

Poole SCITT Complaints Policy for trainees and staff

1. Principles

We believe that taking informal concerns seriously is the best way of meeting the needs of everyone. Such concerns are best dealt with within a very short time frame and without the need for formal complaints and appeals procedures. An effective response and appropriate redress should be provided swiftly and simply.

Any anonymous complaint will not be investigated unless there are exceptional circumstances.

This policy considers complaints from trainees only and does not consider complaints from candidates with admission complaints.

To allow for a proper investigation complaints should be brought to the attention of the SCITT as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances

Trainees must be aware that there is a complaints procedure and copies of this policy will be available on request.

2. Dealing with complaints

a) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will ensure that they:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.
- Keep notes of the interview(s) and each party to receive a copy

b) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled differently or better (this is not the same as an admission of negligence)
- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance and an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review SCITT's procedures in light of the complaint

3. Records

Notes/records should be taken of all complaints, including informal complaints.

Records relating to individual complaints are confidential.

4. Informal complaints procedure Stage 1 (see flow chart)

The majority of issues raised by partnership trainees or staff are concerns rather than complaints. Poole SCITT is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing to implement formal procedures.

Complainants will be asked what specifically the concern is about, what outcome they are hoping for and how might this be achieved. Where a concern is straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no

investigation, resolution might be achieved on-the-spot through providing an explanation of why the issue occurred and / or an apology and what will be done to stop a similar situation happening in the future.

Informal complaints would normally be made directly to the Professional Co-ordinator (see flow chart).

5. Formal written complaints procedure Stage 2 (see flow chart)

i) If someone wants to make a formal written complaint about the Administration Manager they should write in the first instance using the complaints form to the Professional Co-ordinator with details of:

- The complaint
- Any attempts they made to raise/resolve the complaint (who they spoke to and when)
- Actions they feel might resolve the problem
- Any staff they would prefer not to discuss the issue with.

The Professional Co-ordinator will investigate the matter and conduct a robust investigation, including speaking to all relevant parties, including the complainant, who may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.

The Professional Co-ordinator will decide on an appropriate course of action on the basis of that report, and the complainant will be notified in writing accordingly. The Professional Co-ordinator will aim to respond within 10 working days of a complaint being lodged, and will notify the complainant within that timescale if that deadline is not going to be met, with reasons why.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they will need to follow the TEACH Complaints Policy (contact TEACH HR department).

ii) If the formal written complaint is one against the Professional Co-ordinator or the TEACH Finance team they will need to follow the TEACH Complaints Policy (contact TEACH HR department).

iii) If someone wants to make a formal written complaint about a Professional Tutor, a placement school or the taught course they should write in the first instance using the complaints form to the Professional Co-ordinator with details of:

- The complaint
- Any attempts they made to raise/resolve the complaint (who they spoke to and when)
- Actions they feel might resolve the problem
- Any staff they would prefer not to discuss the issue with.

The Professional Co-ordinator will investigate the matter and conduct an investigation, including speaking to all relevant parties, including the complainant, who may be accompanied.

The Professional Co-ordinator will decide on an appropriate course of action on the basis of that report, and the complainant will be notified in writing accordingly. The Professional Co-ordinator will aim to respond within 10 working days of a complaint being lodged, and will notify the complainant within that timescale if that deadline is not going to be met, with reasons why.

The Professional Co-ordinator will inform the Chair of the SCITT Management Board (SMB), of the complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they can write to the Chair of the SMB, with details of their previous communication and the reason why they are still not satisfied, within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome letter. The Chair of the SMB will respond within 10 working days, giving details of the process.

The Chair of the SMB convenes a complaints panel.

(a) Constitution of the panel

The panel will consist of 3 members:

3 members of the SMB (minus Chairs of TPD and CQD committee who might subsequently be required later on the Appeals committee). This must not include any members involved in the complaint in any capacity (e.g. Staff from any school involved in a complaint).

If 3 members are not available, then Headteachers from CQD or TPD committee not involved in the complaint in any capacity.

The panel will investigate the matter and conduct a robust investigation, including speaking to all relevant parties, including the complainant, who may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.

(b) Remit of the panel

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to SCITT systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

(c) Proceedings of the panel

- The appeal will be closed to the public
- The complainant may attend and be accompanied if they wish by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.
- Witnesses will only be required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- The panel will deliberate in private
- The panel will inform the complainants of the decision as quickly as possible and within five working days
- The panel's findings and recommendations will be sent to the complainant and individual complained about (where applicable) in writing (this may be email if all parties agree)

If the complainant is not satisfied with this response, the Chair of the SMB will in all cases convene a complaints appeal panel within 21 days.

