

NSHCS Apprenticeship End Point Assessments: Complaints and Appeals Policy

1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 This policy applies to the Healthcare Science Apprenticeship End Point Assessments (EPA) provided by the National School of Healthcare (NSHCS) - henceforth referred to as the School.

1.2 The policy offers EPA candidates or their employer the opportunity to submit a complaint or appeal should they believe that there was an irregularity in the provision of the EPA which had an unfavourable impact on the performance of the apprentice during the process and therefore, on the outcome of their assessment.

2. Complaints

2.1 *A complaint refers to an irregularity in the provision of the end point assessment.*

2.2 If an apprentice or employer wishes to raise a complaint regarding any aspect of the provision of the EPA, they should complete the complaints form that is available on the NSHCS's apprenticeship webpage <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-apprenticeships/apprenticeships> and submit this within 3 working days following the EPA.

2.3 Where the apprentice has informed the School of a disability or learning difficulty, they or their employer may phone the School of their intention to submit a complaint and forward the form and any supporting evidence in the agreed timeframe.

2.4 Complaints received outside of 3 working days following the assessment will not be accepted.

2.5 The completed complaints form and any supporting evidence must be received by the School via email to NSHCS.assessment@hee.nhs.uk or by post to National School of Healthcare Science, Health Education England, St Chads Court, 213 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9RG.

2.6 Genuine complaints shall be treated respectfully and will be investigated as provided in this policy. However, spurious complaints that are a deliberate attempt to unfairly gain advantage will be rejected and may incur a charge.

2.7 On receipt of the submission, the School shall log the details and issue a reference number to be used in all associated communications.

2.8 The submission shall be passed onto the School's EPA assessment unit which will review the complaint and respond to the apprentice and employer within 10 working days.

2.9 If the review results in a change to the scores or grades of the EPA, the apprentice and their employer will be notified and an updated outcome transcript issued.

3. Appeals

3.1 *An appeal refers to a request for a review of a fail outcome from the apprentice's EPA.*

3.2 If an apprentice or employer believes the EPA outcome is incorrect, they can, in the first instance, request a clerical check of the assessment data. The request should be made by email NSHCS.assessment@hee.nhs.uk.

3.3 A fee of £25 is payable per clerical check; this must be received by the School either by post or by bank transfer before the check can be carried out.

3.4. If the check has resulted in an amendment to the outcome, an updated outcome transcript will be issued to the apprentice, copied to their employer, within 5 working days.

3.5 If the check does not result in any amendment to the outcome, the apprentice and their employer will be notified within 5 working days.

3.6 If the apprentice or employer is unsatisfied with the response and wishes to raise an appeal, they should complete the appeals form that is available on the NSHCS's apprenticeship webpage <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-apprenticeships/apprenticeships> and submit this together with supporting evidence within 10 working days following the receipt of the response from the check.

3.7 The completed appeals form and any supporting evidence must be received by the School by email to NSHCS.assessment@hee.nhs.uk or by post to National School of Healthcare Science, Health Education England, St Chads Court, 213 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9RG.

3.8 A fee of £150 is payable for each appeal, refundable if appeal is upheld; this must be received by the School together with the posted appeals form or by bank transfer if forms are sent by email before the appeal can be passed on to the EPA assessment unit for review.

3.9 On receipt of the submission, the School shall log the details and issue a reference number to be used in all associated communications.

3.10 The apprentice and their employer shall receive a response to the submission within 21 working days of receipt. However, in the event that the issue raised is complex and requires more time to investigate, the apprentice and their employer shall be informed and a further timeframe to arrive at a resolution agreed with them.

3.11 The appeal shall be read in the first instance by the School's Apprenticeship Lead who will determine if the appeal is within scope of the policy and the need for a panel to review the appeal.

3.12 Where determined to be warranted, appeals shall be reviewed in detail by the EPA Appeals panel.

3.13 Where the appeal cannot be resolved by the EPA Appeals panel, advice will be sought from the EPA's external quality assurer, the Academy for Healthcare Science.

3.14 If the appeal is upheld and results in a change to the outcome of the EPA, the apprentice and their employer will be notified and an updated outcome transcript issued. The appeal fee shall be refunded.

4. Management of personal data

4.1 The apprentice's submission, and all accompanying statements and records, will be kept confidential as far as is possible in facilitating a fair and thorough review. Whilst the apprentice's privacy and confidentiality will be respected, this needs to be balanced with:

- The need for an open and fair investigation
- Appropriate remedial action to be taken
- The outcome of the investigation to be reported appropriately
- Action to be taken to improve our processes and quality of service.

4.2 The details of the apprentice's submission may, therefore, need to be shared with others who have been involved with the assessment process and are responsible for their design and delivery.

5. Responsibility

5.1 The ultimate responsibility for the EPA Complaints and Appeals policy, dissemination of the policy and management of the complaints and appeals rests with the School's senior management.

5.2 Resolution will be on the basis of ensuring a fair and safe outcome for patients, the apprentice and their employer.

5.3 In some cases, it may be necessary for the School's senior management to see advice from the EPA's external quality assurer, the Academy for Healthcare Science.

6. Quality improvement process

6.1 The School undertakes to treat all complaints and appeals that fall within the scope of the policy respectfully. Regardless of the outcomes of complaints and appeals, all such submissions shall be reviewed to elicit any learning to inform improvements in the School's policies and procedures.

6.2 Outcomes of complaints and appeals shall be recorded and reviewed by the School's senior management team for reflection and inform the quality improvement process.

Policy review date: every 2 years from implementation