

Articulacy Complaints Procedure

Introduction

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Articulacy prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to students. However, a complaint will be treated by Articulacy with respect and in accordance with this procedure. Articulacy makes its complaints procedure available to all and can be sent to anyone upon request.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A distinction should be drawn between, on the one hand, an expression of concern or an informal complaint and, on the other, a formal complaint. Of the very few complaints Articulacy is asked to address, virtually all, if not all, are resolved at an informal level. Where at all possible, therefore, organisations or individuals should seek to resolve matters at an informal level. This is usually best done by discussion and agreement.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about Articulacy as a whole or about an individual member of staff or freelancer. A complaint is likely to arise if an organisation or individual considers that Articulacy has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done, or acted unfairly.

Organisations and individuals can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially and appropriate legal advice taken if necessary.

Timeframe for dealing with complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days. It is in everyone's interest to resolve the complaint as speedily as possible. Articulacy's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 2 days if the complaint is lodged at a time when all parties involved are available, and as soon as possible and practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

In order to adhere to these tight timescales all parties are expected to co-operate with investigations and may be required to give promptly the necessary amount of time (which may be substantial) to assist with investigations and/or attend meetings.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, Articulacy will keep a written record of all complaints whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to an Appeal Panel hearing. At Articulacy's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of complainant
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name(s) of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Stage 1 - Expressions of Concern or Informal Complaints

If an organisation or individual has a concern about some aspect of a student's participation in a workshop or activity organised by Articulacy, Articulacy more generally or about a particular member of staff, they should contact the Business Manager of Articulacy initially, who will try to assist or will refer the matter to another member of staff, as necessary.

The nature of the concern or informal complaint will influence the time that it will take to investigate and report back to an organisation or individual. However, it is expected that an organisation or individual will receive an initial, if not complete, response within 5 working days. Where this course is not deemed sufficient, or where it has been tried but the outcome is considered unsatisfactory, the organisation or individual may refer the matter, still at an informal level, to one of the Articulacy Directors.

Where all reasonable attempts to resolve a complaint at an informal level have failed or, in exceptional circumstances, where an apparently extreme situation would appear to justify a formal complaint immediately the following procedure should be used:

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the organisation or individual should put their complaint in writing to the Articulacy Directors, stating clearly why they wish the matter to be dealt with by formal procedure. The Directors will investigate the complaint themselves.

An organisation or individual wishing to make a formal complaint about one of the Directors should follow the procedure outlined, but submit the written complaint to the Business Manager in an envelope marked 'for the personal attention of the Business Manager', who would be responsible for ensuring that the formal complaint was dealt with in accordance with the procedure outlined, but by a person or people appropriate to the Director's seniority.

The process of investigation will be determined by the nature and complexity of the complaint. It is not possible therefore to be prescriptive about the procedure to be followed, but it is likely to involve further investigations, meetings with any staff/freelancer concerned and, in most cases,

with the organisation or individual submitting the complaint. The organisation or individual may be accompanied to any meeting by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

Once, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the organisation or individual will be informed of this decision in writing. A copy of the findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent, where relevant, to the person complained about as well as the Directors (if they have not carried out the investigation).

If the organisation or individual are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3. Appeal Panel Hearing

If an organisation or individual seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Business Manager to call hearings of the Appeal Panel. The matter will then be referred to the Appeal Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three external persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of Articulacy. The Business Manager, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.

The organisation or individual may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the organisation or individual informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the organisation or individual, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Directors.

This policy was last reviewed by Articulacy on 12th February 2020

Signed on behalf of Articulacy



Print name here

Leanne Fennell

Date

12th February 2020