

Mary Pugsley MBE

Director, HAIR AT THE ACADEMY



Complaints Policy

Written by Mary Pugsley MBE

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Introduction

1.1. Purpose

In keeping with its core values, HATA is committed to providing an excellent service offering a range of professional and qualifications. From time to time we may fall short of our high standards and it is important that those affected have an effective means of bringing this to our attention with an expectation of resolution.

The complaints policy:

- defines what constitutes a relevant complaint;
- indicates which other policies and procedures might be more appropriate;
- sets out the process for making a complaint to HATA;
- explains the steps taken to resolve complaints;
- gives the timescale for each part of the process;
- aims to ensure that complaints are handled within a reasonable timescale and in a consistent manner;
- explains how to escalate a complaint to the relevant awarding organisation.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the service provided by your centre or awarding organisation, which is deemed to have fallen below your expectations and our own standards.

Students who wish to complain should make sure they follow the relevant policy and procedures. Issues relating to assessment decisions should be addressed using the Appeals Policy and Procedure, and others may be covered by the Malpractice Policy and Procedure. Reference to the following policies may also be useful:

- the Centre Agreement;
- the Whistle-blower Policy;
- the Sanctions Policy.

All policies are available to students at any time and are displayed in the office.

Complainants who are unsure of the correct policy and procedure to follow should contact the our administration team, salon manager or internal verifier as appropriate for advice.

Where an associated investigation identifies a rectifiable problem, HATA takes all reasonable steps to:

- identify any other learner who has been affected by the issue;

- correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate its effect as far as possible;
- take steps to ensure that the issue does not recur in the future.

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Complaints should be made by the student directly affected by the matter, or a person acting on their behalf, with their written permission.

HATA aims to deal with complaints reasonably, to the student's satisfaction and as quickly as possible.

Complaints can normally be resolved informally. If this is not achieved, a formal complaint must be raised without delay and by no later than 20 days after the occurrence of the issue which gave rise to the complaint.

1.2. Scope of the policy

This policy is provided for the use of:

- learners who are or have been registered for qualifications at HATA.
- personnel with responsibilities for managing, delivering, assessing and quality assuring qualifications at HATA.
- Members of the public accessing our services

1.3. The regulators

1.3.1. Regulatory requirements- This policy addresses the requirements of the relevant regulatory authorities' criteria.

1.3.2. Situations brought to our attention by the regulators- Where the regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, we will review whether or not a similar failure could affect our own processes and arrangements.

1.4. Responsibilities

HATA personnel are required to follow the related procedures in order to deal with complaints as transparently, consistently and effectively as possible. The director is responsible for ensuring that all personnel involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of all qualifications are fully aware of the policy and conversant with the related procedures.

The centre's own complaints procedures must be exhausted before a complaint about a centre is raised with an external awarding body e.g. VTCT.

Failure to have its own complaints policy and procedures or to make them available to learners constitutes a breach of the centre agreement.

1.5. Confidentiality and data protection

In following this process a learner might provide us with confidential information, and during our investigation we may need to request information of a confidential nature. Complainants are

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assured that HATA complies fully with data protection legislation at all stages. We ensure that confidential information is kept securely and used only for the purposes for which it is intended.

1.6. Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints cannot be considered. HATA will note their contents and may seek to verify them if this is possible and appropriate. We may include related information in our review activities

1.7. Review arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually as part of HATA's self-evaluation activity, which includes consideration of learner and awarding body feedback and good practice guidance.

A policy review may also be triggered as an action resulting from the outcome of the investigation of a complaint.

2. Making a complaint about HATA

The following pages set out the process for making a complaint about HATA.

A complainant will follow either stage 1-3 or 4 dependent on their complaint.

- Stage 1-2 - following the HATA's complaints procedures.
- Stage 3 – making a formal complaint to an awarding body.

Complainants should normally have exhausted the HATA's own complaints procedures before referring a matter to an awarding body.

Exceptionally, learners may make the complaint direct to the awarding body if they consider it is not appropriate to raise it with HATA.

Formal complaints should be submitted using the form provided (see appendix 1)

If any of the information below is not available a statement to that effect should be made so that the form is not returned as incomplete.

