



Business & Computing Examinations (BCE)

LONDON (UK)

Centre Complaints Management Guidelines

1	The Centre Commitment
1.1	Each BCE Approved Centre should be committed to delivering a high quality service and encourage its learners to tell it where there is cause for concern and a case for improvement.
1.2	At the same time it is expected that in raising possible issues of complaint, learners themselves will have observed their obligations as members of the Centre, through meeting their academic commitments and a level of general behaviour that accords with Centre regulations or reasonable consideration for others.
1.3	Each Centre should aim to handle complaints in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourages informal conciliation• is fair and efficient• treat complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality• facilitates early resolution• allows the Centre or a particular part to benefit from the experience
1.4	Every effort should be made to ensure that the procedure operates as closely as possible to its declared timetable, at low cost and with minimum documentation, but always within the spirit of fairness to all sides.
2	Advice to Learners (Before Making a Complaint)
2.1	If you are considering making a complaint or need help or further information, you can seek advice from a number of sources. These may include one or more drawn from the following list but it could be worth your while enquiring first at the Centre Front Desk (Reception) on the best route to take.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners Advice Unit / Department • Your personal tutor/supervisor • Your Centre's student/staff liaison committee • Procedures outlined in your Centre's Code of Practice
3	How to Complain
3.1	This procedure outlines a number of simple routes to be used by any learner depending on the seriousness of the complaint.
3.2	<p>The following list indicates examples of the type of complaint covered by this procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failing in a BCE Approved Centre service, academic or non-academic • Misinformation about academic qualifications • Poor teaching or supervision • Insufficient facilities • The behaviour of a member of staff • The behaviour of another learner
3.3	<p>However, you should also note that for the following matters of potential dispute; separate procedures might apply (your centre should be able to advise):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunities Policy • Protection of dignity while at study (including harassment) • Examination Results or Other Appeals
4	Complaint Results
4.1	You will be asked to indicate at the start of the complaint process what type of remedy you are seeking. Such remedies might include changes in practice, compensation, disciplinary action against a learner or member of staff, or a combination of these. Do remember that complaints will not always produce the outcome you seek. For instance, policy decisions or resourcing beyond the Centre's control may affect the level of service provided. However, whatever the decision, Centres should undertake to inform you of the result of a complaint and the reasons for it.
4.2	Centres should ensure that within appropriate bounds of confidentiality, sections of the Centre are notified of the outcome of a complaint where those sections are expected to take action in response (which may include data on the learner information system).

4.3	If a complaint refers to matters or allegations that are, or that become, the subject of an appeal against an academic decision, the academic appeal should be completed before final completion of the learner complaint.
4.4	If a complaint raises allegations of inappropriate behaviour by another learner, these allegations should be referred to the Learner Disciplinary Procedures.
4.5	If a complaint results in allegations about the conduct of a member of staff, these allegations should be referred to the Centre's Staff Disciplinary Procedures.
4.6	Anyone making unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations concerning the conduct or reputation of members of staff should be subject to disciplinary proceedings on the grounds that they have harmed, or attempted to harm, the good order and discipline of the Centre and/or brought the Centre or its staff or learners into disrepute.
5	Anonymity and Confidentiality
5.1	In general, those about whom complaints are made have a right to know what is being claimed and who is making a complaint. A copy of a complaint should normally be supplied to the person who is the subject of the complaint. There might be exceptions to this rule, for instance in the initial stages of the harassment procedures. If, in the context of another type of complaint, and learners are concerned to protect their anonymity, Centre should be able to make initial enquiries on participants behalf.
5.2	Learners should not be discriminated against or suffer recrimination as a result of making a complaint unless it is found to be malicious or vexatious.
5.3	It should be the Centre's expectation that the confidentiality of the documentation generated by a complaint will be respected by all parties.
5.4	Each year a report should be prepared detailing the sorts of general matters on which learners have been raising complaints. BCE hopes that in this way, broad concerns can be shared and appropriate action taken.

The Complaints Procedure

1. Before submitting a written complaint a learner should attempt to resolve the matter informally through discussion with the relevant member of staff. If that discussion proves unproductive the learner should again seek to discuss the issue informally with the Student representative, Welfare Officer or relevant staff member.
2. If the learner is still not satisfied they should then submit a written complaint. If a learner has any complaints they wish to make the Centre Head aware of, they first need to inform the Front Desk i.e. Receptionist.
3. The Front Desk will then furnish the learner with the relevant procedure/information or contact the Welfare Officer or equivalence to arrange a meeting with the learner.
4. The Welfare Officer or responsible person might then meet with the learner to investigate the problem and identify the issues. If the complaint is judged to not require further escalation, the Welfare Officer will try to resolve the issue at that point.
5. If this is not possible, the Welfare Officer then decides how the problem should be addressed and involves the correct departments or individuals.
6. The confirmation of the action being taken by the Welfare Officer might be given to the learner in writing or otherwise. The Welfare Officer will look to take action and report back to the learner within reasonable time i.e. 5 working days.
7. If the issue cannot be resolved during this period of time an escalation process is initiated. This will involve the Welfare Officer acting under the guidance of Senior Management. This escalation process and will typically take another 5 working days, after this time an update will be provided to the learner.
8. Once the issue has been dealt with successfully, the resolution of the problem must be confirmed to the learner in writing and a signature received from the learner.
9. All written complaints need to be saved in a complaint folder and tracked on centre complaint management tracking sheet.

Centres are advised to display complaints management procedures on student notice board.