6.Appeals

(a) Constitution of the panel

The panel will consist of 3 members:

- Independent Appeals committee Chair (currently Duncan Churchill, Upton Infant School)
- One of the Chairs from either the CQD or the TPD committee*
- CEO of TEACH Trust or a TEACH Trustee

* or Vice Chair if the Chair of TPD and CQD committee are not available or have been involved in the complaints panel already (if this is not possible, then Headteachers from CQD or TPD committee not involved in the complaint in any capacity). This must not include any members involved in the complaint in any capacity (e.g. Staff from any school involved in a complaint).

Individual complaints must not be heard by the whole SMB at any stage.

(b) Remit of the panel

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint

- Recommend changes to SCITT systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

(c) Proceedings of the panel

- The appeal will be closed to the public
- The complainant may attend and be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.
- Witnesses will only be required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- The panel will deliberate in private
- The panel will inform the complainants of the decision as quickly as possible and within five working days
- The panel's findings and recommendations will be sent to the complainant and individual complained about (where applicable) in writing (this may be email if all parties agree)
- The decision of the appeal panel is final.

7. Review Stage

The SCITT Management Board will monitor the level and nature of complaints as a standing agenda item each term and will review the outcomes and resulting changes to partnership procedures.

Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA)

A complainant has a right, once SCITT processes are exhausted, and they are still not satisfied, to send their complaint to the OIA. The OIA will review that the process has been followed and that the outcome was reasonable rather than examining the substance of the complaint.

The OIA considers complaints from trainees only and do not consider complaints from candidates with admission complaints. The OIA will not consider complaints if the complainant has not gone through the providers internal complaints procedure first, unless the circumstances are exceptional.

OIA: Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB

Telephone: 0118959 9813 <http://www.oihe.org.uk>

Complaints about Kingston University (KU)

Informal complaints should be made to the Professional Coordinator who informs KU of the complaint.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the KU Complaints policy will be followed.

Any complaints made directly to KU (about the University or the Professional Coordinator) will follow the KU complaints policy. The Professional Co-ordinator will be informed of any complaints made against him/her.

Staff complaints:

Any complaints by members of SCITT staff should follow the TEACH grievance policy.

Note that any genuine, serious concerns or complaints should immediately follow the TEACH Whistleblowing Policy.

Annex 1: Investigation Procedure

Carrying out an Investigation into a Formal Complaint

The investigation of an allegation or a complaint should always be carried out thoroughly and responsibly irrespective of whether the complaint appears to be trivial or serious. The outcome of such an investigation will have significance not only for the complainant but also for the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made.

Any procedure should include provision that "An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances". These would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the SCITT would either involve appropriate external agencies or else conduct its own internal review to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

Where the Professional Coordinator or Chair of the SMB receives a complaint, it should be acknowledged formally and a commitment made that the complaint will be investigated and the outcome of the investigation notified to the complainant in due course.

The member of staff against whom the complaint has been made, should be notified that a complaint has been received, provided with a copy of the complaint and be informed that an investigation will be carried out.

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the complaint. Where necessary the nature of the complaint should be confirmed with the complainant.

Once the complaint has been confirmed the investigator should establish who they wish to interview and what documentation they will need to review.

Arrangements should be agreed so that accurate notes can be taken of all interviews and the outcome of the investigation be accurately recorded.

The complainant and the member of staff should be given the opportunity to offer documentation and to identify potential witnesses or sources of evidence.

The member of staff subject to the complaint should be advised that they may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative when invited to be interviewed.

Where children are potential witnesses, discretion should be exercised over their involvement. Pupils should only be interviewed when the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant it and adult witnesses are not available. Only in extreme circumstances will younger pupils be interviewed.

Any interviews should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure that recollections are as fresh as possible and to minimise the possibility that evidence will become tainted through witnesses discussing alleged incidents with other persons.

In conducting interviews, the investigator should prepare the questions to be asked prior to the interview. These can always be supplemented during the interview. The investigator should allow the interviewee to answer in their own way. Their responses should be listened to attentively. Any temptation to cut an interviewee short or to seek to "lead" them must be resisted. The interviewee should be given the opportunity of providing other relevant information at the end of the interview.

Interviewees should, however, be advised that their responses must be confined to the substance of the complaint. Any attempt by the interviewee to introduce information relating to other members of staff or to issues unrelated to the complaint should be resisted.

The investigator should avoid reaching conclusions or passing judgement until the investigation has been completed.

A summary of the process undertaken and the outcome of the investigation should be provided to both the complainant and the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made. Caution must be exercised in reporting back to the complainant as revealing certain details may prejudice the ability of the employee to continue in post.

Any recommendations should also be shared with all parties, unless there are good reasons not to. Wherever possible, recommendations should be constructive and not punitive.

The complainant should be advised that he/she may, if they are not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, request a review of that process by the Appeals Committee

STUDENT COMPLAINTS FORM:

Please review the Poole SCITT Complaints Policy before completing this form. In particular, **please note that it is expected that all complaints will start at Stage 1 of the procedure.** Once you have completed this form, please submit it to the Professional Coordinator.