- HATA's complaints policy and procedures.
- A statement of the circumstances and facts surrounding the complaint.
- Copies of any correspondence regarding the complaint.
- Written statements from all parties concerned.
- Any material relevant to the complaint.
- Any other supporting documents relevant to the complaint.
- Outline of the reason for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the informal stage of the complaint to HATA.

HATA reserves the right not to accept or process complaints which are deemed to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious. If we consider that a complaint falls into this category, we will let the

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complainant know that this is our judgement, setting out the reasons and making it clear that we will no longer communicate on the matter.

The centre's complaints policy and procedure

2.1 Stage 1- The complainant raises their informal complaint with HATA.

The circumstances and content of the complaint will be discussed with the salon manager in the first instance and an amicable resolution will attempt to be sought. If the learner feels that they are unable to discuss this complaint with the salon manager they may make the complaint to an allocated tutor or trusted staff member within HATA. If the complainant does not feel that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily, then they can progress the complaint to stage 2.

2.2 Stage 2- The complainant raises their formal complaint with HATA.

The complainant must raise a formal complaint via the completion of the following form show in Appendix 1 below. Access to this form should be given by HATA to the complainant and should be accompanied by a copy of this complaints procedure.

Appendix 1

Formal Complaints Form

<u>Name of complainant:</u>	
<u>Contact details of complainant:</u>	
<u>Date and time of incidents relating to the complaint:</u>	
<u>Name of HATA staff that informal complaint was addressed to:</u>	
<u>Date informal complaint was made:</u>	

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<u>Write a statement of the circumstances and facts surrounding the complaint.</u>	
<u>What actions were taken as a result of your informal complaint?</u>	
<u>Outline of the reason for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the informal stage of the complaint to HATA.</u>	
Please include here or attach separately copies of any correspondence regarding the complaint.	
Please include here or attach separately any other material or supporting documents relevant to the complaint.	

The formal complaints form will be submitted to HATA administrators in a timely fashion by the complainant.

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In response HATA will:

- acknowledge receipt and log the complaint within 10 days;
- From time of submission, HATA staff will respond to the formal complaint within 20 working days.
- allocate the complaint to a member of the team (usually the company director) who has no involvement in the related issue;
- HATA administrators will contact all parties involved and will collect written statements from all parties concerned. They will also collate any other supporting documents or evidence relevant to the complaint alongside the completed complaints form and submit this to the director for formal review.
- investigate the complaint. The director will review all documents and evidence submitted and may request further information from all parties as appropriate. The director will then review documents in relation to all relevant HATA policies and procedures. They will then come to a conclusion as to whether the complaint is upheld or dismissed and provide written feedback explaining these decisions no later than 20 working days after the formal complaint has been submitted (unless notified of an extension).
- provide a decision to the complainant, providing written feedback explaining their decision no later than 20 working days after the formal complaint has been submitted (unless notified of an extension).
- The director will outline any proposed remedial action.
- In complex cases the timescales may be extended beyond 20 working days. If an extension to this time is needed to investigate the complaint further the salon manager or director will inform the complainant no later than 15 working days after the submission of the formal complaint with an expected response time stated.

This decision is final and the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Complaint results

If any part of the complaint is upheld HATA will:

- consider the implications for the improvement of services and procedures and agree actions;
- advise the complainant, and any relevant parties of proposed remedial actions.

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Remedial actions will be proportional to the matter under consideration, and may include:

- an apology, (either verbal or written)
- an explanation of how the matter will be improved;
- review of and improvements to policies and procedures;
- imposition of HATA disciplinary sanction(s)
- staff training and development.

Additional information is not normally accepted after submission unless it was not originally available and is considered to be highly relevant to the complaint. If at any point the complainant or others involved in the complaint wish to be legally represented in relation to any aspect of the complaint, HATA must be informed. HATA reserves the right to be legally represented and to act upon legal advice.

The complainant may proceed to stage 3 if a satisfactory outcome is not reached.

Stage 3 – Formal complaint with awarding body

If the matter has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, or the complainant does not consider it appropriate to raise their complaint with HATA directly, an awarding body's formal complaints policy may be triggered. Please speak to HATA staff to obtain the complaints procedure for the relevant awarding body as these may differ across qualifications.

If the formal complaint is being submitted following the centre's decision, it must be submitted to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the centre's decision.

If at any point the complainant or others involved in the complaint wish to be legally represented in relation to any aspect of the complaint, HATA must be informed. HATA reserves the right to be legally represented and to act upon legal advice.

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