

COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

DSW aims to deliver training, consultancy and end-point assessment services of the highest possible standards, which exceed the reasonable expectations of our clients, associates, suppliers and partners.

Our day-to-day activities are governed by a set of robust internal service standards and we work hard to deliver services within this generic framework, whilst often agreeing bespoke standards with our clients to recognise their unique requirements.

Any expression of dissatisfaction with our service is considered a complaint. Complaints should be seen as an opportunity to improve the way we do things and demonstrate our commitment to our clients and other stakeholders – they are a means by which we can maintain and build relationships with those we work with.

Our policy is to:

- Utilise a straightforward complaints procedure designed to be comprehensive but easy to use for both those expressing dissatisfaction and the DSW staff dealing with the complaint
- Provide a specific complaints telephone number and email address for our apprenticeship business
- Treat all complainants fairly, professionally and with integrity
- Ensure DSW's team knows what a complaint is and what to do if one is received
- Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly, fully and in a timely way
- Provide a route that enables a complainant to escalate the issue if not satisfied with the original decision
- Log all complaints received and undertake root cause and trend analysis to ensure that complaints are used as drivers of positive change in process.

RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy falls to the Chief Executive Officer, who may delegate the investigation and settlement of individual complaints to other member of DSW's management team.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

Overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy falls to the Chief Executive Officer, who may delegate the investigation and settlement of individual complaints to other member of DSW's management team.

RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

The nature and complexity of a complaint will determine the exact methodology to be used in its investigation and resolution, but the following principles will apply in all cases:

RECEIVING BY TELEPHONE

STEP 1

The person who receives the call should:

- Thank the caller for bringing the matter to our attention and make brief but comprehensive notes about the complaint on the complaint record sheet (Appendix A)
- Take the caller's name and contact number and ask when it is convenient to call them back
- Tell the caller that the issue will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will arrange for someone to call them back within 24 hours
- Refer the issue to the Chief Executive Officer who will decide who is best placed to make the return call and will add this to the complaint log

STEP 2

The person making the return call should:

- Ensure a basic understanding of the issue(s) raised by the complainant
- Call the complainant back within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint
- Fully understand the nature of the complaint by asking appropriate probing questions
- Agree with the complainant the next steps, including the type of investigation to be undertaken, a contact point within DSW and the time / date / method of next contact
- Confirm the proposed actions and timescales by email or post (as agreed above) to the complainant
- Update the complaint record sheet
- Report the actions taken to the Chief Executive Officer who will monitor progress and update the complaint log

STEP 3

The person investigating the complaint (who will usually be the person making the return call described in Step 2) should:

- Ensure a complete understanding of the nature of the complaint
- Fully investigate the complaint, utilising all available internal records relating to the issue(s) raised
- Comply with the agreed next steps and the time / date / method of next contact
- Inform the complainant (by email or post as previously agreed) of the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- If the complaint has not been fully investigated or cannot be fully resolved in accordance with the original timescales, explain why additional time is required and inform the complainant when further contact can be expected (this time period must be shorter than the timescales agreed for original investigation)
- Update the complaint record sheet
- Report the actions taken to Chief Executive Officer who will continue to monitor progress and update the complaint log

STEP 4

When the investigation is complete, the person investigating should:

- Submit the completed complaint record sheet to the Chief Executive Officer for sign off of the decision
- Inform the complainant (by email or post as previously agreed) of the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- Advise the complainant of the final decision reached, and why

- Inform the complainant of the escalation procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- Invite the complainant to contact us if they require further information
- The Chief Executive Officer will update the complaint log

RECEIVING BY EMAIL

STEP 1

The person who receives the email should:

- Immediately bring the email to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer who will decide on an appropriate response and record this on the complaint log
- Instigate the response (from the person who will be investigating the issue(s)) and complete the complaint record sheet (Appendix A)

As a minimum the response should:

- Acknowledge receipt of the email
- Thank the sender for bringing the matter to our attention
- Request any further information required to enable a full investigation to take place
- Indicate the next steps and timescales involved
- Include a request for confirmation that our proposed actions and timescales are acceptable to the complainant
- Report the response to the Chief Executive Officer who will monitor progress and update the complaint log

STEP 2

The person investigating the complaint (who will usually be the person who responds to the original email described in Step 1) should:

- Ensure a complete understanding of the nature of the complaint
- Fully investigate the complaint, utilising all available internal records relating to the issue(s) raised
- Comply with the agreed next steps and the time / date / method of next contact
- Inform the complainant (by email or post as previously agreed) of the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- If the complaint has not been fully investigated or cannot be fully resolved in accordance with the original timescales, explain why additional time is required and inform the complainant when further contact can be expected (this time period must be shorter than the timescales agreed for original investigation)
- Update the complaint record sheet
- Report progress to the Chief Executive Officer who will monitor progress and update the complaint log

