

ICB



The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

ICB Complaints Policy

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1. Aim and Purpose of ICB Complaints Policy

ICB aims to provide and maintain an excellent level of service for the benefit of all its members, students, suppliers and stakeholders. One of the ways ICB can continue to improve its service is by welcoming feedback, both positive and negative, and by listening and responding to the views of customers.

ICB understands that members, students, suppliers and stakeholders may not always be satisfied with the level of service they receive and is, therefore, committed to ensuring all complaints are dealt with to resolve the issue in a consistent manner.

Therefore, ICB aims to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible
- The complaint is dealt with it promptly, politely and confidentially
- An appropriate response is provided in a timely manner
- ICB learns from complaints and uses them to improve services going forward

In most instances, many concerns are raised informally, and dealt with quickly. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process of making a complaint and how ICB will respond. It stipulates a clear understanding of the service level ICB will provide and how complaints will be dealt with.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of products or services provided by ICB.

3. Complaints Handling

The ICB Complaints Policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. ICB is committed to ensuring all individuals have equal access to the Complaints Policy and each complaint is dealt with in accordance with the Policy.

All complaints will be dealt with in an appropriate manner through dialogue and mutual understanding with regard to relevant legislation and in line with ICB Equality and Diversity policy.

Who can make a complaint?

Complaints can be made from members, students, suppliers and stakeholders. However, students wishing to express dissatisfaction regarding services provided by an ICB Approved Training Provider (ATP), must first raise their concern with the ATP. ICB encourages all ATPs to try to address and resolve any complaint against them in an informal and friendly manner first. However, ATPs are required to operate an internal complaint handling policy and if the complaint cannot be resolved informally, their policy should be followed. Only when the ATP's complaints policy/procedure has been fully exhausted, and the complainant remains dissatisfied, should they contact ICB. ICB will then act as mediator between the two parties to ensure that the complaint is dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

Complaints that will not be investigated:

The following types of complaints will not be investigated under ICB's formal complaints procedure:

- Anonymous complaints
- Vexatious complaints
- Complaints which are intended to support a case undergoing legal proceedings

The complainant's responsibility

For a complaint to be investigated the complaint must be made **within two months** of the cause of the complaint first arising. ICB may, at its discretion, investigate complaints outside the two-month timeframe where there are exceptional circumstances to be taken into consideration.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of ICB staff
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
- Discuss with ICB whether the concern can be dealt with informally, in response to which ICB will aim to resolve the concern by providing an explanation or apology
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond ICB's control

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may request escalation to the formal complaints procedure.

4. How to make a formal complaint

All formal complaints must be put in writing and sent to ICB for the attention of the Head of Qualification Standards and Quality Control. The following must be provided:

- Name, address and contact information of the complainant
- Full details of the complaint including dates and any action taken so far to try and resolve the dissatisfaction
- All supporting evidence, such as correspondence between the complainant and the source of the complaint

Formal Complaint Procedure

Stage 1

Upon receipt of a written formal complaint, ICB will log the complaint and send an email acknowledgement **within 3 working days**.

The complaint will be investigated based on the information and evidence provided. Should further information be required, ICB will contact the complainant or other named parties. The complainant's identity will not be revealed to any third party contacted by ICB to establish further details of the complaint.

After full investigation, ICB will provide a response, including explanation, **within 6 weeks** of the formal written complaint being received. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for ICB to extend the duration of the investigation and in such instances will contact the complainant with revised timescales.

Once the outcome of the investigation has been communicated to the complainant, the outcome will be recorded, and the case closed.

Stage 2

Should the complainant feel that the complaint has not been resolved in Stage 1, they must notify the Head of Qualification Standards and Quality Control in writing **within 2 weeks** of receiving the initial outcome. An email acknowledgement will be sent **within 3 working days**.

The complaint will then be escalated to the ICB Senior Management team for further investigation and the complaint log will be re-opened.

A member of the Senior Management team will carry out a further investigation of the complaint and the initial outcome and should further information or evidence be required the complainant will be contacted.

The outcome of Stage 2 investigation will be communicated to the complainant **within 8 weeks** of the complaint being escalated to the Senior Management team.

Once the outcome of the further investigation has been communicated to the complainant, the outcome will be recorded, and the case closed.

5. Unresolved Complaints

If the complainant is not satisfied and believes the complaint has not been resolved following both stages of the formal complaints procedure, they may submit an appeal following the ICB Appeals policy. All appeals must be received **within 2 weeks** of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome.

6. Monitoring and evaluating the ICB Complaints Policy

All complaints are recorded, along with their outcomes, and are retained by ICB for a period of at least three years. All complaints are reviewed annually at the Appeals Committee to ensure consistency in the complaints handling process.

The Complaints Policy is also subject to regular monitoring and review by ICB to maintain the highest possible standards of consistency and quality.

The complaints policy and procedures are formally approved by the ICB Governing Council. Furthermore, the policy and procedures have been developed in line with all relevant legislations.



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