



Complaints Policy



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Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 Geason has a Complaints Policy to enable clients including learners, employers, and other stakeholders, who have legitimate complaints to have them addressed in the interests of continually improving the service we offer.
- 1.2 Geason welcomes constructive comments and criticisms from Learners. Whatever is stated will be taken seriously and dealt with objectively and efficiently, for the following reasons;
 - » Complaints tell us when learners are not happy with a service and this gives Geason the opportunity to put things right
 - » Comments/suggestions provide ideas on how Geason can improve its services
 - » Compliments let Geason know when learners are happy with a college service and tell us when something is working well. The good practice can then be shared with other company services
- 1.3 This procedure may be used by any learner regardless of mode of attendance or venue (including prospective learners and learners who have recently left Geason), parents, carers, employers and any other members of the community served by Geason.
- 1.4 The complaints procedure can be applied to complaints about:
 - » Enrolment
 - » Quality of teaching
 - » Treatment by Staff
 - » Behaviour of other Learners
 - » Information, Advice and Guidance
 - » Facilities

Note:

This procedure should not be used for:

- » Appealing an assessment grade, for which there is a separate Academics Appeals Procedure
- » Matters relating to harassment which are covered in the Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy or matters relating to potential personal injury which are covered in the relevant Health and Safety documents.

Note:

The complainant is the person making the complaint

How to make a complaint

- 2.1 All formal complaints must be made in writing and sent to the Quality Manager.

To guarantee a swift response, clients should complete a Complaint Form which is available from the main Centre reception or can be downloaded from Geason website.
- 2.2 Representatives of organisations may wish to write their own letter of complaint on behalf of their organisation, but in this case, they should take care to clearly state the nature of the complaint and the people involved, identifying when and where the incident/circumstances occurred and stating the named contact in the organisation with whom.
- 2.3 Every complaint will be dealt with separately unless a group of complaints relate to the same individual. If a group of Learners wish to make a joint complaint, one person, possibly the course representative should be nominated to 'lead' the complaint. This person should complete the complaints form. All the rest of the complainants must individually sign on the back of the form and all names must be clearly identified. In some circumstances all signatories may be asked to individually confirm that they wish to proceed with the complaint.
- 2.4 When the complaint is against a member of staff or another student, the person being complained about will be notified of the complaint. Once a complaint of this nature has been made it cannot be withdrawn until it has been investigated and a conclusion reached.
- 2.5 Subjects of a complaint will not be responsible for investigating the complaint.
- 2.6 If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous s/he must be informed that a formal complaint against a member of staff or other learners cannot be pursued.
- 2.7 Once received, all complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days by the Quality Manager, and investigations completed as quickly as practicable.
- 2.8 The complainant will be updated by the Quality Manager on the progress of their complaint every 15 working days until the matter is resolved.
- 2.9 The Quality Manager will direct the complaint to be investigated by the most appropriate Manager. The Quality Manager will also identify and alert an SLT member or to supervise the investigation and to check the response that is prepared.
- 2.10 The investigating manager may interview parties involved in the complaint. In this case such parties may be accompanied by a representative. A student will be entitled to be accompanied by a "friend" who may be a relative, fellow student, union representative or appropriate member of staff but not by a legal or other professional adviser.
- 2.11 A letter of response will be composed by the investigating officer, checked by the supervisor and sent to the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager will check it and combine it with other letters (if other aspects of the same complaint have been separately investigated).
- 2.12 The Quality Manager will monitor the progress of the complaint and will check and send a written response letter from the investigating manager(s) as soon as the matter has been fully investigated.

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- 2.13 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, s/he should contact the Quality Manager who will pass the complaint to a member of the senior leadership team, who will determine whether the complaint has been properly dealt with under this policy.

Their decision is final.

Appealing after an initial complaint has been raised

- 3.1 In the unlikely event that you remain unhappy after your complaint has been investigated and a decision reached then you may escalate your complaint to our Director of Quality Transformation and Innovation. Please include any further items for consideration and state clearly why you remain unhappy with the decision taken so far. The Director of Quality Transformation and Innovation will investigate in full and respond to you within 5 working days.

The Director of Quality Transformation and Innovation can be contacted on:

Call: 0141 2485755

E-mail: Claire.howard@geason.co.uk

Write to: Geason, Geason House, 145 North Street, Glasgow. G3 7DA.

- 3.2 This will be the final route of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal complaints procedure and your complaint refers to services you have received relating to your course and achieving your qualification then please contact the Awarding Organisation directly. The Awarding Organisation is Highfield Qualifications and their complaint policy can be located on their website: www.highfieldqualifications.com. Alternatively, please speak to the Highfield team on 0845 2260350.
- 3.3 Should you address your complaint to Highfield and remain unhappy with the outcome you may then raise your complaint to the relevant qualification regulator. Either a representative of Geason or Highfield will be able to offer you guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

Staff Responsibilities

The Quality Manager should:

- » ensure adequate supplies of Complaint Forms and envelopes
- » reply to complainant within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint
- » advise the complainant that attempts to influence witnesses before the case has been investigated may prejudice his/her original complaint (if applicable)
- » identify an appropriate investigating officer for the complaint and advise that a written response should be prepared and if necessary that the disciplinary procedures should be initiated (if applicable)
- » identify an appropriate supervisor to oversee the investigation
- » advise the person(s) complained against, of the complaint and unless there is a demonstrable fear of intimidation or victimisation, of the name(s) of the complainant(s)
- » check the letter of response before sending it to the complainant
- » maintain a confidential file of complaints and responses and any other relevant correspondence
- » ensure the file is up to date
- » report as required about the record of complaints to the SLT
- » produce an annual Complaints Report.

The Investigating Manager should:

- » fully investigate the complaint, adhering to the guidelines provided herewith.
- » if they are not able to fully investigate the complaint, or there is a conflict of interest, inform their line manager and the Quality Manager who will ensure that the investigation is followed through
- » if the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature, take steps to separate the complainant and the person(s) complained against.
- » discuss cases involving staff with the complaints supervisor and the Human Resources lead, to consider whether any disciplinary action should be initiated, after the investigation has been completed, produce a written response to the complainant and check it with the complaint supervisor before sending it to the Quality Manager (responses should not be sent directly to the complainant)
- » incorporate important outcomes/findings into the Self-Assessment Report.
- » present the record of complaints for discussion at Curriculum Review Meetings.