



## **1<sup>st</sup> for EPA Ltd Complaints and Appeals Policy**

### **1. Policy purpose**

This procedure applies to all 1st for EPA Ltd staff, contracted assessors, apprentices, training providers, employers and stakeholders. This document sets out guidance of how to lodge a complaint or appeal to 1st for EPA Ltd and the procedure to follow.

### **2. Introduction**

1st for EPA Ltd is committed to delivering a high standard of customer service. We recognise that apprentices should have access to fair and reliable assessment.

It is important to define a complaint and an appeal:

A Complaint is a report of 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA or its staff carrying out its activities in a way that the complainant is not satisfied with, but that does not directly affect the outcome of assessment. For example, a complaint may arise where results have not been issued within the agreed timescale.

An Appeal should be lodged where it is believed that 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA has not carried out its duties to the required standard, and this has caused apprentice(s) to either:

- Not be marked fairly
- Have been awarded an incorrect grade
- Have been disadvantaged in some other way.

Appeals may be lodged in relation to:

- The results of assessments.
- Decisions regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.
- Decisions relating to any action to be taken against a Learner or a Centre following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration.

The processes for complaints and appeals are detailed below.

### **3. Complaints process**

Where 1st for EPA Ltd receives a complaint, it will be dealt with promptly.

1st for EPA Ltd's procedure for complaints involves:

- Submitting a complaint
- Acknowledgement
- Review
- Response
- Notifying the regulators or IfATE
- Record the complaint.

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

Send complaints by:



**1st for EPA**

End Point Assessment made easy

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

Post to: 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA Ltd, 61 Cranbrook, Marton-in-Cleveland, Middlesbrough TS8 9XH

**Acknowledgement:** 1st for EPA Ltd will contact the complainant within 3 working days of receipt to acknowledge the complaint.

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

- Investigate the complaint directly; this investigation will be carried out by the Quality Manager and Managing Director.
- Bring the matter to the attention of the Head of Awarding Body and/or EQA provider (external quality assurance provider), asking them to investigate the complaint and to report on the outcome.

**Response:** 1st for EPA Ltd will respond to the complainant by email or post within 28 days, with details of any preventative or corrective action to be taken.

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

**Record the complaint:** The complaint will be recorded on 1st for EPA Ltd internal systems.

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

#### 4. Appeals Process

Appeals must be submitted by the training provider; apprentices should discuss the appeal with their training provider and ask them to lodge the appeal. Employers should be in agreement that an appeal should be lodged.

Appeals may be submitted within 28 days from the date that they were notified of the assessment decision they are appealing against.

Apprentices should be aware that an appeal is an independent review of decisions taken, and as such it may result in a grade/result being marked either up or down.

Appeals should be lodged through ACE360. To do this, go into the apprentice's record and click Actions and then Submit Appeal. The system will then ask for details of the appeal as well as any supporting information. Please make sure to include all relevant information to allow a third party to make a decision.

**Important:** Any confidential information/attachments should be emailed directly to 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA's Quality Manager: [quality@1stforepa.co.uk](mailto:quality@1stforepa.co.uk)

Full details on using ACE360 can be found in the training guide available at the link below (see the Appeals process on page 39 onwards).

[https://ace360.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LTP-Guide-June-2020\\_v11.pdf](https://ace360.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LTP-Guide-June-2020_v11.pdf)

#### Reviewing an Appeal: Stage 1

1st for EPA Ltd will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 3 working days. In the first instance this will be reviewed by 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA staff.

Those investigating an appeal must:

- Have no personal interest in the decision being appealed.
- Not have made the initial assessment decision that is being appealed.
- Have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal.

Following the review of the appeal, the Quality Manager will write to the appellant with details of the decision to either uphold the original assessment decision, or amend the original decision in light of the appeal and detail the revised mark or grade, as appropriate to the apprenticeship standard.

We aim to respond fully to the appeal within 28 working days. Please note that in some cases the review processes may take longer. In such instances, the Quality Manager will contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely timescale.

If the apprentice, training provider and employer do not agree with the outcome of stage 1, they may proceed to stage 2.

### **Reviewing an Appeal: Stage 2**

Where the outcome of stage 1 is not accepted by the apprentice, training provider and employer, the appeal will proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2 involves escalating the appeal to an independent appeals panel. This panel will include one or more competent members who:

- Have no personal interest in the decision being appealed.
- Have no conflict of interest with 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA, the apprentice, training provider or employer.
- Have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal.

The independent panel will review all evidence relating to the assessment and the stage 1 appeal. They will then make a decision as to whether 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA made the assessment decision fairly, appropriately and consistently. This decision will be communicated to all parties within 28 working days.

The independent panel's decision is final and must be accepted by 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA, the apprentice, training provider and employer.

Where the outcome of the appeal affects 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA's policy and processes, these will be reviewed as necessary.

### **5. Fees for Appeals**

Appeals at stage 1 will incur a fee of £100 to cover our costs.

Appeals that proceed to stage 2 will incur a further cost of £200.

Where the appeal finds in favour of the apprentice, no fee will be incurred.

### **6. Policy Review**

This policy was last updated 21 January 2021. It will be reviewed annually and as legislation requires.