STEP 3

When the investigation is complete, the person investigating should:

- Submit the completed complaint record sheet to the Chief Executive Officer for sign off of the decision
- Inform the complainant (by email or post as previously agreed) of the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- Advise the complainant of the final decision reached, and why

- Inform the complainant of the escalation procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- Invite the complainant to contact us if they require further information
- The Chief Executive Officer will update the complaint log

RECEIVING BY POST

STEP 1

The person who receives the post should:

- Immediately bring the letter to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer who will decide on an appropriate response and record this on the complaint log
- Instigate the response (from the person who will be investigating the issue(s)) and complete the complaint record sheet (Appendix A)

As a minimum the response should:

- Acknowledge receipt of the correspondence
- Thank the sender for bringing the matter to our attention
- Request any further information required to enable a full investigation to take place
- Indicate the next steps and timescales involved
- Include a request for confirmation that our proposed actions and timescales are acceptable to the complainant
- Report the response to the Chief Executive Officer who will monitor progress

STEP 2

The person investigating the complaint should:

- Ensure a complete understanding of the nature of the complaint
- Fully investigate the complaint, utilising all available internal records relating to the issue(s) raised
- Comply with the agreed next steps and the time / date / method of next contact
- Write to the complainant describing the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- If the complaint has not been fully investigated or cannot be fully resolved in accordance with the original timescales, explain why additional time is required and inform complainant when further contact can be expected (this time period must be shorter than the timescales agreed for original investigation)
- Report progress to the Chief Executive Officer who will monitor progress and update the complaint log

STEP 3

When the investigation is complete, the person investigating should:

- Submit the complaint record sheet to the Chief Executive Officer for sign off of the decision
- Write to the complainant to describe the actions carried out in the course of the investigation and the findings / outcome
- Advise the complainant of the final decision reached, and why
- Inform the complainant of the escalation procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- Invite the complainant to contact us if they require further information
- The Chief Executive Officer will update the complaint log

Please not the following:

- If the complaint is against a director of the business, it must be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer
- If the complaint is against the Chief Executive Officer, it must be investigated by the Managing Director
- If the complaint is against the Managing Director, it must be investigated by DSW's Board of Directors, with written responses being signed by the Chief Executive Officer

TIMESCALES

RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE

In accordance with timescales agreed with the complainant

RECEIVED BY EMAIL

- Step 1 initial acknowledgement – within 1 working day of receipt
- Steps 2 and 3 – in accordance with timescales agreed with the complainant

RECEIVED BY POST

- Step 1 initial acknowledgement – within 2 working days of receipt
- Steps 2 and 3 – in accordance with timescales agreed with the complainant

ESCALATION PROCEDURE

When providing the complainant with our final response to the issues they have raised we should inform them of their right to escalate the complaint should they not be completely satisfied with the outcome.

Should a complainant wish to take this step, the following escalation levels apply:

- First Level Escalation – to the Chief Executive Officer for further investigation of the complaint. If the Chief Executive Officer investigated the original complaint, escalation is to the Chairman

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after First Level Escalation:

- Second Level Escalation – to the Chairman. If the Chairman has already investigated the complaint, escalation is to DSW's Board of Directors with written responses being signed by the Chief Executive Officer

ADVERSE COMMENT ABOUT DSW ASSOCIATES

Feedback on the performance of all associates, in the form of quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, is received from training delegates, stakeholders and other client representatives

– summaries of the results are provided to client stakeholders. Furthermore we agree with our larger and more established clients specific contractual terms around the performance of associates placed with them and a process for their replacement if this performance falls short of expectations.

Additionally, feedback is received from clients during day-to-day contact and as part of regular client relationship meetings.

Our clients have the right to expect our best endeavours in sourcing appropriately skilled, experienced and knowledgeable associates who conform to professional standards of behaviour, to fulfil their specific requirements. On the rare occasion that expressions of dissatisfaction are received, they are treated in accordance with specific contract terms and / or the above complaints policy, with DSW acting as a mediator to ensure that all interested parties are fairly represented.

APPENDIX A – COMPLAINT RECORD SHEET

Your Name	
Details of Complaint	
Date complaint received	
How was the complaint received (phone, email, letter)	
Overview of complaint	
Investigator	

INVESTIGATION LOG

Date	Action Taken / Findings / Outcome Achieved

RESOLUTION

Date of resolution	Resolution Achieved

MOVING FORWARD

Lessons Learned and Changes Made as a Result

INVESTIGATION AND OUTCOME SIGNED OFF BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date	
Signature	
Name of Signatory	

COMPLAINT DECISION NOT ACCEPTED – ESCALATION

Further Considerations Made and Final Decision

INVESTIGATION AND OUTCOME SIGNED OFF BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date	
Signature	
Name of Signatory	