

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

Issue Number	Effective Date	Amendments	Reason for Amendments
8	31 March 2025	1. Tabling 'out of scope' scenarios. 2. Regulatory references table.	1. To provide further clarity and guidance. 2. To outline IMI and regulatory requirements.

## INTRODUCTION

This document sets out our complaints policy and is aimed at IMI members, approved centres and learners.

If you feel you have a valid complaint you should raise any concerns with us immediately. This will enable us to investigate and provide an opportunity to resolve the complaint.

## SCOPE

This policy covers complaints against:

- an IMI member concerning alleged breach(es) of IMI Professional Standards,
- IMI approved centres or,
- a service provided by IMI, including end-point assessment.

## MAKING A COMPLAINT

### I. against an IMI member

All IMI members, except those of an Affiliate grade (AffIMI), commit to abide by the IMI [Professional Standards](#).

If it is felt that a member of IMI has fallen below the expectation of these standards, you can submit a formal complaint to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

Every effort must have been made to resolve any issues with the IMI member before submitting a formal complaint.

### II. about an IMI approved centre

All IMI approved centres must have their own complaints and appeals policy which should state clearly how complaints relating to the delivery, including assessment, of IMI qualifications or IMI Accredited Assessments can be made. Complainants must first go through their centres own process before bringing the matter to the attention of IMI.

If, having exhausted the centres complaints process you are unhappy with the outcome, you can submit a formal complaint to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

### III. about a service provided by IMI

If you have a complaint about our service, the best way to resolve it will usually be to contact the member of staff you have been dealing with. You can do this over the phone, by email or in writing.

If you feel that this is not the right way to resolve your complaint, or you are not happy with the outcome, or your complaint is about a member of staff, you can submit a formal complaint

to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

Complaints relating to conduct or services relating to end-point assessment should be submitted to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

## OUT OF SCOPE

Although it is not possible to provide a definitive list of complaint scenarios, the following outlines the areas that we are unable to take forward in line with the scope of this policy.

IMI members vs organisations	<p>As a professional body our members are individuals, not businesses and we are only able to consider complaints against individual members.</p> <p>Complaints about individuals or organisations who are not current members of the IMI are out of scope.</p>
IMI Professional Standards	<p>IMI will only consider complaints about the professional conduct of an individual member, who are Associate, Member or Fellow grade.</p> <p>Complaints against members unrelated to IMI's <a href="#">Professional Standards</a> will not be considered. Complaints made against IMI members of an Affiliate grade, may be considered, depending on the severity of the complaint made.</p>
IMI approved centres / training providers delivery	<p>Actions undertaken by centre/training provider staff during qualification or end point assessment training delivery need to be directed to the centre/training provider in the first instance, as detailed above.</p> <p>This includes complaints about assessment decisions made by an IMI approved centre or training provider.</p>
Legal proceedings	<p>Complaint matters that are, or become, the subject of legal proceedings in any court or tribunal are out of scope.</p> <p>Making a complaint against an IMI member is not a substitute for taking legal action. Some such disputes can only be resolved through the courts or using alternate dispute resolution.</p> <p>IMI are <b>not</b> able to advise on alternate dispute resolution schemes or act as an impartial mediator.</p>
Technical inspections / reports	<p>When a complaint is reviewed the only matter to be considered is the professional conduct of the member, we do not review technical reports, recommend an alternative outcome or mediate between parties following technical inspections / reports.</p> <p>IMI is not the appropriate forum to make technical determinations regarding any advice or work undertaken. These are issues for the courts, the appropriate ombudsman, or for trading standards.</p>

Technical disputes	IMI is not the appropriate forum to make technical determinations regarding any advice or work undertaken. This includes disputes that turn on the resolution of a conflict of evidence (particularly oral evidence) between parties.  These are issues for the courts, the appropriate ombudsman or for trading standards.
Fee disputes	Fee disputes are legal claims; therefore, the courts are the appropriate forum for deciding such matters. IMI has no authority to seek financial award (including compensation).
Employer or commercial disputes	Disputes between employer and employee or commercial disputes between businesses must be directed to the parties involved, IMI are unable to pass judgement on other organisations or act as an impartial mediator.
More than six months old	Complaints must be submitted within six months of the event, those occurring more than six months past the complaint incident date will not be in scope.

