



Complaints and Appeals Policy (2/3)

Purpose of this Policy

This policy explains Competum Ltd's procedures for handling:

- **Complaints** about the service, conduct, administration or delivery
- **Assessment appeals**, including:
 - Challenges to assessment decisions
 - Concerns about assessment process
 - Requests for re-marks of externally assessed exams
 - Appeals relating to failed applications for reasonable adjustments or special considerations

This policy ensures all complaints and appeals are handled:

- Fairly
- Promptly
- Transparently
- Without disadvantage to the complainant
- In line with awarding body and regulatory requirements

Competum Ltd will consider complaints and appeals from **individual learners only**, to protect confidentiality and ensure accurate investigation.

Policy Principles

Competum Ltd is committed to:

- High-quality service delivery
- Maintaining learner trust, fairness and transparency
- Providing clear and accessible procedures
- Ensuring all complaints and appeals are thoroughly investigated
- Ensuring no learner is penalised for raising concerns in good faith
- Continuous improvement based on feedback and investigation outcomes



Scope of Complaints

Learners may submit a complaint relating to:

- The way a qualification, programme or Bootcamp was delivered
- Staff behaviour or conduct
- Actions or decisions of assessors or trainers
- Centre administration or communication
- Alleged malpractice or maladministration
- Application of processes such as:
 - Reasonable adjustments
 - Special considerations
 - Enquiries, requests or administrative decisions

Competum Ltd does **not** charge learners fees for submitting a complaint unless it is proven to be malicious or frivolous.

Learners must submit complaints to **Competum Ltd first** before contacting an awarding body.

Feedback and Informal Resolution (Stage 0)

Learners are encouraged to discuss feedback or concerns with their assessor in the first instance to allow informal resolution.

If the learner wishes for their issue to remain confidential, they must inform their assessor. Assessors are required to discuss issues raised at monthly meetings—unless confidentiality is requested.

If informal resolution is not appropriate or the learner does not feel comfortable, they may proceed directly to the **Formal Complaints Procedure**.



Formal Complaints Procedure (Stage 1)

To make a formal complaint, learners must submit their complaint in writing to:

Cris Drant
Head of Centre
BJB House
Estate Road No.1
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN31 2TB

Email: cris@competum.co.uk

If help is needed to write the complaint, learners may call **01472 358932**.

Complaint Content

The complaint must include:

- Learner's full name
- Contact details
- Programme/qualification (if relevant)
- Clear explanation of the complaint
- Any supporting evidence

Acknowledgement

Competum Ltd will acknowledge the complaint **within 5 working days**.

Investigation

- Conducted by the Head of Centre or nominated senior staff
- May involve meetings, evidence review, and contact with relevant staff
- All investigations are confidential and impartial

Outcome

A written response will be issued **within 15 working days**.
All formal complaints are recorded and stored for **5 years**.



Escalation

If unsatisfied, the learner should discuss the response with the Head of Centre.

The learner may then escalate to the relevant **awarding body** if still dissatisfied.

Scope of Assessment Appeals

Learners have the right to appeal assessment-related decisions, including:

- Conduct of the assessment
- Access to fair assessment
- Range and relevance of evidence allowed
- Opportunities to demonstrate competence
- Administrative or procedural errors
- Failure of a reasonable adjustment application
- Failure of a special consideration request
- Handling of an assessment-related complaint

Appeals must relate directly to assessment practice, decisions or processes.

Assessment Appeals Procedure

Initial Review (Stage 0 – Informal)

Where possible, appeals should first be discussed **at the time of assessment** with the assessor.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, learners may use the formal appeals route.

Formal Appeals Procedure (Stage 1)

Appeals must be:

- Submitted within **20 days** of the assessment decision
- In writing
- Sent to the Centre Manager or Head of Centre
- Marked **Confidential – Appeal**
- Emailed to **cris@competum.co.uk**



The appeal must include:

- Full name and contact details
- Programme/qualification/module
- Details of the decision being appealed
- Explanation and reasons for appeal
- Supporting evidence
- Any relevant special consideration/RA information

Acknowledgement

Competum Ltd will acknowledge the appeal within **7 working days** and confirm whether the appeal is within scope.

Evidence Collection

Within **14 working days** of receiving the appeal:

- Additional information may be requested
- Assessors, IQAs, markers or external assessors may be contacted
- For external assessment re-marks, a new marker will review the work

Appeal Decision

Within **14 working days** of gathering full documentation:

- Evidence is reviewed
- A conclusion is reached
- Recommendations or required actions are identified
- Learner is notified in writing

If the appeal is upheld, any fees (if charged) will be refunded.

Stage Two Appeal (Final Internal Review)

If dissatisfied with the Stage One outcome:

- The learner must submit a Stage Two appeal within **7 days**
- A senior staff member not involved in the original decision will carry out the review



- A written final decision will be issued within **14 working days**

This concludes Competum Ltd's internal appeals procedure.

External Escalation

If the learner remains unsatisfied:

Awarding Body

The awarding body will review:

- Assessment conduct
- Centre handling of the appeal
- Possible procedural errors
- External marking accuracy

Awarding bodies will **not** review:

- General learner experience (facilities, support etc.)
- Assessment decisions already subject to formal appeals without new evidence
- Issues outside their regulatory scope

Qualification Regulator (Ofqual)

Learners may refer the matter to **Ofqual** only after:

- All Competum Ltd processes are completed
- Awarding body processes are completed
- The complaint concerns qualification regulation or award validity

Outcomes & Actions

Where a complaint or appeal identifies risks to the integrity of assessments or learner outcomes:

- A full internal investigation will be undertaken
- Additional IQA sampling may occur
- Other learners' work may be reviewed
- Programmes or units may be audited
- Staff may receive additional training
- Awarding bodies or regulators may be notified
- Corrective and preventive actions will be implemented



Competum Ltd ensures all recommendations from complaints/appeals investigations are acted upon.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- All complaints and appeals are reviewed at Quality Meetings
- Data is analysed to identify trends or recurring issues
- Reports are shared with awarding bodies/regulators where required
- Records are stored securely for **3 years** (appeals) or **5 years** (complaints)
- Findings inform the SAR and QIP

Vexatious Behaviour

Competum Ltd staff have the right to work without abuse or harassment. Behaviour considered vexatious includes:

- Abusive, threatening or intimidating communication
- Repetitive contact without new evidence
- Malicious or defamatory allegations
- Unreasonable demands or harassment
- Attempts to manipulate or obstruct investigation processes

Vexatious behaviour will:

- Be escalated to management
- Be formally recorded
- Potentially be reported to the police

The Board of Directors will be informed of all vexatious cases.

Confidentiality and GDPR

Competum Ltd will:

- Treat all complaints and appeals confidentially
- Only share information on a need-to-know basis
- Store records securely in accordance with GDPR
- Not share complainant identities without consent unless required by law



Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if:

- Legislation changes
- Awarding body rules change
- Ofqual/ESFA guidance changes
- Internal quality assurance identifies required improvements

Approval and review

Approved by	Keith Mcgroarty
Policy owner	Competum Ltd
Policy author	Cris Drant
Launch Date	01.05.19
Reviewed date	30.04.20, 30.04.21, 28.04.22, 25.04.23, 30.04.24, 23.04.25, 14.06.25
Updates/adjustments	Reviewed and Updated