

Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy



Doc ref QUA 020-5.0
Date of issue 01/03/2016
Review date 01/12/2021
Classification Public

1. Company Statement

It is the responsibility of all staff who carry out work for Smart Awards to ensure all our customer expectations are met and if possible surpassed. Our Customers are the most important people in our business. All persons representing Smart Awards will endeavor to portray a professional image and attitude to ensure the Company standing is maintained at the highest possible level.

2. Scope

Smart Awards is committed to providing a high-quality service to all our customers and views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our services to customers as well as an opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Smart Awards aim is to ensure complaints are handled sensitively and speedily to enable us to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to centres and other stakeholders
- Demonstrate our commitment to providing the best possible service
- Help to find out about things that have gone wrong so we can fix them
- Help to prevent things going wrong again in future.
- To show tractability of all complaints received
- To satisfy contractual needs

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by Smart Awards whether justified or not.

Associated Documents

- Complaint Form on SAMS – Centre
- Complaints Form on SAMS– AO

3. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Smart Awards.

4. Policy principles

Our policy principles are to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use
- Publicise our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us
- Make sure everyone at Smart Awards knows what to do if a complaint is received
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- Ensure complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do
- All complaint information will be handled confidentially.

5. Complaints procedure

Smart Awards will not normally investigate complaints which are received more than six months after the incident or occurrence took place.

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Complaints can arrive through many different channels and may be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. However, our preferred method is via Smart Awards Management System (SAMS).

Complaints received by telephone or in person

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Smart Awards
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email.

Practical guidance for handling verbal complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable)
- If you feel that an apology is deserved, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told.

Complaints by letter or e-mail

Written complaints may be sent to Smart Awards.

Complaints via SAMS

- Create a complaint from via the SAMS system.

Resolving Complaints

In many cases, a complaint that is informal is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. All complaints are required to be logged by Smart Awards whether informal or formal.

If a complaint cannot be resolved immediately and requires to be formally addressed by Smart Awards the complaint process applies.

Complaints process

Step 1 - the complaint information will be passed to Smart Awards within 3 days of receiving the complaint

Sept 2 - the information will be added to the complaints log on SAMS

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Step 3 - a letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent within one week of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this policy, a contact name and date of expected reply.

Step 4 – the complaint will then be investigated

Step 5 - we will write within 28 days of receiving a complaint, confirming our final position - Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at this stage, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by a different person at and the following process applies:

Step 6 - a letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent within one week of receiving it

Step 7 – the complaint will then be investigated

Step 8 - write within 28 days of receiving the complaint confirming our final position - Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint

Step 9 - The decision taken at this stage is final, unless it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Complaints can be escalated to the relevant regulatory body (SQA Accreditation in Scotland, Ofqual in England and Northern Ireland or Qualifications Wales in Wales). Users of public bodies in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman 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.

For some complaints, there will be no requirement to escalate the complaint, for example if the complaint concerns the behaviour of a centre staff member (in this case, once the complainant has exhausted the centre's complaints process, they would go direct to the SPSO if dissatisfied). Note that 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 Smart Awards appeals policy.

The SPSOs Further Education Colleges Model Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at <http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/wp-content/media/The-Further-Education-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure.pdf>

6. Management Reviews

Smart Awards management team will review complaints at all meetings.

- To review all complaints
- To ensure necessary action plans are put in place to solution any major issues that may be identified
- To report all complaints exceeding KPI target.

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Managing Director (MD)

- To review all complaints
- To ensure necessary action plans are put in place to solution any major issues that may be identified
- To report at Management Review Monthly complaints exceeding KPI within the month
- To ensure that Smart Awards is proactive in relation to all centre issues
- To ensure that all complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively
- To ensure that all responses are complete and within time
- To ensure that all weekly reports are dispatched to relevant managers
- To monitor very critically the escalation process, to enable Smart Awards to meet their customer KPIs.

Monitoring

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action. All records of complaints will be held for 7 years. This policy is reviewed regularly and updated annually or as and when required.

