

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

Policy owner: Quality Manager

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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 offer feedback and, where necessary, make complaints and appeal assessment decisions.

2. Policy Statement

Damar will ensure that students are fully aware of their rights in terms of complaints and appeals against assessment decisions and we will maintain effective communication channels to offer students and employers sufficient opportunity to raise concerns and seek information, advice and guidance. We acknowledge our responsibility to ensure students and employers can raise concerns relating to qualifications developed and awarded by Damar, as well as qualifications that are assessed by awarding organisations we work with. Any such instances will be dealt with sensitively, swiftly and transparently.

3. Scope of the Policy

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

Complaints may be directly linked to assessment but may also include any area of dissatisfaction with the standard of service delivered by Damar. This includes complaints about qualifications developed and awarded by Damar, which are subject to oversight by Ofqual and CILEX Regulation.

Appeals include those made against internal assessment decisions, those made against the outcomes of qualifications awarded by Damar, and those in relation to the results of external assessment.

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 complain and/or appeal and the process they should follow to do so.
- Maintaining effective channels of communication to allow customers to raise a complaint and/or appeal or seek information, advice and guidance.
- Investigating complaints thoroughly, impartially and sensitively.
- Supporting customers to escalate complaints to the appropriate regulator (e.g. Ofqual, CILEX Regulation), 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 colleagues at induction. The policy itself is available to all colleagues, applicants, students and employers on request, both electronically and in hard copy. The complaints and appeals 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:

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

the following process should be followed:

Informal resolution

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

Raising a formal complaint/appeal

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should submit their concerns in writing. When a complaint/appeal 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 can look into them properly.

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

In each case, the details of the complaint/appeal will then be passed to the 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.

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

For appeals relating to an assessment decision for a qualification awarded by another organisation, where the appeal 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.

If the appeal relates to a qualification awarded by Damar, and the appeal is not upheld, if the complainant has exhausted Damar's complaints and appeals procedure and remains dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way in which we handled the matter, the complainant has the right to escalate the matter to CILEX Regulation or the relevant qualification regulator. CILEX Regulation's Complaints Policy allows escalation after internal routes have been fully exhausted.

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 Chief Operating Officer (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 Chief Executive Officer.

At each stage of the escalation process, Damar will acknowledge receipt within two working days. We will always investigate complaints/appeals 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 Department for Education: https://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship. They may also contact the National Apprenticeship Helpline regarding apprenticeship concerns, complaints or enquiries: telephone: 0800 015 0600; email: helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.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 Business Support Unit on 0161 480 8171 or via email businesssupportunit@damartraining.com.

7. 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 including Ofqual, CILEX Regulation, 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 line managers are responsible for communicating the policy effectively to their teams and for positively promoting the vision and policy statement. In addition, they will ensure the presence of ongoing support and training and monitor their teams for breaches of this policy.

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

8. 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 colleague, contractor, student or employer. Any instance will be investigated thoroughly, and robust action will be taken.

9. 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.

10. Documents Supporting the Policy

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

- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Damar Employee Handbook