		
ISSUED BY: AO Director Caroline Walton	Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures	**ISSUE DATE:** September 2026 **REVIEW DATE:** September 2027
	Complaints Policy	**ISSUE:** V7

Scope and Purpose

At Explosive Learning Solutions (ELS), we are always open to receiving comments, both positive and constructively critical. It is important for us to know when we get things right and when there is a need for improvement.

Feedback from Apprentices, training providers and employers helps ELS evaluate the effectiveness of its services and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. Where necessary, this feedback will be used to improve, redesign or amend our assessment services. Apprentice feedback is central to this process of continual quality improvement.

We want to hear from you if you feel we have done something well or, alternatively, if you think we have not met the standards required.
It is our commitment to listen and respond to the views of all users of ELS and its services.

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to any Apprentice, employer, training provider or any other interested party who are dissatisfied with any aspect of ELS or have positive suggestions/comments to make.
ELS aim is to:

- Respond quickly and positively and reach an outcome that is satisfactory and fair for all concerned
- Keep those involved informed of our progress in dealing with the complaint

When to use this policy

A complaint may be made about any aspect of ELS' Apprenticeship Assessments over which it has control, such as:

- Delivery of assessment
- Outcome of an assessment delivery
- Against training provider/learner or employer
- Content of assessment material

- Anything else relating to Apprenticeship Assessment

If the complaint relates to malpractice or maladministration, these will be dealt with through the procedures specifically outlined in the Malpractice and Maladministration policy.

Complaints relating to the administration, conduct or service delivery associated with assessment activities. A challenge to an assessment decision should be managed through the Appeals Policy.

ELS will not normally investigate complaints:

- Exceeding one month since the decision or action complained about has been taken
- Where ELS considers the complaint to be vexatious, malicious or impractical

Responsibility

Responsibility for complaints

The Assessment Scheduling Team will handle, review and respond to feedback and complaints received from all parties relating to Apprenticeship Assessment.

The Assessment Scheduling Team will also monitor feedback and complaints and look for trends and patterns. The Assessment Scheduling Team will have the responsibility of documenting any feedback or complaints received.

Principle of complaint handling

ELS is committed to maintaining high standards for its policies and procedures, providing an efficient, effective and transparent mechanism for Apprentices, training providers or employers giving feedback on ELS Apprenticeship Assessments.

All complaints are to be dealt with fairly and should be recorded so that analysis is facilitated. Individuals should not be discouraged from making complaints, unless they are bad-natured or lacking serious purpose. Where possible complaints should be dealt with informally, bad-natured is and their outcomes must always be recorded.

It is critical that formal complaints are responded to with an appropriate degree of formality and in an appropriate manner. All parties involved should have confidence in the process and the outcomes. The procedural policy set out below is designed to provide such confidence.

It is acceptable for complaints to be submitted anonymously; however, it is always preferable for complainants to reveal their identity and contact details. If they are concerned about potential repercussions, they can inform us that they do not wish for their identity to be disclosed. Sharing information would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

Should ELS discover a failure in its Apprenticeship Assessments following a complaints investigation, ELS will take all reasonable steps to:

- Correct the issue wherever possible or, where correction is not possible, take reasonable steps to minimise the impact of the issue (as far as possible)
- Ensure that failure does not occur in the future.

ELS will aim to:

- Take appropriate action to address concerns
- Handle all complaints in a balanced and impartial manner
- Keep those involved informed of our progress in dealing with the complaint
- Acknowledge receipt of a complaint within **three working days** of a written complaint being received
- Communicate conclusions from the investigation within **ten working days**
- from receipt of the complaint (depending on the nature of the complaint)
- Take positive action to put things right where a complaint is fully or partially upheld
- Make every effort to prevent the same thing from happening again
- Advise accordingly for any complaints not upheld

Outcome of the investigation

On completion of the investigation, the complaint will be classified in one of three ways:

- **Upheld**: the complaint was fully justified and will result in ELS taking corrective action.
- **Partially upheld**: certain aspects of the complaint were considered justified and will result in ELS conducting some follow-up action.
- **Not upheld**: the complaint was not justified.
- **Resolved Informally**: many complaints are often addressed before a formal investigation reaches conclusion.

