

Apprenticeships Employer Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Oxford Brookes University is committed to providing high quality education and services to all its learners and stakeholder organisations. Employers of degree apprentices are important stakeholders. We value their views and will be responsive to concerns when they are raised. The purpose of this policy is to create a supportive environment for stakeholders to raise and manage complaints in a way which is sensitive to the needs of each specific case and to the benefit of the apprentices.

1.2 Employers are encouraged to raise any concerns with us immediately so that we can discuss them at an early stage and prevent matters from becoming more complex. We aim to deal with complaints in a timely and consistent way.

2. Purpose

2.1 The University is concerned to investigate and understand issues and disputes with employers who work with us to deliver apprenticeships.

2.2 This policy is supplementary to existing contractual and other regulatory material including the University's Quality and Standards handbook and the Contract for Apprenticeship Training Services.

2.3 This policy addresses the requirements by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and sets out a framework for addressing and resolving complaints.

2.4 All concerns and complaints will be monitored to ensure that they are dealt with promptly and efficiently and any action may be used to help us improve our apprenticeship provision.

2.5 In the event of a dispute arising in relation to the Contract for Apprenticeship Training Services, clause 7 of the agreement details the actions to be taken.

2.6 Complaints by apprentices are outside this policy and should be raised under the Student Complaints procedure which is available at: [Student complaints - Oxford Brookes University](#)

2.7 The University will normally be unable to respond to any complaints or concerns which are made anonymously.

3. Complaints Procedure

3.1 Initially, it is recommended that employers raise any concerns informally with the UK Partnerships and Apprenticeship team. This provides the opportunity for the University and the employer to discuss the concerns in an attempt to bring about an early resolution. The employer should, in the first instance, make contact with the UK Partnerships and Apprenticeships team (apprentices@brookes.ac.uk) who will arrange to discuss the issues of concern directly with the employer on an informal basis or, if more appropriate, will arrange for a Faculty Associate Dean Strategy and Development to do so.

3.2. Stage 1

3.2.1 Where the employer is dissatisfied following informal discussions with the UK Partnerships and Apprenticeships team or the Faculty or feel that their concerns have not been adequately resolved, the employer may refer their concerns, in writing, to the Head of Educational Partnerships.

3.2.2 The written complaint should include:

- Details of the nature of the concerns/ dispute or complaint.
- Copies of any supporting documentation (if relevant).
- Details of any discussions already undertaken with the University and the reasons why, in the employer's opinion the complaint has not been adequately resolved.
- What action would, in the employer's opinion, be an adequate resolution.

3.2.3 The Head of Educational Partnerships (or equivalent) and the employer will aim to discuss the dispute/concerns within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint in an attempt to resolve the issues raised, or agree further steps required to enable the parties to come to an agreeable solution which satisfies ESFA rules.

3.2.4 Confirmation of the outcome of the complaint (including any action points) will be provided to the employer in writing.

3.3 Appeal

3.3.1 Where the parties are unable to agree a reasonable resolution, or the employer is not satisfied with the resolution offered by the University at stage 1 above, the complaint may be escalated to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), who will seek to resolve the complaint with the employer within 10 working days.

3.3.2 Should the employer wish to appeal the stage 1 solution to their complaint it should be put in writing to gdalton@brookes.ac.uk

3.3.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) will confirm the outcome of the appeal in writing to the employer.

3.4 Should the University be made aware of concerns raised between an employer and a sub-contractor, the University's role shall be to offer assistance to the parties to help them to resolve their concerns, with the aim of bringing about a reasonable resolution.

3.5 This policy is subject to an annual review by the UK Partnerships and Apprenticeship Team at the University to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The owner of this policy is the Apprenticeships Oversight Group

Approved: January 2024

Next review: January 2025