



Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out our complaints policy and procedures and is aimed at our centres, candidates and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from SafeCert Awards Ltd (SafeCert).

We value all the centres delivering our qualifications and the candidates who undertake them and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of our customers. We are confident of providing a high-quality service and would be extremely disappointed if this is not the case.

Therefore, it is important should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both yours and our expectations, that you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn lessons.

Scope

This policy covers complaints candidates, members of the public or centres may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by SafeCert.

Policy covers complaints

It is not used to cover enquiries about services officered by SafeCert or appeals in relation to decisions made by SafeCert. These areas are covered by our Enquires and Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted, which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party, that the issue is being considered in accordance with our Enquires and Appeals Policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice may have occurred, you should send your concerns to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Centres Responsibility

We suggest that your staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, along with the candidates, are aware of the content of the policy and that your centre has a complaint handling procedure and appeals process in place to deal with issues raised by candidates about the services provided by your centre:

How should I complain?

Our staff have been trained to help our customers, so they will ensure they give you the time and attention needed in order to assist you in solving any issues at the earliest opportunity.

If they cannot help or you wish to speak to someone else, you can ask to speak to the Office Manager.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the Office Manager, please send a written complaint, normally within one month of the event you are complaining about, and address it to us at the contact details outlined at the end of this policy.

Candidates and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by the centre at which they have taken a SafeCert qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process, before bringing the complaint to us. However, candidates can make the complaint directly to SafeCert in exceptional circumstances, where they feel there is a significant breach by the centre of our various procedures.

If I complain, what details do I need to give?

When you contact us, please give us your full name and contact details including a daytime telephone number along with

- A full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known);
- Any names of the people you have dealt with so far;
- Copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint;

Confidentiality and whistle-blowing

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, and if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity. If it helps to reassure you on this point, we can confirm that we are not obliged (as recommended by the regulators) to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and /or any other legal duty.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously, we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the complaint/allegation relates. At all times we will investigate such complaints from whistleblowers in accordance with relevant whistle-blowing legislation.

What will happen to my complaint?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days, letting you know who is investigating your complaint.

We aim to investigate the complaint within 10 working days. If your complaint is more complex or involves people who are not available at the time, we will update you on our progress and provide an indication of when we hope to complete the investigation. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation, we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

If any part of your complaint is upheld, we will of course respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements. For example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our arrangements and assessment process (if relevant) or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of our staff is deemed inappropriate.

- a. Identify any other candidates who have been affected by that failure

- b. Correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effects of the failure, and
- c. Ensure that the failure does not recur in the future

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you disagree with the decision the first point of contact is the General Manager to make us aware of your disagreement.

We will organise a review of the complaint to ensure that we have followed the process correctly. If the process has been followed correctly the outcome will stand.

Once all of these stages have been exhausted and if you still disagree with the decision taken by SafeCert you may wish to contact the regulator for which the qualification is regulated by in relation to your complaint.

Contact us

If you've any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our support team:

Contact can be made by:

Telephone: 0845 500 2 100
Email: fiona@safecertawards.com
Web: www.safecertawards.com
Fax: 0845 500 2 101
Post: SafeCert Awards Ltd - 38 Main Street, Gortin, BT79 8PH

Office Hours: 9.30 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday

Voicemail: Available outside of normal office hours.

If the case is still unresolved, you may wish to contact the appropriate qualification regulator.


For our centres operating in Northern Ireland

CCEA Regulation
29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock,
Belfast
BT1 3BG
Tel: 02890 261200
Email: info@ccea.org.uk

For our centres operating in Scotland, England or Wales

SQA Accreditation
The Optima Building,
58 Robertson Street,
Glasgow G2 8DQ
Tel: 0345 2135249
Email: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

If the complaint is in relation to a SafeCert qualification that is accredited by SQA Accreditation, the candidate will retain the right to complain to SQA Accreditation once they have exhausted the SafeCert's complaints process. If the candidate remains dissatisfied at this point then they have the right to make a complaint to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

Company Name	SafeCert Awards Ltd	Company Address	38 Main Street, Gortin BT79 8PH
Responsible Person Name	Paul Horsburgh	Position	General Manager
Responsible Person Signature		Date	1 June 2023

This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly cycle or before with any legislation or regulatory changes.

Appendix A

Public Services in Scotland

Public services in Scotland are required to follow the guidance provided by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

Contact details for the SPSO

Online: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service>