COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Owner: Head Office
Oversight Committee: Examinations & Standards Committee
Final Authority: Grand Council
Applies to: All learners, centres, teachers, examiners, staff and third parties
Review Cycle: Annual or following regulatory change

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how International Performing Arts & Theatre Limited (I-PATH) handles complaints in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

It ensures that:

- concerns are taken seriously and investigated objectively
- complainants are treated respectfully and without disadvantage
- outcomes are consistent, proportionate and well-reasoned
- lessons learned are used to improve services and systems
- I-PATH meets Ofqual expectations relating to governance, integrity and public confidence

2. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction about the way I-PATH has carried out, or failed to carry out, its work, services, decisions or responsibilities, which requires a response.

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- administrative or customer service issues
- conduct of staff, examiners or representatives
- centre approval or operational processes
- communication, timeliness or clarity of information

3. What This Policy Does Not Cover

This policy does not apply to:

- academic judgement or assessment outcomes
  (see *Enquiries of Results* and *Appeals Policy*)
- allegations of malpractice or misconduct
  (see *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy*)
- complaints about the policies or processes of an awarding organisation or regulator

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- matters that are subject to legal proceedings
- matters that have already been fully investigated and concluded

4. Who May Make a Complaint

Complaints may be made by:

- learners
- parents or carers (via centres where appropriate)
- centres or teachers
- examiners
- members of the public

Where a complaint relates to centre delivery or teaching practice, complainants are expected to follow the centre's internal complaints procedure first before referring the matter to I-PATH.

5. Time Limits

Complaints should normally be submitted within six months of the matter giving rise to the complaint.

Exceptions may be made where there is a clear and justified reason for delay (e.g. illness or bereavement).

6. Information Required

To enable a thorough and fair investigation, complainants should provide:

- full name and contact details
- centre name and number (if applicable)
- learner or candidate details (if relevant)
- qualification and subject (if applicable)
- clear description of the complaint
- relevant dates
- copies of supporting evidence or correspondence

Incomplete complaints may delay investigation.

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

I-PATH:

- handles complaints sensitively and confidentially
- shares information only where necessary to investigate
- complies with data protection requirements

Where identity cannot be verified, information that would breach confidentiality may be withheld.

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8. Informal Resolution

I-PATH encourages early and informal resolution where appropriate.

- concerns may initially be raised verbally or in writing
- staff may attempt to resolve issues within their remit
- a meeting or call may be arranged where helpful

A record of informal resolution attempts is retained.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the matter may progress to the formal stages.

9. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Formal Investigation

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, I-PATH will:

- acknowledge receipt within 5 working days
- conduct an objective and proportionate investigation
- aim to issue a full written response within 10 working days

Where an investigation is complex, I-PATH will:

- notify the complainant
- provide an expected timescale
- issue updates at appropriate intervals

Possible outcomes may include:

- explanation or clarification
- apology
- corrective action
- recommendations for improvement
- proportionate redress (where appropriate)

Stage 2 - Complaint Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review within 20 working days of the Stage 1 outcome.

A Stage 2 review considers how the complaint was handled, not whether the original decision should be changed.

The review will consider whether:

- the investigation was fair and thorough

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- relevant evidence was considered
- the outcome was reasonable and explained

The outcome of Stage 2 is issued in writing and represents the final internal decision of I-PATH.

10. Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints

I-PATH expects all complainants to engage respectfully.

Where behaviour becomes abusive, threatening or persistent after warnings:

- investigation may be discontinued
- this does not apply where serious legal or safeguarding concerns are raised

11. Escalation Outside I-PATH

Where a complaint relates to a regulated qualification, and the complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting I-PATH's procedures, they may refer the matter to the relevant awarding organisation, in line with its published processes.

Complaints relating to I-PATH must always be considered by I-PATH before external escalation.

12. Monitoring and Reporting

I-PATH:

- maintains secure records of complaints and outcomes
- reviews complaint trends for quality improvement
- reports anonymised summaries to the Examinations & Standards Committee and Grand Council

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Appeals Policy
- Enquiries of Results Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Centre Approval Policy

14. Contact Details

Complaints should be submitted to: info@i-path.org

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