



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy prepared April 2019

Reviewed September 2021

Signed 

Title Director of SCITT

Introduction

The Manchester Nexus SCITT is committed to providing a high-quality initial teacher training programme that has the maximum positive impact for all trainee teachers and SCITT staff in all partner schools. We understand that there may be times where things do not work as they should and the SCITT believes that it is in everyone's best interest to resolve concerns and complaints at the earliest possible stage. Any complaint about the training course, the management of the training course or the school-based training will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner.

Staff involved in SCITT activities must read these complaints procedures and are advised to read the OIA good practise guidelines at the following link

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/96361/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf>

Guidelines for dealing with concerns and complaints

Complaints are defined as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.”

Complaints covered by this policy are in relation to the training course only and may include:

1. failure by the SCITT to meet obligations including those outlined in course/student handbooks
2. misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the SCITT
3. concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided by a partner provider
4. poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the SCITT
5. complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the SCITT

For the Manchester Nexus SCITT to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within three months of the incident occurring. Investigations into complaints older than three months will be at the discretion of the SCITT Director. The prime aim is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible and without prejudicing the trainee teacher bringing the complaint.

Complaints can be brought by a group of trainees through a trainee nominated as a representative of the group with responsibility of keeping the group updated.

Trainee teachers can raise a concern within three months of completing the course – such concerns should be treated as a Stage 2 complaint with a Complaint/Appeals form being completed and submitted to the SCITT Director.

It is usual to disregard anonymous complaints unless somebody is prepared to substantiate them. However anonymous complaints may be investigated, at the discretion of the SCITT Director, if it is felt the complaint is of sufficient seriousness to warrant this. However, raising a complaint anonymously, if investigated, is likely to impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.

Manchester Nexus SCITT also reserves the right to reject a complaint that it considers unsubstantiated or frivolous.

Confidentiality - Trainees may indicate that they wish their complaint or academic appeal or elements within it to remain confidential. All complaints and academic appeals need to be managed

in a confidential and sensitive way. However, it may be necessary to ask staff involved in the complaint or academic appeal to comment on or respond to the statements made.

Where it is highlighted that part or all of a complaint or academic appeal is to remain confidential either through trainee request or due to the nature of the complaint this decision must be made by the SCITT Director and communicated to the parties concerned. Relevant documents will be password protected and the file marked as to the confidentiality restrictions in place

An example of where confidentiality maybe requested might be where a student provides a corroborating statement in support of a complaint about a member of staff and wishes his or her name to be removed from the statement when it is shown to that member of staff.

Informal complaints

The majority of issues raised by partnership trainee teachers/staff are concerns rather than complaints. Manchester Nexus 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. Before the commencement of a formal complaint, it is expected that the trainee discusses a grievance with the appropriate professional mentor, SCITT QA lead, or SCITT Director and a decision made as to the severity of the complaint and the procedure to be followed.

In order to analyse complaints and to improve our service as a result, it is essential to record brief details in the complaints log held by the SCITT administrator and annotate it with a note indicating the action to be taken. The trainee should be able to air their concerns and feel they have been listened to. If the issue is resolved without the need for formal procedures the complainant should be approached to confirm that they are happy with the outcome.

Formal complaints

Individuals may wish to, or be asked to follow, the SCITT's formal complaints procedure. If the process above does not resolve the matter or the nature of the complaint is such that an informal approach is not considered appropriate. For example, where the issues raised are complex such as those involving mental health or conduct of staff or a number of different incidents.

Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. If a formal procedure is not the result of an informal action above, formal complaints will be initially evaluated to check the complaint has been submitted under the right procedures, within any deadline and in the required format responded to initially in three working days, and be logged by the SCITT administrator, the formal complaint procedure will then be followed.

Complaints involving other organisations

Where a trainee wishes to raise a concern/complaint against a contractor providing a service as part of the training programme – e.g. Student Loan Company/ Liverpool Hope University (e.g. academic appeals) – Manchester Nexus SCITT must advise the trainee teacher to contact the appropriate organisation concerned. It is therefore important to ensure all these organisations have complaints procedures in place.

Trainee teachers can use the Manchester Nexus SCITT complaints procedures for complaints against other organisations providing a service on behalf of the provider- e.g. placement schools.

It is important that all parties involved comply with data protection legislation and school data protection policies when making enquiries outside the organisation on investigation of a complaint.

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

1. Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues
2. Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
3. Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish or appoint a representative
4. Keep notes of the interview(s)
5. Remain independent without actual or perceived conflicts of interest at all stages of the process

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:

1. 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)
2. An apology
3. An explanation
4. An assurance and an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
5. An undertaking to review SCITT procedures in light of the complaint.

Where it is not felt that a complaint is valid in whole or in part, this will be communicated with an explanation of why the complaint is not upheld.

Where a complaint or appeal is submitted late, the SCITT Director will review the evidence and reasoning for the delay to conclude whether there are exceptional circumstances to accept the complaint/appeal outside the normal limit. The reasons for acceptance or rejection will be documented.

The SCITT Director and the SCITT Executive Board will monitor all complaints/concerns and the actions taken/comments made to ensure these are acted upon and that lessons learnt are incorporated into procedures and training going forward.

Complaint/Appeal Panel Hearings/Meetings

Meetings must be held in a timely manner with a week's notice given to the Trainee with information on the right to attend, right to have representation, submit evidence or call witnesses. The trainee should also be provided details of the panel composition and information to be considered.

The panel must be independent of the appeal/complaint and are trained and supported. Notes of the meeting must be taken.

Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA)

If a complaint cannot be resolved the trainee has the right to make a formal complaint to the OIA however, before a student can complain to the OIA, they must normally have first completed the Manchester Nexus SCITT internal complaints procedures. Once they have done so, and the Completion of Review Letter (setting out the issues that have been considered, the SCITT's final decision and the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA) has been issued, the complainant will have 3 months in which to contact OIA .

The contact details for the OIA are as follows:

WEB SITE: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

ADDRESS: Office of Independent Adjudicators
Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB
Telephone: 0118 959 9813

[Publishing policy](#)

This Policy will be available through the Manchester Nexus SCITT website and the trainee induction documentation. A copy is also available from the SCITT office at The Blue Coat School.

[Review date for the policy](#)

This Policy will be reviewed by the SCITT Administrator annually and approved by the SCITT Director

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

<i>For Official Use:</i>	
<i>Date received:</i>	
<i>Date Acknowledgement Sent:</i>	
<i>Name of Person Complaint Referred to:</i>	
<i>Date of referral:</i>	
<i>Outcome:</i>	