Serial and vexatious complaints

A serial and/or vexatious complainant is someone who acts in an unreasonable manner e.g. is unreasonably persistent in raising their complaint and is not accepting what is being said.

ELS has a duty of care for its employees; when dealing with a serial and/or vexatious complainant, we reserve the right to refuse to investigate a complaint and may, if appropriate, refer the matter to ELS's solicitors.

ELS will refuse to investigate complaints of the following nature:

- Abusive or threatening
- Repeatedly contacting ELS via telephone or email in each working day without offering new evidence or information
- Unreasonable demands on ELS outside of the investigation premises
- Making unfounded, abusive or persistent allegations without providing any supporting evidence.

In all the above circumstances, the complainant will be referred to the AO Director.

Procedure

Our complaints procedure is designed to help Apprentices, training providers or employers register their concerns and to help ELS respond effectively and appropriately.

1.1 Before a formal complaint is raised, any concern relating to Apprenticeship Assessment can be raised with the Assessor or Internal

Quality Assurer (IQA) for a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, then the complainant can proceed to raising a formal complaint.

1.2 Apprentices, training providers and employers can submit feedback or a complaint regarding Apprenticeship Assessments by downloading our Complaints Form from our website at elsbusinesstraining.co.uk and submitting the form to assessments@explosivelearningsolutions.com where it will be received by one of our Coordinators. Any evidence or documentation which supports the complaint must also be submitted at this time.

1.3 Once the formal complaint has been received, the coordinator will send a response to the complainant acknowledging their complaint within **three working days**.

1.4 The relevant Delivery Manager and the Quality Assurance Manager will meet to review complaints submitted relating to Apprenticeship Assessment and decide whether further investigation is required.

1.5 The Delivery Manager and Quality Assurance Manager will determine:

- Whether the complaint falls within the scope of this policy.
- Whether immediate resolution is possible.
- Whether a full investigation is required.

1.6 If the Delivery Manager and Quality Assurance Manager decide that the nature of the complaint can be easily resolved and require no further investigation, an explanation of the decision will be sent to the complainant within **five working days**.

1.7 If further investigation is required, the AO Quality Assurance Manager will lead on this. The complainant will be advised on this. Completion of an investigation will be carried out within ten working days.

1.7.1 The Quality Assurance Manager will conduct a thorough investigation. Using the information provided to them, they will review why the problem has occurred and what can be done to rectify it.

If required, the AO Quality Assurance Manager may reach out to other parties who might have been named or are involved in the complaint, as to gain additional evidence and information, which could determine the outcome of the complaint. The AO Director may also be consulted to advise on more complex queries.

1.7.2 Once a full investigation has been conducted, a decision will be made by the AO Quality Assurance Manager, and the complainant will be informed of the outcome. The AO Quality Assurance Manager will inform the complainant, and all relevant parties will be informed of the decision in writing.

1.7.3 If the complainant is satisfied with our decision about their complaint, we will consider the complaint as closed. One of our Coordinators will update the Complaints Log with details of the decision

and potential actions raised from the investigation for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Escalation Stage

1.7.4 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they must inform ELS that they would like to escalate the complaint within ten working days of receiving the original outcome. Escalated complaints will be raised with the AO Director who will review the complaint in full and confirm an outcome/solution, again within **ten working days**. The AO Director's decision is final.

Continuous Improvement

ELS will maintain a Complaints Log and regularly review complaint themes, trends and outcomes. Information gathered through complaints investigations will be used to identify risks, inform corrective actions and support continuous improvement of assessment services.

Where a complaint identifies a potential issue affecting other Apprentices, ELS will consider whether further investigation or corrective action is required.

Review and Version Control

ELS is committed to ensuring all policy documentation is subject to document control and reviewed annually.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:-	**APPROVED BY:-** Caroline Walton, AO Director