*Note: Where we identify at the outset that the nature of the complaint is not one which the policy is likely to resolve then we may signpost you to an appropriate body who can assist you.*

The decision of IMI on whether a complaint is within the scope of this policy is **final**.

This policy does not cover complaints in relation to decisions made by IMI as these are covered by our Appeals Policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an assessment was 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.

## BEFORE YOU COMPLAIN

Complaints under this policy should be made promptly and within 90 days of the complaint incident. IMI may at its discretion consider complaints made later than 90 days having regard to any unreasonable delay by any party involved but will not hear any complaint which has been raised more than six months after the incident.

Please provide as much information as possible so that we can investigate your complaint promptly.

## HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You must ensure you have read and understood all details of IMI's Complaints Policy, including what we can and can't investigate, how IMI will handle the complaint and expected timescales.

A full description of the nature of the complaint (including dates and times if known), the names of the people you have dealt with so far, copies of all correspondence between you and the named party relating to the complaint must be submitted using IMI's online complaint form.

*Note: IMI will not investigate anonymous complaints – however we may consider doing so where there is evidence to support an investigation, and these will be taken forward in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.*

## HOW WE HANDLE COMPLAINTS

IMI will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours, letting you know who will be dealing with it. At all times we will ensure that personnel assigned have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

An initial review will be undertaken to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of this policy, the complainant will be informed of this within 20 working days and advised on the outcome or the next steps in the process. Where this is not possible, we will contact you to update you on our progress and provide a deadline by which we should be able to provide a further response.

## COMPLAINT OUTCOME

At the end of an investigation, we shall notify the complainant and the relevant individual or party of our decision. If a complaint is upheld, IMI will identify what went wrong and why, taking remedial action as appropriate.

If it is found that an IMI member is in breach of any part of the IMI Professional Standards or an IMI approved centre is in breach of IMI or regulatory requirements, appropriate action will be taken.

IMI are unable to pay or instruct individuals or associated parties to pay any financial compensation.

## TAKING A COMPLAINT FURTHER

If you disagree with the decision taken by IMI or are unhappy by the way in which your complaint was handled, you can take the matter further and instigate an appeal in line with the arrangements outlined in our Appeals Policy.

The determination of a complaint against a member of IMI under this policy is final and there is no further right of appeal.

If your complaint relates to a qualification or apprenticeship standard and, after you have exhausted our appeals arrangements, you are still not satisfied with the outcomes, you can complain/appeal directly to the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification (e.g. Ofqual in England, SQA Accreditation in Scotland, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and Qualifications Wales) or apprenticeship standard (e.g. Ofqual, RMISC). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle complaints and appeals.

If you have a complaint about the quality of teaching or delivery of an apprenticeship standard programme, as opposed to the end point assessment element, and this has been raised with the training provider but you are unhappy with the outcome, you can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) directly via [complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk)

Users of public bodies<sup>1</sup> in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services

<sup>1</sup> The SPSO's rules apply only to public bodies (e.g. FE colleges and local authority centres). Learners at centres that are not public bodies will not be able to escalate their complaints to the SPSO.

Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter. Users have to exhaust the public body's own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

The SPSO defines a complaint as "an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about [the college's] action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by [the college<sup>2</sup>] or on its behalf".

The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an appeal and should follow awarding bodies' appeals processes.

**The SPSO's Further Education Colleges Model Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at**

<http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/further-and-higher-education/>

## REGULATORY REFERENCES

Regulator	Regulatory rule or guidance	Regulatory condition, criteria or principle
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	D4
Qualifications Wales	Standard Conditions of Recognition	D4
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition	D4
SQA Accreditation	Regulatory Principles	16

<sup>2</sup> For some complaints, there will be no requirement for the college to escalate the complaint to awarding bodies, e.g. if the Complaint concerns the behaviour of a Centre staff member (in this case, once the student has exhausted the college's complaints process, they would go direct to the SPSO if dissatisfied).