

# **PARK Education Centre**

## **Complaint Policy and procedures**

Park Education recognises that from time to time employees and learners will wish to seek redress for issues or grievances relating to their employment or training. In this respect the organisation's policy is to encourage free communication between employees or learners and their managers or tutors/assessors to ensure that questions and problems arising during the course of employment or training can be addressed and where possible resolve quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned. The organisation will ensure that the interests and well-being of employees or learners associated with a complaint or grievance are properly safeguarded, and there may be a need to render appropriate support for those associated with a complaint or grievance. Employees and learners are encouraged to deal with problems informally in the first instance with their managers or assessors/tutors. If it is not possible to resolve informally the employee or learner should then raise the matter formally with a manager or assessor without unreasonable delay. This should be done in writing setting out the nature of the complaint. The objective of a complaint procedure is to provide a recognised procedure through which a complaint can be brought to the attention of management, by providing the right for an employee or learner to have their complaint heard, investigated and if proved justified, remedied. In this respect Park Education recognises that there is a substantial need for sound evidence and procedural fairness in the process.

### **Scope:**

The organisation deals with two types of complaints. Those from the organisation employees and the ones from students. In each area fairness and transparency are important.

#### **Employees**

Complaint relating to your work or the people with whom you work you should use the following procedure:

Employees should always try to resolve issues informally. If this is not possible the employee should raise formally

The employee should raise the matter formally and without delay with a manager who is not the subject of the complaint setting out the facts in writing of the exact nature of the complaint or problem and redress being sought

The manager should investigate and arrange as soon as possible a mutually agreed date for a meeting where the employee will be given opportunity to state their complaint.

At a formal meeting you have the right to be accompanied by one individual:

- A work colleague or
- A trade union representative

Your companion has the right to explain and sum up your case and to respond to views expressed at the hearing. They may not answer questions on your behalf.

If your companion is unable to attend the date we set , we will always postpone the interview for up to five days or longer at our discretion

## Students

Park Education recognises that students' complaint is an expression of a specific concern about an assessment decision, the provision of a course/module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service as per to Ofsted Further Education and skills inspection handbook guidance.

For students complaints the following individuals will be involved

1. Student Welfare Officer
2. Internal Quality Adviser
3. Centre Manager
4. Assessor
5. Director

This procedure does encompasses two types of complaints

1. Non - Academic Complaints and will include the following
  - Allegations of harassment or discrimination on students
  - In adequate access to students' resources
2. Academic Complaints and include the following
  - Student Academic Misconduct of plagiarism /collusion/ fabrication in assessments. Assessment Decision
  - Staff Academic misconduct
  - Complaints on Academic delivery

When dealing with appeals the Park Education will ensure the following

- Making provision for informality and flexibility in the proceedings, where appropriate
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that the parties involved are on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in the proceedings, including assisting or otherwise facilitating the person making a complaint or an appeal in the presentation of their case
- Avoiding delay as far as is compatible with fairness and the proper consideration of the matters involved

- Dealing with a complaint or appeal in ways which are proportionate to the complexity of the issues and the resources of the parties involved

## Principles

1. Park Education will render the best possible experience for its students in a high quality learning and supporting in academic environment, and will do everything to facilitate students to resolve any reasonable complaint in informal way.
2. Park Education will assure students will not be victimized for making a complaint in good faith, and all fair and reasonable complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with according to the Park Education policy and procedures. If it is established that a complaint is playful or spurious, then it will not be considered reasonable. Park Education will not hesitate to take suitable measures against a student in this circumstances
3. Park Education will design a clear complaints and appeals procedures enables them to be conducted in a timely, fair and reasonable manner, and having regard to any applicable law.
4. All parties should act without bias or prejudice, with the objective of establishing the true facts of the case and coming to a reasonable and just resolution, which is relevant and proportionate to the complaint. Complaints should be dealt with in a timely manner, and complainants should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation at every stage.
5. Park Education will deal with all complaints confidentially, and expects all parties involved (including the complainant) to honour this approach. Unless and otherwise there are exceptional circumstances, any student or person, who is the subject of a complaint has the right to be furnished with a copy of the complaint, with the comment on it.
6. Park Education does possess effective arrangements to monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the complaints and appeals procedures and to reflect on the Park Education outcomes for enhancement purposes.
7. The anticipation is that the most of the complaints raised by students will be answered or resolved in a very short time informally by direct contact between the student and the Student Welfare Officer, without recourse to the more formal processes prescribed by Park Education Procedure.

