

Complaints Policy

Introduction and Purpose

ICME is committed to providing an excellent End-point assessment service with a positive customer service experience. At ICME we aim to resolve complaints as close to the initial point of contact as possible, however, we complete fair investigations in all cases of a complaint.

This policy is aimed at any individual or organisation involved in the delivery of a Standard where ICME are providing the EPA services, including Apprentices, employers and providers. This policy covers any complaints these individuals or organisations wish to make. The purpose of this complaints policy is to define the circumstances in which a complaint can be made and how complaints will be managed by ICME.

This policy does not cover;

- Appeals relating to any decisions made by ICME – Such events are covered in our Appeals Policy
- Complaints made about possible malpractice or maladministration which are covered in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Events prior to the date that ICME were selected for End-point Assessment services
- Events that do not directly relate to End-point Assessment undertaken by ICME
- Outcomes relating to reasonable adjustment requests
- End-point Assessment outcomes

Therefore, it is important to us at ICME that should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below expectations, you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and enable us to adapt.

Review arrangements

At ICME we shall review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it continues to reflect the requirements of End Point Assessment.

However, a review will be commissioned earlier should any issues arise in relation to any findings through review processes or changes to legislation.

Any review of policies are signed off by Finance and General Purposes committee (F&GP) before being issued.

Document Version History

Issue Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Date of next Review
05/11/20	A Worrallo	Creation of Policy	November 2021

Definition

A complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, it can also be defined as showing an expression of dissatisfaction, the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of ICME.

Putting a complaint into context for the End-point Assessment service ICME provide could include but is not limited to;

- The quality and standard of the EPA service
- The quality of the EPA resources
- Treatment, attitude or behaviour of an ICME staff member
- ICME's failure to follow an applicable administrative process

How to make a complaint?

All of the ICME End-point Assessment team are able to provide support to our customers, in the first instance you should try to resolve the problem at the earliest opportunity by speaking to the Independent End-point Assessor (IEPA). If they cannot help you, or you still wish to escalate your complaint you should submit your complaint in writing. Your complaint should be sent to the address listed at the bottom of the policy, all correspondence must be clearly identified as a complaint.

All complaints must be made within **20 working days** of the event you are complaining about.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or the support/guidance provided by the EPA Quality Manager, please email or send a written complaint to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (Trustees) using the details at the end of this policy.

Complaints will be acknowledged within **two working days** of receipt.

ICME will accept complaints on behalf of third parties where the third party that is affected has given their personal consent in writing under the requirements of Data Protection Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulations - GDPR (2018).

If I choose to submit a formal complaint what information should I provide?

If you choose to submit a formal complaint in writing, then you will need to provide the following details;

- Your full name
- Your contact details including phone number
- Full description/details of your complaint – including subject matter, dates/times if they are known
- Any supporting information or documents relating to the complaint
- The names of individuals you have dealt with

Complaints brought to our attention by an External Quality Assurance (EQA) Body

If there is an instance that a complaint is brought to our attention via an EQA body about our End-point Assessment service or arrangements, we will follow the same process as any other complaint. If ICME are notified of a failure that has been discovered in the assessment process of another End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) via a complaint, we will review our policies and procedures in accordance to the complaints policy to ascertain if the same failure could affect our arrangements.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

We understand that sometimes a complainant may want to remain anonymous, although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to use, if you are concerned about adverse consequences, you may request us not to divulge your identity.

To provide reassurance we are not obliged to disclose information, if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty by ICME.

We are prepared to investigate complaints made that are reported anonymously, we shall always try to confirm a complainant by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those whom the complaint relates to.

We will at all times investigate such complaints from whistle blowers in accordance with relevant whistle blowing legislation and guidance.

What will happen to my complaint once I have submitted it in writing?

As stated above ICME will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 working days.

We aim to investigate within **20 working days**. If, however, your complaint is a more complex issue, or involves people who are not available within that timeframe, we may extend this period, but will inform you if this is the case. Initially we will review the complaint to ensure it is within the scope of the complaints policy, should the complaint be outside of the scope of this policy we will inform the complainant that the complaint will not progress any further.

