



Complaints Policy

September 2021 – Rev 07

Scope

This policy relates only to complaints made about services and products supplied by SIMIAN. Complaints, concerns or reports related to any issue associated with bullying, safeguarding or learner welfare, will be referred immediately to a designated and responsible person, and will be dealt with under the relevant procedure.

Our Aim

SIMIAN is committed to improving its quality of service by listening and responding to feedback from apprentices, learners, clients and other customers and by responding positively to complaints.

This Policy and Procedure will apply in all circumstances where an apprentice, learner, employer, client or other customer wishes to complain about the service they have received from SIMIAN or the behaviour of a SIMIAN member of staff or representative. Complaints may be about training and assessment delivery or support functions and consultancy services.

Therefore, the business aims to ensure that: -

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- it treats a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- it deals with complaints promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- it responds in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where it has got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- it learns from complaints, use them to improve its services, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

SIMIAN recognises that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to: -

- Resolve informal concerns quickly;
- Keep matters low-key;
- Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Definition: SIMIAN defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with a service supplied by SIMIAN or with a member of staff) and that requires a formal response'.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

SIMIAN's responsibility will be to: -

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- Respond within a stated period of time;
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- Take action where appropriate;
- Monitor complaints and use them to improve the service provides.

A complainant is required to: -

- Bring their complaint, in writing (complaint form), to SIMIAN's attention;
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of SIMIAN staff;
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- Allow SIMIAN a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond SIMIAN's control.

Lead Responsibility for Implementation of this Process: The Support Services Manager.

Responsibility for Action: All members of staff and company representatives and Directors of SIMIAN.

Confidentiality: -

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and SIMIAN maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting: -

The Support Services Manager will log all complaints made and the resolutions that were reached.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage One

In the first instance, if the complainant is unable to resolve the issue informally with the SIMIAN point of contact, a formal complaint should be raised in writing with Jess Hollowell, Support Services Manager.

Where applicable, an Investigation Officer will be appointed and will investigate the complaint, produce an Investigation Report (IR) and will respond the complainant.

Complainants can expect acknowledgement within five working days of receipt and a response and an explanation within fifteen working days.

Stage Two

If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, the complaint should be raised in writing with the Operations Director. The Operations Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint request within five working days of receipt will provide a response and an explanation within fifteen working days.

SIMIAN's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the complainant will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Final Stage

If the complainant is not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Operations Director, then the complaint can be escalated further to the SIMIAN Managing Director, at Wallis House, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6FW, stating why the complaint requires escalation. This must be done within ten days of receiving the written response from the Operations Director.

The Managing Director will respond within ten working days to advise of the action which will be taken to investigate the escalated complaint, and the likely timescales for the case to be heard formally.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, the matter may be referred to the awarding organisation (if appropriate), and/or the government funding body – the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (in the cases of apprentices).

The ESFA address is: -
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Complaints Team
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>

Follow-up

We recognised that complaints provide valuable customer feedback. Simian will undertake to improve procedures or systems or implement staff training to address service failures where this is appropriate. This action should reduce the likelihood of a recurrence.

Signed



Jess Hollowell
Support Services Manager

Date: September 2021