



Complaints Policy

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Introduction

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, candidates and all interested parties who receive a direct or indirect service from LanguageCert.

We value all the centres delivering our qualifications and the candidates who undertake them and our constant aim 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 that, should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations, you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn from them.

Scope

This policy covers complaints that candidates, centres or any interested parties may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by LanguageCert.

Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, we will inform the relevant party that the issue is being reviewed, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in our Customer Service statement or Appeals policy.

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

Centre's responsibility

Centres should take all responsible steps to ensure that candidates and staff involved in the management and quality assurance of our qualifications are aware of the contents of this policy and that the centre has a complaints handling procedure and appeals process in place to deal with complaints from candidates about the services provided. If an individual is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by a centre, it must first go through the centre's complaints process before bringing the matter to LanguageCert.

As part of a centre's application to become a recognised LanguageCert centre, we will check that a centre has a Complaints Policy in place and this will be re-checked from time to time during our centre monitoring activities.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy and its associated procedures annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise them when necessary in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the regulators) and any trends that may emerge with regard to the subject matter of complaints received.

If you would like to feed back any views, please contact us via the details provided in LanguageCert's "Contact Us Guide".

How should I complain?

All of our staff have been trained to do what they can to help our customers, so you should first try to sort out any problem at the earliest opportunity by speaking to the person who dealt with you.

If they cannot help or you wish to speak to someone else, you can ask to speak to the manager in charge.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the 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 in LanguageCert's "Contact Us Guide".

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 LanguageCert qualification should have exhausted their centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to us. However, candidates can make the complaint directly to us in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a significant breach of procedures by the centre.

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

When you contact us, please give us your full name, 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 relating to the complaint

Sometimes a complainant will prefer to remain anonymous. Although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity.

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 to whom the complaint/allegation relates.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

Where the regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain whether the same issue could affect LanguageCert qualifications.

What will happen to my complaint?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours, letting you know who is investigating your complaint.

Our Quality Officer will be responsible for ensuring the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy and will allocate a relevant member of staff to lead the investigation and establish whether or not an issue relating to the complaint has occurred.

At all times, we will ensure that LanguageCert personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter. If the Quality Officer has an involvement in the complaint matter, they will not be responsible for allocating a member of staff to carry out the investigation or for overseeing and managing the investigation. In such cases, it is the Responsible Officer & Manager who will stand in for the Quality Officer.

We aim to investigate the complaint and report the outcomes of the investigation and decisions regarding the complaint in writing / e-mail within 10 working days. If your complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, we may extend this to 15 working days. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances, we may recommend a meeting).

Successful complaints and/or issues brought to our attention by the regulator(s)

If any part of a complaint is upheld, we will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements, such as, for example, by reviewing our procedures to assess the impact on our qualification development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process (if relevant) or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

- identifying any other candidate and/or centre who has been affected by that failure
- correcting, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure
- reviewing and amending our arrangements, where appropriate, to reduce the likelihood that the failure will reoccur in the future
- starting internal disciplinary procedures against a member of our staff if we found their behaviour was not appropriate in accordance with our internal procedures and arrangements

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you disagree with the decision, the first point of call is the Quality Officer.

If you are still unhappy with the decision taken by LanguageCert in reviewing the complaint, you can, where relevant, take the matter through our Appeal arrangements which are outlined in our Appeals Policy. If, after you have exhausted our Appeals arrangements, you are still dissatisfied with the outcomes, you can complain/appeal directly to the relevant regulatory authority for the qualification e.g. Ofqual/Qualifications Wales).

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