SECTION A – YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Last name	
First name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone number	
Email address	

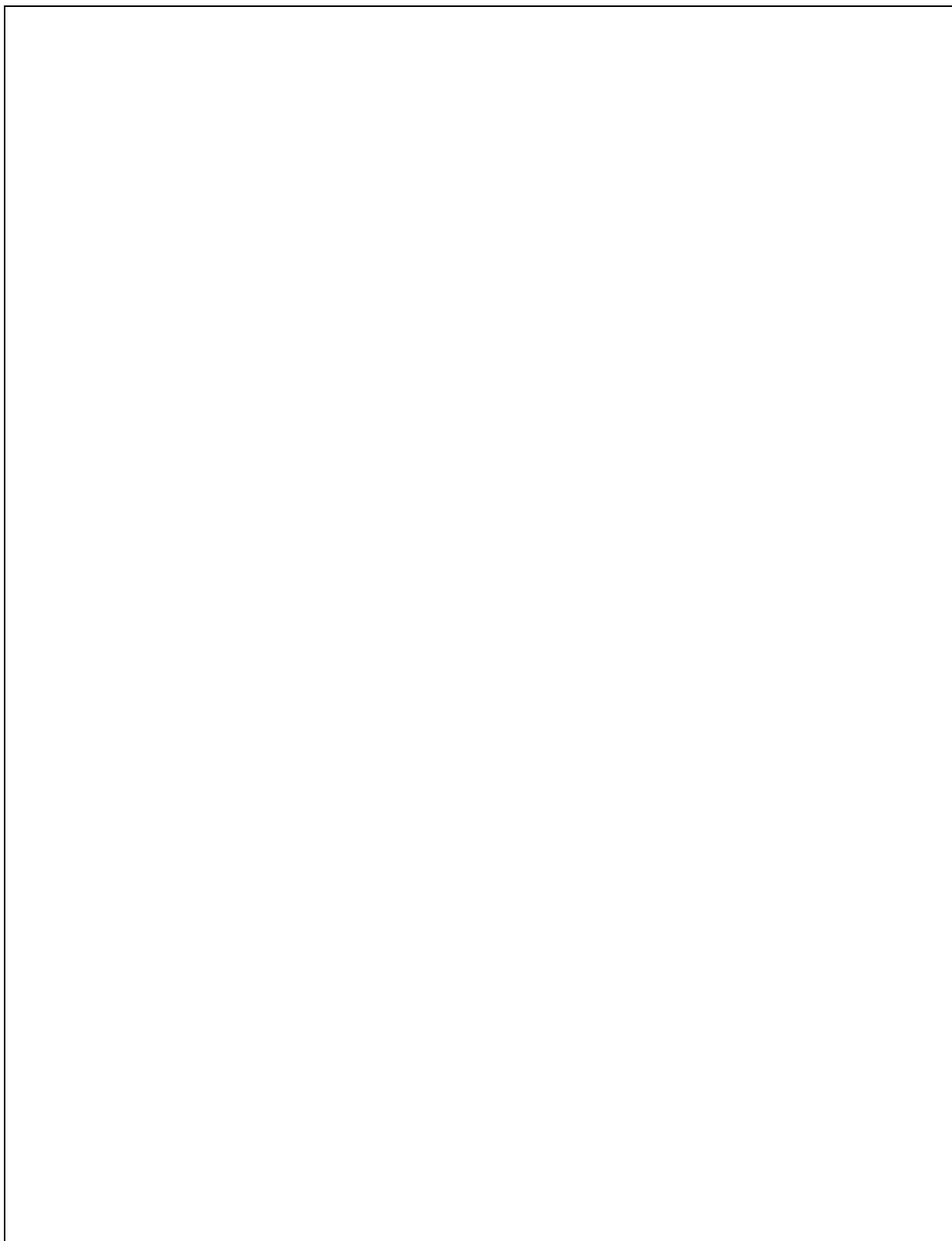
Place X in the box if you **do not** wish to be sent correspondence by post:

SECTION B – YOUR ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Course name	
School (if applicable)	

SECTION C – DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT

Please set out clearly and concisely what you are complaining about and why. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary, clearly indicating your name.



SECTION D – ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE YOUR COMPLAINT AT STAGE 1

Your complaint will not be considered at Stage 2 unless you have first attempted to resolve it at Stage 1.

With whom have you discussed your complaint?

What action was taken at Stage 1?

Why are you dissatisfied with this?

Have you been advised to escalate your complaint to Stage 2? If so, please state by whom and date of advice:

SECTION E – YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

Please indicate what you would like in order to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction (e.g. apology).

SECTION F – YOUR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please list below all documents/evidence that you are submitting in relation to your complaint (e.g. relevant emails and documents supporting the issues raised, or evidence). Please ensure that you include your Stage 1 complaint and the response you received.

SECTION G – STUDENT DECLARATION

The information that I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature_____ Date_____

Name_____