Complaints Log

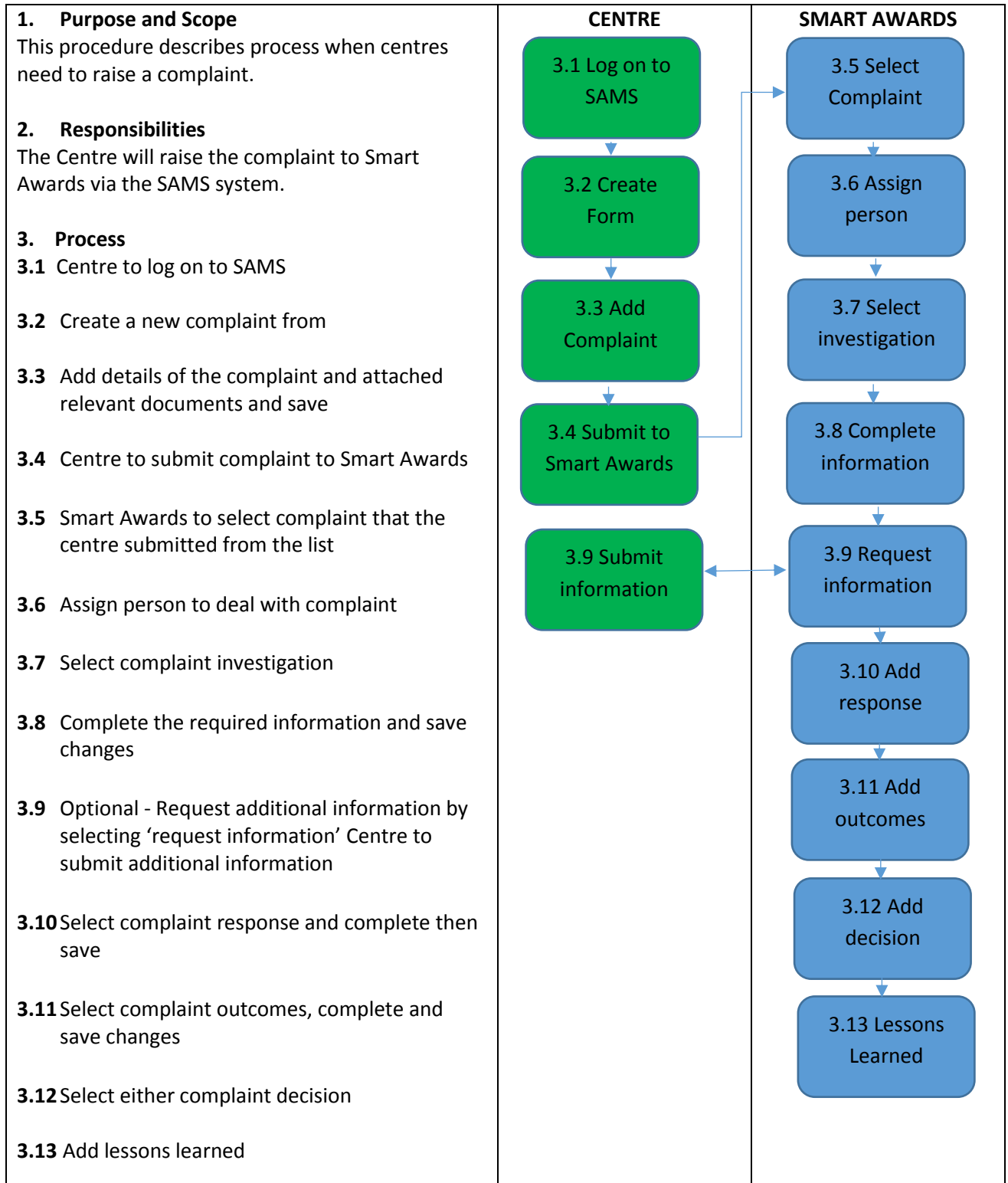
The manager must add the details, including any corrective action onto the complaints log to ensure the complaint is considered at the Management review.

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7. Complaints Procedure (Centre raising complaint)



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8. Complaints Procedure (Smart Awards raising complaint)

