



## **COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This policy aims to provide an effective means for individuals to feedback on the services they receive from Astro Martin Ltd

All compliments, complaints or comments/suggestions are taken seriously, and feedback is used to improve and develop our services. This policy aims to provide a means by which learners/stakeholders can inform us when we get things right, and when things do not go to plan. We welcome and encourage all learners/stakeholders to give their views and opinions. We aim to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a courteous and efficient manner and that they are resolved without avoidable delay.

We welcome good news stories, positive feedback and suggestions. From time to time, we publish case studies, please let us know if you would not be willing to appear in one.

### **COMPLIMENTS**

A compliment is defined as being feedback that informs Astro Martin that it has provided a service or services well.

We value all feedback received from our learners as it forms an important part of our quality assurance procedures and our commitment to improve and develop the services we provide. We encourage feedback relating to compliments and all learners attending courses with Astro Martin are encouraged to do this via telephone, email, our website, face to face or via our feedback forms or satisfaction surveys.

When a compliment is received, it will be recorded by a member of staff to ensure it is tracked and responded to, within 10 working days.

### **COMPLAINTS**

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to ensure that complaints are dealt with and resolved informally through discussion between the aggrieved learner and staff. Complaints are concerns or problems raised by learners/stakeholders and may be made in writing or orally. Before using the complaints procedure, it is expected that a learner/stakeholder will try to resolve the complaint informally. The formal stage of the procedure should only be used when the informal stage has failed to resolve the issue or is not making progress at reasonable speed.

This procedure applies to all learners attending training programmes or members of staff or contractors delivering services on behalf of Astro Martin Ltd.

### **1. PRINCIPLES OF PROCEDURE:**

The procedure is based on the following principles:

- A learner has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or friend at every stage of the formal procedure.
- Any complaints, to become formal, must be made in writing as soon as possible
- In all cases, reference to informal resolution in advance of formal complaint is recommended
- All proceedings, whether informal or formal, should, so far as is practicable, remain confidential
- A formal record of any hearing will be available to the learner/stakeholder.
- The timescales set out may be extended with the agreement of the parties. Where more than one learner has lodged a complaint relating to the same, or substantially the same, issue, the complaints may be dealt with together in the interests of fair and consistent decision-making.
- Where a complaint concerns an apparently trivial issue the relevant staff member will discuss this informally with the learner to determine whether there is a real need to pursue the matter through the complaints procedure.
- If the learner and member of staff are unable to agree, the stakeholder will be entitled to submit the complaint formally together with any further evidence or explanation that throws new light on it and demonstrates that a substantive complaint is in fact being made.
- If the learner's complaint restates a complaint that has been dealt with in the past, the learner will be asked to explain how the new complaint differs from the previous one, and either what new incident has occurred or what new evidence has come to light.

## **2. INFORMAL STAGE**

If a learner has a complaint that involves another learner or other learners, they should first try to resolve the matter by direct approach to the stakeholder/s involved.

If the matter relates to the general welfare, to Assessors, staff or facilities provided by the organisation, then the stakeholder may request a meeting with a relevant/senior staff member and efforts made to resolve the issue. Any informal meeting with staff should be held within 10 working days of the submission of the request.

If, after any action to resolve the complaint taken by staff, the learner is not satisfied with such actions, he/she may proceed to the formal stage of the procedure.

## **3. FORMAL STAGE**

If the complaint has not been resolved at the informal stage, the complaint will be heard by the Quality Manager. The learner must set out in writing the nature of their complaint and the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal stage. The record of this written complaint will be kept in a Complaints File for three years, whatever decision is made and however the issue is resolved.

Should the complaint relate to a process or decision, the Quality Manager will appoint another person as investigating officer who will be asked to provide a full written report together with any relevant documents. The investigation should be conducted as quickly as possible while allowing for all relevant information and evidence to be gathered. A timescale for this will be agreed between the stakeholder and the Quality Manager.

Should the complaint be against a named individual or individuals, the Quality Manager will give them a copy of the complaint at the earliest opportunity. The individual will present their response at the hearing and it would not normally be necessary to conduct an investigation.

Every attempt will be made to ensure that the hearing will be held within 10 working days of receipt of the investigating officer's report, or within 10 working days of the complaint being received if it is against an individual. The learner will be given five working days' notice that the hearing is to be held. The learner may request an alternative date to allow up to an additional five working days if their representative is unavailable. If following a reasonable attempt to rearrange the hearing, the learner is still unable to attend, they may send a representative, or the hearing may be held in their absence.

A copy of any decision will be given in writing to the complainant **within three working days** of the hearing.

#### **4. RIGHT OF APPEAL**

Should the complainant wish to appeal against the decision of the Quality Manager they must do so, in writing, within five working days of being informed of the decision.

The appeal will be considered by an external independent adjudicator who has not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and is independent of the management and running of the organisation. All details of the complaint will be made to the external adjudicator, including findings and reasons for the decision.

The appeal will be heard by the independent external adjudicator. The learner will be given five working days' notice that the hearing is to be held. The complainant may request an alternative date to allow up to an additional five working days if their representative is unavailable. If following a reasonable attempt to rearrange the hearing, the stakeholder is still unable to attend, they may send a representative, or the hearing may be held in their absence.

The complainant should ensure that they attend the meeting at the specified time. If they are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the Centre Manager as soon as possible. If they fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in their absence.

The adjudicator will hear all or part of the previous hearing depending upon the nature of the appeal.

Within three working days of the appeal the adjudicator will record the decision and give it to the learner. Any recommendations made by the adjudicator will be notified to the appropriate individuals and will be time bound. The decision of the appeals adjudicator is final. Written



records of this complaint will then be kept in the Complaints File for three years and then destroyed.

## **COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS**

A comment is defined as being an idea, suggestion or opinion on how Astro Martin could improve its services. If you would like to make a comment on our work, this may be done orally, by telephone, email or in writing; we prefer in writing or email as it helps us to keep a paper trail of comments received.

When a comment is received, it will be recorded by a member of staff to ensure it is tracked and responded to within specified timescales.

We will reply to the person making the comment within 10 working days and will include any necessary action we have taken as a result of the comment.



## The Complaints Procedure and Feedback Form

At Astro Martin we want to provide an excellent service. One of the ways in which we can improve what we do is by listening and responding to your views. We value feedback that learners provide, and complaints are monitored, evaluated and reported on regularly to the organisations senior management team. We aim to resolve your complaints quickly.

Please use the following space to tell us about your experience at Astro Martin:

Name: .....

Course: .....

Please continue your comments here