

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Employer & Subcontractor Feedback and Complaints Policy Process

Policy Statement

1. Canterbury Christ Church University (“**the University**”) is committed to providing high quality education and services to all its learners and client organisations. We aim to be responsive to concerns when they are raised. Employers of higher and degree apprentices and subcontractors that work with us to deliver apprenticeship provision are important stakeholders in enabling the University to provide high quality higher and degree apprenticeships and we welcome their feedback and cooperation to resolve issues for the benefit of apprentices.

Purpose

2. As a higher education institution (“**HEI**”) Training Provider for higher and degree apprenticeships, the University is responsible for resolving issues and disputes with and between employers and, where relevant, other providers, including sub-contractors, who work with us to deliver apprenticeships.
3. The Education Skills Funding Agency (“**ESFA**”) requires Training Providers to provide employers with a written complaints and dispute resolution policy and process. This policy addresses that requirement by setting out the framework for employers to raise and resolve queries, complaints and disputes.
4. Feedback received and action taken as a result of receiving and resolving queries and complaints will help the University to improve the quality of education that it provides for apprentices.

Scope

5. This process can be used for all queries and complaints that employers wish to raise with the University or one of our subcontractors in relation to higher and degree apprentice provision. Apprentice complaints are outside the scope of this policy. Where an apprentice is dissatisfied with any aspect of their apprenticeship

they should refer to their apprentice agreement and raise relevant matters with the University via the Student Complaints Procedure copies of which are available from: <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/students/student-voice/your-feedback/complaints.aspx>. Subcontractors may use the process provided in their agreement with the University.

Objectives

6. The desired objectives of this policy are:
 - 6.1 to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity;
 - 6.2 to ensure that the decision-making processes for complaints and disputes are fair and transparent to the complainant; and
 - 6.3 to give all parties a clear procedure for escalating concerns that cannot be resolved at the level where they arise.

Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure

7. In the event that any dispute arises between the University and the employer, or between the employer and any sub-contractor, the parties shall discuss in good faith a resolution to the dispute. For the University, the initial point of contact for discussions is the Apprenticeship Unit at:

Telephone +44 (0)1227 921911

Email: apprenticeships@canterbury.ac.uk
8. If the dispute is between the University and the employer and it continues for a period of five (5) working days without resolution, either party may formally refer the dispute in writing to the authorised officer or lead contact nominated for their organisation. For the University this is **[Dr. Ken Powell, Director of The Apprenticeship Unit (ken.powell@canterbury.ac.uk)]**.
9. If the dispute is between a sub-contractor and employer, then the lead contact for the employer should formally refer the dispute in writing to the authorised officer of the subcontractor in a written referral that is copied via email to the Apprenticeship Unit of the University.

10. Whether the dispute relates to a sub-contract or not, the referral notice must include:
 - 10.1 the name and job title of the authorised officer to whom the referral is being made;
 - 10.2 sufficient details of the nature of the dispute or complaint to enable it to be considered;
 - 10.3 copies of any supporting documents;
 - 10.4 what steps have already been taken to resolve the dispute or complaint;
 - 10.5 what outcome(s) the referrer is seeking to address the complaint or resolve the dispute;
 - 10.6 whether there are any special circumstances which need to be taken into account, including any reasonable adjustments which any party wishes to make to the complaints-handling process to ensure it is accessible and fair to those involved; and
 - 10.7 if applicable, any reasons why the requirements set out above cannot be complied with at the relevant time.
11. The authorised officer or nominee and employer contact shall discuss the dispute within five (5) working days of the date of referral and attempt to resolve the dispute, or agree the next steps for working out a solution.
12. If no resolution is reached following the process in paragraphs 1 to 10 above, either of the authorised officers may refer the matter to the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education, Enhancement and Student Experience) on behalf of the University and an alternative representative of the employer, or sub-contractor, who shall seek to resolve the dispute within ten (10) working days thereafter.
13. Where the dispute is between an employer and a sub-contractor and the authorised officer and employer lead contact cannot resolve the matter then the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education, Enhancement and Student Experience) on behalf of the University will adjudicate at their sole discretion, or

they will appoint an alternative adjudicator who has not been involved with the process before this point.

14. Where the dispute is between the University and an employer and the parties cannot reach a satisfactory resolution within twenty (20) working days after commencing discussions, either party may refer the matter to mediation in accordance with the model procedure of the Centre for Dispute Resolution, London ("CEDR"), such mediation to be completed within twenty (20) working days of signature of the CEDR Mediation Agreement.

ESFA Helpline

15. In addition, you may also escalate a complaint to the Skills Funding Agency's apprenticeship helpline. The ESFA Apprenticeship helpline can be contacted on **0800 015 0400** or by email ***nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk***.

Roles and Responsibilities

16. Relevant roles on behalf of the University are:
 - 16.1 Apprenticeship Manager is the initial point of contact for employers or subcontractors to raise issues or complaints and seek early resolution.
 - 16.2 Director of The Apprenticeship is the operational policy owner responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy, advising Authorised Officers on individual complaints and disputes.
 - 16.3 Director of The Apprenticeship Unit is the Executive Policy Owner with responsibility for keeping under review the effectiveness of the policy.
 - 16.4 Authorised Officer for the University, a senior member of staff of the University nominated in the apprentice agreement as being responsible for signing off changes to the agreement and senior level resolution of disputes.
17. The authorised officer for the subcontractor is a person nominated by the subcontractor in its apprenticeship agreement with the University with sufficient seniority to act for the subcontractor in negotiations with the

University, and with sufficient authority to resolve disputes on behalf of the subcontractor.

18. The Lead Contact for the Employer is the person nominated by the Employer in its apprentice agreement with the University as responsible for oversight of the apprenticeship arrangements.

Associate Documents

19. The Complaints Policy and Process has been drafted with reference to:

Apprenticeship Funding and Performance Management Rules for Training Providers May 2017 to March 2018

Education Skills Funding Agency Procedure for dealing with complaints about providers of education and training, October 2015.

Review

20. This policy is subject to annual review by the University's Academic Strategy Committee to ensure it continues to meet the University's needs and the requirements of the Funding Agency regulations and contract.