

NCTJ Complaints Policy and Procedure

The NCTJ is committed to providing high-quality learning and training services and we will resolve any problems you may have with our service as quickly as possible.

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, training providers, learners, apprentices and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from the NCTJ.

This policy covers complaints learners, apprentices, members of the public, centres or training providers may wish to make in relation to the qualifications, end-point assessments and/or associated services offered by the NCTJ.

It is not to be used to cover appeals in relation to decisions made by the NCTJ. These areas are covered by our appeals policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in our customer service statement or appeals policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our malpractice and maladministration policy.

Centre's responsibility

Centres and training providers should take all responsible steps to ensure that staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of NCTJ qualifications/units and/or end-point assessments are aware of the contents of this policy.

Centres and training providers must have their own internal complaints handling procedure and appeals process in place to deal with complaints from candidates about the services they provide relating to the delivery and assessment of NCTJ qualifications/units and/or end-point assessments.

Centres and training providers should take all responsible steps to ensure that their candidates taking NCTJ qualifications/units and/or end-point assessments are aware of the centre/training provider's internal complaints procedure and appeals process, as well as of the contents of this policy.

If an individual is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by a centre or training provider, they must first have completed the centre/training provider's complaints and appeals process before bringing the matter to the NCTJ. The NCTJ reserves the right not to consider complaints from individuals about a service or activity being delivered by a centre or training provider, if the individual has not followed to a conclusion the centre/training provider's complaints and appeals process. If the complaint relates to a service or activity delivered by the NCTJ, and the issue cannot be resolved informally in discussion with the member of NCTJ staff dealing with the request individuals should submit a formal complaint in writing direct to the NCTJ under the terms described in this policy.

Fair treatment for all is paramount.

Review arrangements

The NCTJ welcomes feedback in order to constantly improve our products and services, complaints are an important source of information for improving our services and delivering quality products.

The NCTJ will review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the regulators) and any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of complaints received.

If you would like to feedback any views please contact us via the details provided below.

How should I complain?

The NCTJ has a set complaints procedure to ensure complaints are dealt with in a professional manner. To submit a formal complaint, centres/training providers should complete a 'complaint form' on the homepage of their NCTJ Creatio account and submit this to the NCTJ within the required timeframes. Otherwise, a formal complaint or dissatisfaction with our service can be communicated in writing:

- by email to info@nctj.com; or
- if you wish to write to us our address is: The New Granary, Station Road, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3PL

We will ensure an acknowledgement of your complaint is made in writing within two working days, giving an indication of our proposed action. A considered response would then normally be made within 15 working days.

We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

You should include:

- A clear explanation of the nature of your query or complaint
- Your full name and candidate number (if applicable)
- Your centre or training provider name and course (if applicable)
- Copies of any relevant supporting documentation

Our procedure covers all complaints about administration, administrative support, the learning materials and courses provided by the NCTJ and allegations of discrimination and harassment.

If your complaint is about an NCTJ-accredited centre or apprenticeship training provider, you should in the first instance contact the centre/training provider, setting out the nature of your complaint, and have followed to a conclusion their own complaints policy and procedures.

If your complaint relates to an allegation of discrimination or harassment then it should be addressed to the NCTJ head of awarding. If the allegation involves the head of awarding in this instance it should be addressed to the NCTJ chief executive.

We do not investigate complaints if you have known about the problem for more than three months before complaining.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

If the regulators notify the NCTJ about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation or end-point assessment organisation (EPAO), these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures in this policy to ascertain if the same issue could affect NCTJ qualifications or end-point assessments.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated seriously, and confidentially. Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, and if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity. If it helps to reassure you on this point, we can confirm that we are not obliged (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty. Information about a complaint will only be given to people directly involved and everyone involved will be advised of the need for confidentiality.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the complaint/allegation relates to.

Successful complaints and/or issues brought to our attention by the regulators

If any part of a complaint is upheld we will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

- identify any other candidate who has been affected by that failure
- correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future

Unreasonable behaviour

The NCTJ understands that complainants have a right to be heard and, as is stated in our customer service statement, you can expect us to treat you with courtesy, respect and consideration.

On occasion, the behaviour or actions of individuals makes it difficult for us to deal with their complaints. The behaviour and/or actions become unacceptable if they involve abuse of our staff.

For the avoidance of doubt, we would regard aggressive or abusive behaviour and/or language, unreasonable levels of contact and/or harassment of our staff and the making of unreasonable demands as examples of unreasonable behaviour.

It is important to note that it is how the person who is subject to the behaviour is made to feel, not whether the behaviour was intended, that matters.

Any experience of such actions by a person towards a member of NCTJ staff will be reported to the chief executive and the incident recorded in our complaints log. Resulting action will include an investigation following the NCTJ's complaints procedure and/or malpractice procedures as appropriate.

Outcomes of such investigations may lead to sanctions against the individual concerned including restricting further contact to written correspondence only or, in exceptional circumstances, deciding to have no further dealings with the individual. The NCTJ will communicate any such action in writing to the complainant.

Information requests

Some complaints may be combined with a request for personal information. This would constitute a data subject access request and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If a complainant makes repeated requests for personal data that they believe the NCTJ still holds about them, they must provide the NCTJ with any details it requires to identify and locate the additional data. If the complainant cannot provide such details, the NCTJ cannot carry out any further searches.

What if I am not happy with the outcome?

If, following our full response, you feel that your complaint has not been adequately addressed then you have the right to appeal in writing to the NCTJ chief executive setting out the reasons for your continued dissatisfaction. You must do this within 14 days of receiving the response to your complaint. The matter will then be dealt with via the relevant stage 1 appeals process which is outlined in our appeals policy.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our head of awarding on 01799 544014 or by email; details are available from our website www.nctj.com.