Complaints Policy

Scope

This policy applies to apprentices, learners, prospective apprentices and prospective learners, employers and other stakeholders who wish to raise a complaint about a service provided by, or on behalf of, Claudius Consulting Ltd.

It applies to complaints relating to the delivery of apprenticeship training, learner support, staff conduct, communication, administration and the standard or quality of services provided by Claudius Consulting Ltd.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair and accessible process for raising and resolving complaints.

Claudius Consulting Ltd is committed to handling complaints fairly, consistently, sensitively and in a timely manner. Complaints will be used, where appropriate, to identify areas for improvement and improve the experience of apprentices, learners, employers and other stakeholders.

No individual will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of raising a complaint in good faith.

This policy is made available to apprentices, learners and employers and is published on the Claudius Consulting Ltd website. Apprentices and learners are made aware of the complaints procedure during induction and employers are informed as part of their engagement with Claudius Consulting Ltd.

Definitions

Complaint

A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction about a service, process, individual, action or lack of action by Claudius Consulting Ltd.

An individual does not need to specifically use the word “complaint” for their concern to be treated as one where the nature of the concern meets this definition.

Informal Complaint

An informal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that may be capable of resolution without progressing to the formal complaints process.

Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.

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Appeal

An appeal is a request for a review of an assessment decision, result or outcome. Appeals are not considered under this Complaints Policy and will be managed through the relevant appeals procedure and/or in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation or Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation (AO).

Matters Outside the Scope of this Policy

Concerns which constitute whistleblowing or a protected disclosure will be managed in accordance with Claudius Consulting Ltd's Whistleblowing Policy.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding & Prevent Policy. The complaints process will not delay any necessary safeguarding action or referral.

How to Make a Complaint

Claudius Consulting Ltd aims to resolve concerns at the earliest appropriate opportunity. Where possible, complainants are encouraged to raise concerns informally in the first instance. However, a complainant may proceed directly to the formal complaints process where informal resolution is not appropriate.

Complaints should normally be raised within **20 working days** of the event or issue becoming known. Complaints received outside this timeframe may still be considered where there are reasonable grounds for the delay or where the circumstances warrant consideration.

Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

Where possible, complaints should be raised with the relevant member of Claudius Consulting Ltd staff or the Business Manager at info@claudius-consulting.co.uk

The aim of Stage 1 is to understand the concern and where possible, resolve it promptly and informally.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days and Claudius Consulting Ltd will aim to provide an outcome within 20 working days. Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reason and provided with a revised timescale.

Although Stage 1 is informal, a written outcome will be provided to the complainant and copied to the Business Manager, who will record the details of the informal complaint.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner.

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Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily through the informal process or within the agreed timescales, or the complainant does not feel that it is appropriate to raise the matter informally, they may raise a formal complaint.

Formal complaints should be submitted to the Business Manager at **info@claudius-consulting.co.uk** and should provide sufficient information to enable the matter to be investigated, including:

- The nature of the complaint
- Relevant dates and individuals involved, where known
- Any supporting information or evidence
- Details of any action already taken to resolve the matter, where applicable
- The outcome or resolution the complainant is seeking.

Claudius Consulting Ltd will acknowledge the formal complaint within 5 working days.

The Managing Director will initiate an investigation of the complaint. Wherever practicable, the person investigating the complaint will not have been directly involved in the matter being complained about.

Claudius Consulting Ltd will aim to provide a written outcome within 20 working days of receiving the formal complaint. Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reason and provided with a revised timescale.

The written outcome will explain the findings of the investigation and any actions to be taken, where appropriate. The complainant will also be informed of their right to request a Stage 3 review if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 3 – Internal Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint, they may request a Stage 3 review.

A request for review should be submitted within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome and should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The complaint and the handling of the complaint at earlier stages will be reviewed by the Quality Improvement Group (QIG). Wherever practicable, individuals involved in the review will not have been directly involved in the matter complained about or the earlier investigation.

The QIG will review the complaint, the investigation undertaken and the outcome reached.

The outcome of the review will be communicated to the complainant in writing within 5 working days of the QIG review.

The written Stage 3 outcome will confirm that the complainant has reached the end of Claudius Consulting Ltd's internal complaints procedure and will provide information about any applicable external escalation route.

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External Escalation to the Department for Education

Where applicable, if the complainant remains dissatisfied after completing all stages of Claudius Consulting Ltd's internal complaints procedure, they may escalate their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE).

The complainant will normally need to provide evidence that Claudius Consulting Ltd's complaints procedure has been fully exhausted, together with relevant information and documentation relating to the complaint.

Complaints to DfE must normally be made within 12 months of the issue occurring.

Information about the DfE complaints process and how to submit a complaint is available through the DfE Customer Help Portal and current GOV.UK guidance for complaints about post-16 education and apprenticeships.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints will be handled sensitively and information will only be shared with individuals who need access to it for the purpose of investigating, reviewing or resolving the complaint, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Personal information relating to complaints will be processed and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Claudius Consulting Ltd's Data Protection & GDPR Policy.

Records relating to complaints and their investigation will be retained securely for five years following closure of the complaint, unless a longer retention period is required by law, contractual requirements or another applicable policy. Records will then be securely disposed of in accordance with Claudius Consulting Ltd's data retention arrangements.

Reporting, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

All formal and informal complaints and their outcomes will be recorded centrally and monitored to identify recurring themes, trends and opportunities for improvement.

The Apprenticeship Manager will report relevant complaint information and outcomes to the Senior Leadership Team. Where a complaint identifies a failure or area for improvement, appropriate action will be taken and, where relevant, consideration will be given to whether other apprentices, learners, employers or stakeholders may have been affected by the same or a similar issue.

Where appropriate, identified improvement actions will be incorporated into Claudius Consulting Ltd's quality improvement arrangements.

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Signature:		Annual check date:	July
Amendments by:	Jenny Beck	Date of last review/amend:	27 Aug 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where required in response to legislative, regulatory or organisational changes, complaints trends or identified good practice.

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