8. Park Education complaint and appeal procedures are publicly available and easily comprehensible information for students to raise their matter of concerns

9. Park Education will satisfy the students that appropriate guidance and support is available for persons making a complaint or an appeal, including those taking advantage of learning opportunities provided away from Park Education and/or through flexible and distributed mode of leanings.

10. Park Education will ensure that suitable briefing and support is provided for all of their staff and students involved in handling or supporting complaints and appeals.

#### Timescales

Initially complaint must be furnished to the pertinent staff member who is responsible after the cause of the complaint and normally within two calendar months of the issue giving rise to a complaint unless there is some valid reason for the delay.

In exceptional circumstances, the following timescales will apply in this procedure:

- Members of staff will acknowledge receipt of any formal complaint within 5 working days
- Members of staff will investigate and issue a response to any formal complaint within twenty working days
- Where a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of any stage, they will have a maximum of 10 working days in which to request progress to the next stage of the procedure.

Park Education complaints process therefore consist of four stages:

#### Informal Stage:

The students are advised to contact the member of staff who is most immediately relevant to the matter in hand at the initial stage of complaint. If it is uncertain whom to approach, or the students think unable to approach the relevant person directly, then they must speak to the Student Welfare Officer, who will be in a position to advise the student where to get assistance in formulating student's complaint and will also have the discretion, in exceptional cases, to immediately advance the complaint to the first or, exceptionally, second stage (

The Park Education will consider whether and how our procedures should allow complaints and, where appropriate, appeals to be resolved informally at any stage, with the consent of both parties.

In this circumstances Park Education staff will be explained in

- How the informal stages in complaints and appeals procedures relate to the formal stages
- The importance of keeping notes of any discussions and their outcomes

- The limits of their authority to speak on behalf of the Park Education.

#### First Stage:

If the student is not satisfied with the response to the complaint formulated from the relevant member of staff, then the student can complain formally, in writing, to the Student Welfare Officer who will issue a written acknowledgement of student's complaint, normally within 5 working days, and let the student know who will deal with the matter concerned. If the complaint is against the Student Welfare Officer, then the student could file his/her written report to the centre manager

The complaint will then be investigated by the relevant staff and the student will receive a written statement with findings within 15 working days from receipt of the complaint. Occasionally, the investigator will need to contact the student to clarify matters of fact.

Once the student received the report, and issue hasn't been resolved satisfactorily, and then the student can progress to the second formal stage of the complaint procedure.

#### Second Stage:

The student must complete a complaint form and furnish it to the Park Education Student Welfare Officer within 07 working days of the receiving the investigator's statement at the end of the first stage. On this form the student must render the following details:

- Reason for complaint
- Evidence to support the complaint with any relevant documents
- Action taken so far to resolve the issue
- Desired resolution of issue
- Student name and contact details

If one student wants to formulate the complaint on behalf of his /her group who wish to make the same complaint, then only one form should be completed, and the student should nominate from amongst the list of complainants one person to act as your spokesperson.

Student Welfare Officer will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint form, normally within 3 working days. The matter will then be passed on to the Centre manager to review and investigate to set up the facts of the case.

In light of this investigation, the Head of Academic Department deems the complaint to be frivolous or spurious then they will close their investigation.

If the head of academic considers that the complaint is valid then the centre manager will investigate the matter. The student concerned will be informed that who will be dealing with his /her complaint and the expected time-scale for the investigation.

The student has the right to a personal hearing with the person investigating the complaint. The student is entitled to be accompanied to this hearing by another member of the Park

Education (for instance his / her colleague or tutor). The Student Welfare Officer will be present at this hearing and will keep a record of proceedings.

At the complaints hearing, you will have the opportunity to present the student's case. The department/person against whom the complaint is raised is also entitled to be present at this hearing, and have their views heard. All information used by the panel to reach a decision will be shared with both parties, so that they can contest or clarify the information.

Once the investigation is complete, the department will write to the student, normally within 5 working days of the hearing, with details of their findings and what they have recommended to be the outcome.

Third and Final Stage:

If the student is not satisfied with the second stage, then he /she can request the Student Welfare Officer to progress to the final stage, which is the formal review to the Head of Academic.

They are required to generate a request for review within 10 working days of receiving details of the outcome of the second stage of the complaints procedure.

Normally a formal review will take place only if they:

- o Submit the current or additional evidence which was not, for a valid reason, available in the earlier stage of the procedure and which might have influenced the outcome; and/or
- o Able to elaborate that the previous complaint procedures were not followed appropriately

Once the review is completed, the Director will write to the student detailing their findings and (if appropriate) what actions will be taken. The decision of the Director will remain final.