

Awarding Organisation Complaints Policy

July 2025



Introduction

As a recognised awarding organisation (AO), the Institution of Occupational Health and Safety is subject to external regulation and must meet the requirements set by education regulation. There are specific requirements for recognised awarding organisations to have a complaints policy and process that provides for the timely, and accurate response to complaints received from users of IOSH qualifications.

The AO is committed to providing a quality service. As part of our commitment, the AO will listen and respond to the views of our customers.

Complaints, comments, and any other expressions of dissatisfaction are taken seriously and are dealt with promptly and appropriately. The AO aims to learn from feedback and to improve the quality of service we offer.

Purpose

This Complaints Policy sets out the AO approach to handling customer complaints. All customer complaints received are recorded. Some will be dealt with informally over the telephone others will require a more formal investigation.

Scope

The AO will consider complaints regarding our regulated functions and any other service we may provide to stakeholders. This may include but is not limited to the following:

- The behaviours of anyone associated with the activities of the AO which includes IOSH staff, contractors, IOSH approved Study Centres and its learners.
- Service expectations including failure to take action or unreasonable delay.

Complaints about the AO

- independent assessment decisions
- external moderation decisions
- actions taken as a result of confirmed malpractice/maladministration
- refusal to grant Special Considerations

are dealt with under the **AO Enquiries and Appeals Policy**.

Where a complaint is about an approved Study Centre and its provision or assessment decisions, complainants must first go through the centre's complaints or appeals procedure prior to contacting us. As part of our contractual arrangements with approved centres, they all must operate a complaint handling and appeals process for learners.

Complaints from learners/whistle blowers about the service provided by our approved centres which allege malpractice or maladministration will be covered under the **AO Malpractice and Maladministration Policy**. Whistleblowing is if you are disclosing an issue that affects others, usually related to wrongdoing or misconduct and is covered under the **AO Whistleblowing Policy**.

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Roles and responsibilities

The Head of AO, as Responsible Officer, will have ownership of this policy and ensure its continued effectiveness through regular review. The Responsible Officer will monitor its performance, periodically provide reports to the AO Committee, regarding the policy's effectiveness and flag any serious complaints that may cause reputational damage or threaten the integrity of AO activity.

All AO staff will have responsibility for its delivery and adherence.

The Policy

Complaining to the AO

Complaints should be made within one month of the occurrence or within **2 weeks** of an unsatisfactory outcome of a complaint to a centre.

Where possible the AO will deal with complaints informally and may do so over the telephone. In such cases it will confirm in an email the action it will take.

Sometimes a more formal approach is required, in these cases, the complaint must be submitted in writing and give the reason for the complaint and expectations of the outcome as succinctly as possible. The complaint should either be emailed to admin@ioshao.com or sent to:

The Operations and Quality Manager, Awarding Organisation
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health,
The Grange, Highfield Drive,
Wigston, Leicestershire,
LE18 1NN

If additional supporting documentation is required, it will be requested at the appropriate time.

Processing a Complaint

Complaints are logged as soon as they are received, and an acknowledgement will be made within **5 working days** of receipt of any written complaint.

If a complaint is excessively long or complex the AO may ask for a summary so there is clarity around the issue.

If the complaint is from a learner who has exhausted the centre's complaints procedure, AO will contact the Head of the Study Centre or their nominee for details of the original complaint.

The AO will endeavour to complete any complaints investigation within **1 month** of the initial written complaint. Complainants will be kept informed during this period and will be informed of the outcome

- If a complaint is upheld, the AO will advise of the actions it proposes to take.
- If a complaint is not upheld, the AO will explain why.

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If a complainant is not happy with the way their complaint has been handled or the outcome of the investigation the complainant can refer their grievance to the IOSH Head of Governance. In such cases

- the referral must be submitted within **10 working days** of receipt of the decision.
- only the dissatisfaction with how the original complaint was handled will be reviewed
- further consideration of the original complaint will only be made if the review considers the complaint was not handled according to AO procedures or failed to take account of some critical evidence
- any decisions made at this stage will be signed off by the Chair of the Awarding Organisation Committee as final and the complaint will be closed.

Correspondence

The AO offers a transparent complaints procedure and will keep complainants informed throughout any investigation. However, it is acknowledged that sufficient time must be allowed to carry out a thorough investigation.

The AO will not engage with abusive or persistent correspondence from complainants, during an investigation or once a decision has been reached.

Repeated contact with no new evidence and/or abusive correspondence from a complainant will be considered as vexatious correspondence.

Where correspondence and/or behaviour are deemed to be vexatious, the AO will refer the complainant to this policy, explaining that if the communication continues in this manner all correspondence will cease, save for that which is necessary to the investigation should it be ongoing.

Customers who remain dissatisfied with an outcome of a complaint may take their complaint to the appropriate Regulator such as [Ofqual](#).

Monitoring

Records of all complaints, comments and any other expressions of dissatisfaction will be regularly reviewed by the Responsible Officer. The findings, together with any identifiable trends and recommendations will be formally reported to, and reviewed, by the AO Committee.

As a result of the monitoring and review process, changes to the policy or any of the associated processes and procedures will be agreed by the relevant decision maker and implemented accordingly.

Terms, definitions, acronyms and abbreviations

None

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AO Complaints Policy



Review

Regular reviews of this policy and guidance will be undertaken to ensure it continues to meet the needs of AO customers and the Regulators (e.g. to align with any complaints process established by the regulator such as Ofqual).

Version Control

V	Last amended	Author	Reason for amendment	Review date
V0.1	28/10/2021	K Bevan	First Draft	28/11/2021
V1.0	24/01/2022	K Bevan	Final version	24/01/2023
V1.0	17/11/2022	K Bevan	Brand update	17/11/2022
V1.0	26/01/2023	R Wilson	Updated following AOC feedback	26/01/2023
V1.1	19/12/2024	K Bevan	Annual review	19/12/2025
V1.2	11/07/2025	B Williamson	Review of AO naming and email	11/07/2026

Policy document information

Policy owner	Head of Awarding Organisation	Policy contact	Operations and Quality Manager
Related operational policies/business rules	AO Enquiries and Appeals Policy AO Malpractice and Maladministration Policy AO Whistleblowing Policy		
Relevant legislation and standards	D4 Responding to enquiries and complaints procedures I2 Compliance with Ofqual appeals and complaints process		