

## University College Birmingham - Employer Complaints Policy (Apprenticeships)

This policy has been developed to advise employers of apprentices who are engaged with the University College Birmingham (UCB) of the process to follow in order to make a complaint about the apprenticeship service provided by the UCB.

All complaints will be treated with the utmost seriousness and employers will not suffer any disadvantage as a result of making a complaint as per the UCB processes.

The University has a separate complaints policy for Students (including apprentices), which is published in the apprentice programme handbooks, on Canvas, Learning Assistant and Smart Assessor, and at <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/Apprenticeships>.

If UCB internal processes have been exhausted, employers have the opportunity to have their raise their complaint with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are not satisfied with UCB's response.

### What is a complaint?

An employer complaint is "a written (including email) communication of discontent by an employer or their representative containing details of the apprenticeship service provided or not provided by UCB." General information which may be feedback through in year evaluation or comments made to UCB apprenticeship staff which will be useful to the apprenticeship service when reviewing its operations, would not be aligned to this policy. Employers are always encouraged to provide feedback to Learning and Skills Development Coaches, senior managers or academic staff to the in a supportive\helpful manner.

### How to make a formal complaint?

There are three levels to the UCB complaints procedure are:

Level 1: Informal feedback and agreement	Level 2: Formal complaint and investigation	Level 3: Escalation and decision
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UCB will record and monitor complaints in order to improve our apprenticeship programmes and to assist in identifying problems and trends across the University programme offer and associated services. The UCB Apprenticeship Management Steering Group and Quality Monitoring Committee will review Level 2 and Level 3 complaints at regular intervals in a contract year.

### The process to follow

#### Stage 1: Informal Complaints

It is our ambition to see that the majority of complaints can be resolved in this way. Complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant staff member or with Apprenticeship Services directorate ([apprenticeships@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ucb.ac.uk)). The relevant member of the team will work with you to try to resolve the issue informally at the earliest opportunity. You will receive a written (including email) acknowledgement of your complaint within three working days and we aim to resolve the issue and provide a written (including email) response within four weeks.

### Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If we cannot resolve the complaint informally, or the employer is unhappy with the response, the employer should raise the matter in writing by emailing the Director of Apprenticeships [g.tipper@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:g.tipper@ucb.ac.uk) and the Director of Quality Systems [R.Dutton@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:R.Dutton@ucb.ac.uk). Please ensure that your email is titled as 'formal complaint' and details the complaint in full. The formal complaint must be raised within 4 weeks of the Stage 1 unresolved complaint. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and the Director of Apprenticeships or the Director of Quality Systems will investigate the complaint. In investigating the complaint, the information received from the employer will be reviewed and meetings with relevant members of UCB staff will be held. In some instances, the Director of Apprenticeships may also meet with the employer and others involved to review the facts. A written response will be issued by the University within four weeks of the date of the formal complaint to the employer.

### Stage 3: Escalation

If an employer is not satisfied with the response provided at Stage 2, they can escalate their complaint in writing to the Pro Vice Chancellor External Partnerships UCB Summer Row Birmingham B3 1JB. The communication should be titled 'Stage 3 complaint'. The Stage 3 complaint must be received within 10 days of the employer receiving written response to Stage 2.

Unless new reliable and authentic evidence is presented at this time, the PVC External Partnerships will not reinvestigate the complaint, but will check that appropriate procedures have been followed and that the decision made at Stage 2 was reasonable.

If new reliable and authentic evidence is presented, the PVC External Partnerships will consider it in making their final decision, and may undertake further investigation. A written response will be issued by the PVC External Partnerships within four weeks of the date of the formal complaint.

### External recourse?

Once the UCB internal processes have been concluded and the employer or their selected representative are still not happy with the outcome then they have the opportunity to raise their complaint with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Contact details for the ESFA - [ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:ESFA@education.gov.uk) or Complaints Team Education and Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT. If you're unhappy with the ESFA response you can contact the Department for Education if you're unhappy with how the ESFA has dealt with your complaint.