We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification, which could result in a meeting.

The review of the complaint will be undertaken by an ICME representative who will be independent of the circumstances of the complaint and who has no conflict of interest in the outcome of the complaint (i.e. they will have had no involvement previously) We will consider;

- The evidence contained within the written complaint and any supporting evidence submitted
- If the relevant/required policies were applied and followed appropriately

Following the investigation ICME will inform you of the outcome of your complaint in writing within twenty working days.

The EPA Quality Manager will deal with complaints, but should there be an occasion where the complaint is about the EPA Quality manager then a member of the Internal Quality Assurance Team or ICME Office Manager will complete this initial stage.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

Following the outcome of the investigation to any complaint made, if the full or part of your complaint is upheld, we will of course review how we can improve our service and/or arrangements such as staff training or review a procedure. The complainant will be advised of the steps required to redress and the timescales of these.

In situations where our investigation indicates a failure in our assessment practices we will take appropriate actions such as;

- Informing relevant EQA body/regulator where required if it affects an apprentice's assessment
- Identify any other apprentices who may have been affected by this failure
- Correct the failure, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating the effect it as far as possible
- Ensure the failure does not occur again

What happens if my complaint is not upheld?

Following the investigation if your complaint is not upheld or the complainant is dissatisfied with the steps agreed with the redress, the complainant can escalate the complaint to a Complaints Review Panel (CRP) with the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP).

Escalation must be requested in writing within five working days of the notification of the complaint investigation.

The escalation request will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt. Upon receipt of the request to escalate the complaint, the F&GP committee members will be selected ensuring they are independent of the circumstances of the complaint and have no conflict of interest in the outcome of the complaint. Those members will then convene the Complaints Review Panel (CRP). The CRP will comprise of at least 2 members of the F&GP committee.

To decide if the complaint is upheld or not upheld the CRP will consider the following;

- Evidence submitted
- If relevant policies and procedures were applied appropriately
- The outcome of the initial investigation

As part of the CRP members of the panel could take actions such as;

- Appoint an advisor to provide information, these advisors will not be involved in the decision making process of the complaint outcome
- Request additional information
- Pause the proceedings until the required information and/or evidence is available to review

The decision made by the CRP is final.

The complainant will normally be advised in writing of the outcome of the CRP **within twenty working days** of the date of the CRP.

If the complaint is upheld, the appellant will be advised of the steps required to redress and the timescales for these. All outcomes of the CEP will be communicated to the President of ICME.

Continuous Improvement

Complaints submitted and the outcomes of investigations and Complaints Review Panel (CRP) will inform continuous improvement of the ICME End-point Assessment provision.

Record Retention

Records will be retained for six years after the date the complaint was closed.

Contact us

To submit a complaint, please email it to epainfo@icme.org.uk, call the EPA Manager on 0121 752 1810 or post it to:

ICME EPA
The National Foundry Training Centre
ECMS
Tipton Road
Tipton
West Midlands
DY4 7UW

GDPR

We may need to access confidential information, ICME will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the purposes of the investigation in line with relevant GDPR legislation. ICME will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so in instances such as with regulators/awarding bodies or law enforcement. For more information, please access our Privacy Statement at our website or view our GDPR Policy.

Privacy Statement

It is necessary for us to collect and hold personal information about you in order to manage complaints and/or appeals correctly. We will hold the information you provide to us securely and use it to help us handle and process any conflict of interests. For more information, please access our Privacy Statement at our website.

What personal data do we collect and who has access to it

We will ask for your name, contact details, organisation's name and dates of employment, if relevant. To ensure ICME manages conflicts of interest correctly, all conflicts of interest will be forwarded to the EPA Quality Manager for recording and action. Your information will be shared internally with limited ICME staff/trustees in relevant departments.

Advice and guidance

Any required guidance or interpretation on our complaints policy or wish to give feedback, please contact the EPA Quality Manager on 0121 7521810 or email epainfo@icme.org.uk