

## Complaints Procedure

Rotunda Ltd is committed to providing a high quality services for everyone, but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know where things have gone wrong so that we can make it right.

Rotunda Ltd has developed the complaints policy and procedure set out in this document. In the development of the policy and procedure, Rotunda Ltd has been mindful of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which defines a complaint as **“the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student’s learning opportunities”** and has also paid particular attention to the definition supplied in its Good Practice Framework by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator:

**“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a college’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of, the college.”**

Rotunda Ltd works to minimise complaints by working pro-actively with learners, visitors and their representatives to make sure that they are involved at all levels in the committee structure, by encouraging regular feedback via the Learner Representative and regular evaluation surveys and through its well-tried open door policy which gives learners and visitors immediate access to senior management. This statement of policy, together with the accompanying detailed procedure, is designed to ensure that the Complaints Procedure is open, equal, fair and unbiased and that complaints are addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. We would wish that learners or visitors try to address any concerns informally as soon as these are raised and that they seek early resolution whenever possible.

### Issues we can address within Rotunda Ltd?

- Complaints may be made by registered learners or visitors of Rotunda Ltd or by individuals who have until recently been so registered.
- Registered learners or visitors must make their complaint within 10 working days of the origin of their concern or 30 calendar days if a resolution isn't found at stage 1.
- Rotunda Ltd recognises that, on occasion, a group of learners may wish to raise a common concern in which case the group should nominate one of its number to act as its representative and to receive the response from us.
- Complaints must be made directly by the learner concerned
- Within the scope of this policy, complaints may be made about:
  - The delivery of a programme of study
  - Misleading or incorrect information presented in written form
  - Poor quality of facilities or learning resources provided by Rotunda Ltd
  - Inefficiencies in administration
  - An action or inaction on the part of Rotunda Ltd

### Issues external to Rotunda Ltd, not covered in this policy.

- Appeals against assignment grades

- Appeals against progression decisions made by the appropriate College boards
- Anonymous or third party complaints
- Allegations of academic malpractice
- Complaints about the decisions made in the course of disciplinary proceedings
- Allegations regarding the behaviour of a learner or a member of the College staff

### **The Complaints Procedure**

In line with the Good Practice Framework of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, the complaints procedure developed by Rotunda Ltd is made up of three stages:

1. Early resolution focusing on the individuals / department concerned
2. A formal stage involving a written complaint and subsequent investigation at senior management level culminating in a formal, written response to delineate the outcome of the process
3. A review stage to be invoked if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their formal complaint

### **Stage 1 – Early Resolution**

If a learner/contractor/customer/visitor has a complaint about some aspect of our activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned, the one of the Senior Managers. Rotunda Ltd is committed to open and regular dialogue with learners/contractors/customers/visitors and welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

- Rotunda Ltd strongly advises that all parties involved in a complaint should make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue informally as soon as is practicable after the concern come to light. To this end, the complainant should first approach the staff member most immediately concerned with the issue. This may be an individual staff member or relevant manager. Alternatively, a learner may raise, for example, a concern about the delivery of a programme with their learner representative who will raise the matter at with the Education Programme Manager.
- The most likely method of resolution would be a face to face meeting however, it may be appropriate for details of the outcome to be provided in written form.
- At **Stage 1**: the complaint should be made as soon as practicable and no more than 10 working days after the issue arises. The member of staff involved must attempt to resolve the issue through a meeting with the complainant also no more than 10 working days after the issue is raised with them.
- Rotunda Ltd would hope that most complaints would be dealt with at this stage in a manner satisfactory to all the individuals concerned.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If a complainant is not happy with attempts to resolve the complaint at Stage 1, or if an attempt at early resolution is either not possible or inappropriate then it is open to the complainant to move to Stage 2 and make a formal complaint.

- Formal complaints must be made no more than 10 working days after a failed attempt at early resolution or within 30 calendar days of the origin of the concern if there has been no attempt at early resolution.
- The complaints, must be signed and if there has been no attempt at early resolution, then the complainant should explain why this is so.
- receipt of the complaint will be made within 5 working days. Extensions to the published timescales are possible only in extenuating circumstances.
- Formal complaints will be dealt with in the first instance by a Senior Manager of Rotunda Ltd who will ascertain whether the correct procedures have been followed / all necessary information is provided / timescales have been met / whether the concern would be more appropriately dealt with through an alternative process e.g. the Academic Appeals Process.

#### **The process of investigation:**

- The outcome of the initial evaluation described above might be that the complainant is referred to a different procedure / that the complaint is not accepted / that the complaint will be formally investigated. Whichever is the case, the complainant must be informed in writing within 10 working days and clear reasons must be given for the decision made.
- A Senior Manager, appointed by the CEO as the investigating officer, will carry out appropriate investigations into the complaint.
- If the subject of the complaint is a named individual, then that individual will be asked to provide a written statement of response.
- A meeting will be held with the complainant so as to ensure that both sides understand the purpose and scope of the investigation. The complainant will have the right to be accompanied. A written record of this meeting will be kept.
- When the investigation has concluded then the Investigating Officer will produce a report which sets out their conclusions and the reasons for them. The report will then be made available to the complainant.
- The report will also give the complainant information about their right to take their complaint to review stage / the grounds on which it is possible so to do / timescales involved / the procedure to follow.
- If the complainant does not move to review stage within the published timescale, then Rotunda Ltd, will assume that the complaint is closed and will notify the complainant this this is so.
- Rotunda Ltd will keep formal records of complaints and their outcomes.

#### **Stage 3 – Formal Review**

If the complainant or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, learners/contractors/customers/visitors should put their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. Details of the Formal Review stage of this process will be provided in writing following the process followed in Stage 2 of the complaint.

Any request for a review must be made within 10 working days of the despatch of the Formal Complaint Report.

**Requests for a formal review may be made on the grounds set out below:**

- That the complaints procedure was not followed correctly (subject to the provision of evidence that this is so)
- That the outcome was not reasonable (subject to the provision of evidence to show that the findings were not sufficiently substantiated)
- That new evidence has become available and that it was not possible to provide this earlier

Any request for a review will be dealt with by the CEO working with one other senior manager who has not so far been involved with the process of investigation of this complaint and a Trustee of Rotunda Ltd.

- A Formal Complaint Review will not revisit the original complaint or become involved in any additional investigation unless substantial new evidence has been provided
- The review request will first be evaluated to see whether it comes within the grounds and timescale required for the acceptance of the need for review. At this stage, the complainant may be asked for clarification
- If the review request is deemed ineligible, then the complainant will be informed in writing within 10 working days and the process will be deemed complete
- If the review request is deemed eligible then the procedure decided upon for the review will be communicated, in writing, to the complainant within 10 working days. A projected timescale will be given.
- If the review does not uphold the complaint then the decision should be communicated, in writing, to the complainant within 30 calendar days. If the complaint is upheld then the complainant should be told, in writing and within the same timescale how and when any remedy will be implemented also whether or not any apology is to be made.
- The complainant should be given clear reasons for the decision whatever form it takes.

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for sending the complainant a full and formal response to the complaint and copy all relevant members of staff if appropriate.

If at the conclusion of this process, the learner/contractor/customer/visitor remains dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with Rotunda Ltd's response will be passed to the Registered Person who will adjudicate the case.

The Registered Person will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to both the Chief Executive Officer and the learner/contractor/customer/visitor concerned within 15 working days.



## Rotunda Policy Review Record

Reviewed by:	Approval date:	Review frequency:	Review date:	Signed:
Maxine Ennis	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Annual	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	