



## **1st for EPA Ltd Complaints and Appeals Policy**

### **1. Policy purpose**

This procedure applies to all 1st for EPA Ltd End Point Assessment staff, contracted assessors, apprentices, training providers or employers using 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment service. This document sets out guidance of how to make a complaint to 1st for EPA Ltd and the procedure to follow.

1st for EPA Ltd recognises that apprentices should have access to fair and reliable assessment in which they play an active part. Apprentices therefore have a right to appeal against end point assessment decisions which are unclear or seem unfair.

### **2. Introduction**

1st for EPA Ltd is committed to upholding its duty of care to apprentices, training providers and employers who utilise 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment service and to delivering a high standard of customer service. Feedback is most welcome and will help towards improving our service.

There are several stages detailed in the Appeals Procedure and each stage must be exhausted before proceeding to the next one. Apprentices are advised to keep their own copies of all the documents used in the Appeals Procedure.

The main reasons for appeal are likely to be:

- Apprentices do not understand why they are not regarded as competent, due to a lack of, or unclear feedback from 1st for EPA Ltd.
- Apprentices believe they are competent and that the Independent Apprenticeship Assessor has either misjudged them or has failed to use some vital evidence.

### **3. Scope**

This guidance and procedure applies to all key stakeholders engaged with 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment. This includes employers, training providers and apprentices using 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment service.

### **4. Institute for Apprenticeships**

The Institute for Apprenticeship conditions require 1st for EPA Ltd to publish procedures to apprentices, training providers and employers for dealing with complaints relating to 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment. This document fulfils that requirement.

### **5. Definition of Complaints**

#### **Complaint**

The term "complaint" is a statement in which you express your dissatisfaction with a particular situation.

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- A failure to provide a service or an inadequate quality or standard of service
- Wrong information about academic programmes
- The quality and availability of facilities and learning resources
- Accessibility of assessment
- The behaviour of a member of staff.

### **6. Complaints process**



**1st for EPA**

End Point Assessment made easy

Where 1st for EPA Ltd receives a complaint, it will be dealt with promptly and in line with our procedures.

1st for EPA Ltd's procedure for complaints may involve the following actions:

1. Complaint received
2. Acknowledged
3. Complaint reviewed
4. Response made
5. Notifying the regulators or awarding body (where necessary)
6. Record the complaint
7. Procedure

If you have a complaint about 1st for EPA Ltd's End Point Assessment service, please put the complaint in writing and send it by email or post to the below address. Please give as much information as possible about your complaint, to enable 1st for EPA Ltd to investigate and review it.

Email: [info@1stforepa.co.uk](mailto:info@1stforepa.co.uk)

Address: 61 Cranbrook, Marton-in-Cleveland, Middlesbrough TS8 9XH

1st for EPA Ltd will contact the complainant within 3 working days of receiving the complaint by either phone/email or letter to acknowledge the complaint.

1st for EPA Ltd will review the information presented and decide whether it is appropriate to either:

- Bring the matter to the attention of the Head of Awarding Body, asking them to investigate the complaint and to produce a written report on the outcome, or;
- Investigate the complaint directly; this investigation will be carried out by the Lead Independent Apprenticeship Assessor or the Apprenticeship Quality Manager.
- Consider whether the Institute for Apprenticeships should be notified of the matter.

1st for EPA Ltd will respond to the complainant by email or post within 28 working days, and will take the appropriate, preventative and/or corrective action required.

In cases where there could be an adverse effect (e.g. cases with alleged fraud or serious threat to the integrity of the 1st for EPA Ltd end point assessment service or 1st for EPA Ltd as an organisation), 1st for EPA Ltd is required to escalate the matter immediately to the Institute for Apprenticeships.

The complaint will be recorded on 1st for EPA Ltd internal systems.

Following a review of the complaint, it may be appropriate to investigate the matter in more detail. Complainants will be informed as to the appropriate action taken/or to be taken and will be informed as to when they can expect a response regarding the outcome.

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome may appeal against the decision using 1st for EPA Ltd Appeals Procedure.

### **Final Arbitration**

The regulators are specified in the published Apprenticeship Standard Assessment plans.

The contact details are as follows:

Institute for Apprenticeships

Level 2

Cheylesmore House

5 Quinton Road



## **7. Appeals procedure**

### **7.1 Procedure**

Apprentices have 20 working days from the date that they were notified of the decision that they are appealing against in which to lodge an appeal against the decision. This includes assessment results, so apprentices are advised to retain their evidence until they receive the result.

If an employer/provider is appealing on behalf of its apprentice(s), they must ensure that they have obtained written permission from the apprentice(s) concerned as grades/results can go down as well as up as a result of an investigation.

Apprentices who wish to appeal about their assessment results or about a related decision should be supported by their employer/provider.

An appeal must be put in writing and include the following details:

- The employer/provider name, address and contact details
- The apprentice(s) name(s) and apprenticeship standard
- The full nature of the appeal
- The date of the report and the name, position and signature of the individual appealing the decision.

### **7.2 Informal Review of Appeal**

Wherever possible, 1st for EPA Ltd will try to resolve disputes before they reach an appeal stage. 1st for EPA Ltd will undertake an initial, informal assessment of all potential dispute information and write to the apprentice with details of the decision.

If 1st for EPA Ltd are unable to resolve a dispute in this way, the appeals process is available for apprentices. In all instances, 1st for EPA Ltd will ensure that the person carrying out this initial assessment will not have a personal interest in the appeal.

### **7.3 Formal Appeal Process**

Upon receipt of any appeal 1st for EPA Ltd will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days and pass to an appropriate person to review the appeal, who will aim to respond fully to the appeal within 10 working days. Please note that in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a visit is required. In such instances, 1st for EPA Ltd will contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

All appeal decisions/processes will include:

- an individual from 1st for EPA Ltd who has no personal interest in the decision being appealed
- at least one decision maker who is not an employee of 1st for EPA Ltd, or otherwise connected to 1st for EPA Ltd
- all individuals involved in the appeal decisions must have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal.
- following the review of the appeal, 1st for EPA Ltd will write to the appellant with details of the decision to either:
  - amend the original decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward which has been reviewed to confirm 1st for EPA Ltd stands by the original decision and in doing so the rationale for this decision. 1st for EPA Ltd will also request that it is confirmed, in writing within 15 days, whether the



appellant now accepts this decision or if they wish to proceed to the independent review appeals process.

#### **7.4 Independent Review Appeals Process**

If the appellant decides to proceed to the independent appeal stage, The Chair of the Governing Body will arrange for an independent review to be carried out.

The independent reviewer must meet the following criteria:

- they will not be an employee of 1st for EPA Ltd, be working as an assessor for 1st for EPA Ltd, or be otherwise connected to 1st for EPA Ltd.
- they must have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal
- they must not have a personal interest in the decision being appealed.

The Independent Reviewer will review all the evidence which took place during previous stages and review whether 1st for EPA Ltd have applied the procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with the policy.

The independent review process may involve:

- a discussion with the appellant and 1st for EPA Ltd personnel
- a request for further information from the appellant or 1st for EPA Ltd personnel
- a visit by authorised 1st for EPA Ltd personnel.

The Independent Reviewer's decision is final in relation to how 1st for EPA Ltd will consider such appeals and 1st for EPA Ltd will inform the appellant of the outcome of the review within 20 working days of receipt of the independent appeal.

#### **7.5 Fees for Appeals**

There will be a fee of £100 per appeal to cover our costs. Where an appeal is upheld, no fee will be incurred.

#### **8. Policy Review**

This policy was created on 23 November 2019. It will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals and as legislation requires.