

Complaints Policy

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Purpose:	To set out the policy and procedure to be followed by NPC when dealing with complaints about its qualifications or services		
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NALP Training Company Limited
T/A National Paralegal College (NPC)

57 Chevening Road
London
SE10 OLA
Tel: 0203 745 5513

Email: Info@nationalparalegalcollege.co.uk

Website: <https://www.nationalparalegalcollege.co.uk/>

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1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

NALP Training Limited, trading as the National Paralegal College (NPC), is a training organisation specialising in qualifications and courses aimed at Paralegals. Some of these qualifications are awarded by a Recognised Awarding Organisation, NALP Limited and are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Other courses and certificates are awarded by ourselves, with some also accredited by the CPD Standards Office.

As a professional training organisation, NPC is committed to ensuring that it deals with any complaints or feedback it receives in a fair and consistent matter. To this end, we have established and maintain this written complaints policy covering the way we respond to complaints and deal with the subject matter of the complaint, including the timescales for doing so. The policy is designed to provide all users with a guide to making, responding to and resolving complaints received by NPC.

Complaints can be received by a variety of different mediums – telephone, email, website contact form, letter, etc. – and can be received from learners, the Awarding Organisation, other users of our qualifications or, indeed, third parties who find they have any cause to complain about our services or organisation.

Please note that this Policy only deals with complaints. This Policy does not cover Whistleblowers which is covered by a separate policy.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the provision of a qualification, course or any other service provided by NPC.

3. The Complainant

Anyone who seeks or receives a service from NPC may lodge a complaint under this Policy. Matters of concern may be raised individually or collectively and Learners should feel assured that they will not encounter any disadvantage having lodged a complaint in good faith.

Anonymous or third-party complaints will not be dealt with under the Procedure. It is at the discretion of NPC as to how these are handled. Where there is reason to believe that a complaint is vexatious or malicious, the matter will be referred to the Compliance Manager who may decide to reject the complaint without full consideration of its merits. Reasons will be given as to why the complaint is considered to be an abuse of process. Such complaints received with sufficient evidence to support the claims being made will, of course, be dealt with rigorously.

In the event of uncertainty about the scope of the Procedure or if general advice is required on the most appropriate way to pursue a complaint, the Learner should contact NPC in the first instance for clarification. All stages of the Complaints Procedure are internal proceedings.

4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be preserved by NPC during the investigation of a complaint to safeguard the interests of everyone concerned unless disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint. For a complaint to be considered under this policy, all parties involved in the investigation must observe confidentiality. Any individual about whom a complaint is made will be informed of the fact and nature of the complaint.

5. Making a Complaint

A complainant, as defined in section 3, wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing, via Email or via telephone, providing as much information as possible to support their claim. We do not accept complaints via text message, but all other reasonable mediums are acceptable. It should be noted, however, that complainants who telephone will routinely be requested to follow up their call-in writing.

Once a written complaint has been received (whether by post or by email), an acknowledgement of receipt will be issued within 3 working days. If no acknowledgement has been received by the complainant within 7 working days, they should contact NPC to ensure that the original complaint was successfully delivered.

For telephone complaints, the acknowledgement will normally be provided during the telephone conversation and so a separate acknowledgement may not be issued, except on request or where the nature of the complaint is such that it is considered appropriate. All telephone complaints will be logged, however it may not be possible to progress a complaint fully without it being followed up in writing by the complainant in order to ensure all relevant details and evidence are being considered.

6. Complaints Handling Procedures

In the case of all complaints, NPC seeks to ensure that appropriate and reasonable action is taken. Where a complaint is justified, any appropriate remedial action will be notified as part of the decision. If a complaint is not justified at any stage, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the candidate.

Complaints are recorded and a copy of the complaint is sent to the person about whom the complaint has been made for their response.

Complaints will be passed to the Compliance Manager on receipt who will then undertake an investigation, looking at all information provided by the complainant and any evidence held by NPC. Should it be required, additional information and clarification may be requested.

Once all investigations have been completed, the Compliance Manager will inform the complainant of the outcome. This should be within 30 calendar days of the original complaint being received by NPC. Should there be any delay to this deadline, for instance if the investigator is awaiting additional

information or clarification, the complainant will be informed of the likely length of the delay and be kept up to date should of any further slippages.

The final decision will be issued to the Complainant in writing (post or email), although they may initially be informed verbally by telephone if requested.

If it is found that the nature of the complaint warrants further investigation, the Compliance Manager will pass on the information to the Executive Board who will make a decision about whether the complaint should be upheld after reviewing all the evidence presented. The Board may decide to contact the Complainant and the person about whom the complaint was made for further information.

7. Internal Review of the Complaint

Once a complaint has been answered, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to request for the case to be internally reviewed within 10 working days of the initial outcome. This will normally be done by one of the NPC Directors, but in any event will be carried out by someone who has not had any previous involvement in the case.

All requests for internal reviews must be made in writing citing the reasons for the request and providing any additional evidence not previously provided by the complainant. If no response is received from the complainant, the complaint will be closed within NPC systems after 90 days.

If as result of the complaint a gesture of goodwill is made to the complainant, it will have to be accepted within 6 months of the initial offer or it will be rescinded. Gestures of goodwill are **not** legally binding and **do not** constitute a contract and, as such, can be rescinded at any point at the discretion of NPC.

8. Escalation to the Awarding Organisation

Where a complaint is in respect of a Regulated Qualification, awarded by NALP, the complainant will have the right to request that a complaint is escalated to NALP. Where this is the case, the complaint will, from that time onwards, be handled under NALP's complaints policy, which can be found at: <https://www.nationalparalegals.co.uk/>.

Please note that the right to such escalation only applies to complaints directly pertaining to the delivery of the NALP qualifications. Complaints in respect of NPC's general administration or policies and procedures that are not directly related to the delivery of NALP qualifications (for instance, invoicing policies, fees, etc.) cannot be dealt with by NALP.

9. Data Protection

All data gathered as part of the complaints handling process will be managed in line with NPC's Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy. This will ensure that all such data is handled in line with all current Data Protection legislation including, but not limited to, The Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations and the Privacy and Electronic Communication Regulations.