered by the University at Stage 2, the complaint may be escalated to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), who shall seek to discuss the complaint with the employer within ten (10) working days.

4.3.2 Should the employer wish to escalate their complaint it should be put in writing the Senior Apprenticeships and Summer Schools Manager at apprenticeships@essex.ac.uk.

4.3.3 The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) shall confirm the outcome of the complaint in writing to the employer within forty (40) working days of receipt of the escalation.

4.3.4 Where the University and the Employer are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution following all the steps within this procedure, either party may refer the matter to mediation in accordance with the model procedure of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, London. https://www.cedr.com/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIj9e8zq-F8glVWODtCh2xiAUmEAAYASAAEgIczPD_BwE . The cost of mediation will be covered equally by the University and the employer, if applicable.

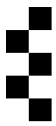
4.3.5 If no settlement results from the mediation the parties agree that the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle a dispute arising in relation to the apprenticeship programme.

4.3.6 In addition to the process set out, Apprentices and employers can contact the apprenticeship helpline regarding apprenticeship concerns, complaints and enquiries:

National Apprenticeship Helpline

Email: helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

Tel: 08000 150 600



5. Sub-Contracting organisations

5.1 The University is responsible for resolving any disputes between the employer and sub-contracting organisations. The employer should, in the first instance, make contact with the Senior Apprenticeships and Summer Schools Manager to discuss the issue of concern on an informal basis.

5.2 Should the employer be dissatisfied following the informal discussion or feel that their concerns have not been adequately resolved, the employer may refer their concerns, in writing (**Dispute Notice**), to the Senior Apprenticeships and Summer Schools Manager at:

Email: apprenticeships@essex.ac.uk

Telephone: 01206 873840

5.2 Steps 4.2.2 to 4.3.6 will then be followed as appropriate to resolve the dispute.


6. End Point Assessment Organisations

6.1 The University will follow the complaints procedure of the relevant End Point Assessment Organisation conducting the end point assessment on behalf of the employer. The University will keep the employer informed at all times of the progress and outcome of the complaint.

7. Joint Complaints (Employer /Apprentice)

7.1 If the Employer and the Apprentice seek to raise a joint complaint against the University, the University shall consider the facts of the complaint and will determine, at its sole discretion, the appropriate procedure to be adopted in respect of the complaint and the complaint will either follow the process set out in this procedure or shall follow the process set out in the University’s Student Complaint Policy and Procedure.

8. Policy Approval

Signature	
Name	Claire Nixon
Role	Head of Quality Development
Date	22 September 2021

9. Review

9.1 This procedure is subject to annual review by the Apprenticeships Hub to ensure it continues to meet the University’s needs and the requirements of the ESFA regulations and contract.



Document Review Information	
Document Owner	Apprenticeships Hub
Document Author	Rachel Brown
Document last reviewed by	Rachel Brown
Date document approved	August 2019
Date last reviewed	August 2021
Review frequency	Annually