



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Including our policy on appeals

Policy owner: Rebecca Blackwood

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DAMAR TRAINING

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1. Vision

At Damar we are committed to delivering a high quality service to every customer and to the continual improvement of our service. As such, we will listen to and provide appropriate support to our candidates, students and employers to enable them to feel confident to offer feedback and, where necessary, appeal assessment decisions and make complaints.

2. Policy Statement

Damar will ensure that students are fully aware of their rights in terms of appeals and complaints against assessment decisions and we will maintain effective communication channels to offer students sufficient opportunity to raise concerns and seek information, advice and guidance. Any such instances will be dealt with sensitively, swiftly and transparently.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Damar staff, including contractors, as well as our candidates, students and employers.

Appeals include those made against internal assessment decisions as well as those in relation to the results of an external assessment.

Complaints may be directly linked to assessment, but may also include any area of dissatisfaction with the standard of service delivered by Damar.

4. Aims of the Policy

We are committed to fulfilling the vision and policy statement by:

- Ensuring that all customers are made fully aware of their right to appeal and/or complain and the process they should follow to do so.
- Maintaining effective channels of communication to allow customers to raise an appeal/complaint or seek information, advice and guidance.
- Investigating complaints thoroughly, impartially and sensitively.
- Supporting customers to escalate complaints to the appropriate regulator, where Damar is unable to resolve the issue to a satisfactory end.
- Supporting appeals made by students and taking action to reverse internal assessment decisions where an appeal is upheld.

5. Implementation and Communication of the Policy

The content and vision of this policy is communicated to all staff at induction. The policy itself is available to all staff, candidates, students and employers on request, both electronically and in hard copy. The complaints process set out in this Policy is also embedded within our standard contract for services with employers.

Students are made aware of the policy at induction.

6. Complaints and Appeals Procedure

In the event of any disagreement or dissatisfaction with Damar's services, including but not limited to the Damar's:

- assessment decision(s);
- quality of delivery; or
- conduct/professionalism;

the following process should be followed:

7. Informal resolution

Many issues can be resolved informally and so the first step is usually to speak directly with the apprentice's coach or relevant member of Damar's account management team to resolve the issue.

8. Raising a formal complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should submit their concerns in writing. When a complaint is first raised formally it should be sent, by email, to the relevant individual, copied to info@damartraining.com (this mailbox is monitored by senior management). Please set out the issues in full so that Damar look into them properly.

Complaints may also be sent by post to Damar Limited, 111 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2HE.

In each case, the details of the complaint will then be passed to the Damar's quality manager.

a. Stage 1

The quality manager will contact the complainant within two working days to discuss further with a view to, either:

- resolving the issue (in which case a summary of the resolution will be sent to the complainant); or
- if the matter cannot be resolved immediately, taking full details and then investigating the complaint with the coach(es) or other relevant colleagues.

The quality manager will respond in writing to the complainant within a further 5 working days with an outcome to the investigation and reasoning behind the decision.

If the complaint relates to an assessment decision and the complaint is not upheld, the quality manager will direct the complainant to the information given at the start of their training to appeal to the awarding organisation for the relevant qualification.

The quality manager will support the complainant in their appeal to such awarding organisation.

In the case that the quality manager is not available, the Damar will nominate another colleague of at least equivalent seniority and who has been independent from the matter giving rise to the complaint.

b. Stage 2

If, following the quality manager's feedback the complainant feels the matter is unresolved, they may raise it, within five working days of such feedback with Damar's Commercial Partnerships Director (or, in their absence, any other director).

c. Stage 3

If, following feedback from the relevant director above, the complainant still feels that the matter is unresolved, they may escalate it, again within five days of receipt of the feedback, to Damar's Managing Director.

At each stage of the escalation process, Damar will acknowledge receipt within two working days. We will always investigate complaints promptly and aim to respond fully within a further five working days (so, within seven working days of the complaint/escalation step). Please note that the response period is indicative only. In many cases we can respond sooner but there may be instances when it is not possible to properly investigate and report within this timescale. Should this be the case, we will notify the complainant and indicate (and endeavour to agree) an appropriate response time.

If, having exhausted the procedure above the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome and the complaint relates to apprenticeships, they may be able to complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship>. They may also contact the National Apprenticeship Helpline regarding apprenticeship concerns, complaints or enquiries: telephone: 0800 015 0400; email: nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

Damar may need to share some or all of the details of the complaint internally and externally in order that it may be properly investigated.

If a complainant is not sure who to contact at Damar, they should call our reception team on 0161 480 8171. Our team can be contacted by email using the following email syntax: first name.surname@damartraining.com.

9. Responsibilities and Designated People

Damar's Directors have ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with our policies, statutory codes of practice, other legislation and the regulations set out by our key stakeholders including awarding bodies and funding agencies.

Damar's quality manager is responsible for supporting the management team through reporting any complaints that are raised and supporting the appeal process.

All department managers are responsible for communicating the policy effectively to staff in their teams and for positively promoting the vision and policy statement. In addition they will ensure the presence of ongoing support and training for staff and monitor their teams for breaches of this policy.

All members of staff at Damar, including contractors, are responsible for supporting and implementing the aims of this policy and reporting any complaints made to them.

10. The Scottish Qualifications Authority

Candidates who are undertaking a qualification with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) also have the right to complain to SQA. SQA will only consider the complaint if the complainant has exhausted Damar's complaints procedure and remains dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way in which we handled the complaint.

SQA will deal with complaints about:

- assessment in the broadest sense, including the conduct of, preparation for, and environment for assessment
- dissatisfaction with the way in which the centre handled the complaint

SQA will not deal with complaints about:

- assessment decisions (use the appeals or post-results service)
- the wider experience of being a candidate (e.g. support services, funding, facilities)

11. Breach of the policy and complaints

We will take any breach of this policy, or complaint in relation to it seriously, whether it be by a staff member, contractor, student or employer. Any instance will be investigated thoroughly, and robust action will be taken.

12. Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed in the event of significant changes to legislation or regulation, or as a matter of course every two years.

13. Documents Supporting the Policy

Damar has a number of policies and documents which support this policy including but not limited to:

- Self assessment report
- Damar staff handbook
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy