

Trainee Complaints Policy

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29.06.2026	V5	Review and updates	M Eszrenyi

To be read alongside all relevant Barr Beacon SCITT and Matrix Academy Trust policies and procedures

1. Introduction

1.1. Barr Beacon SCITT is committed to providing high-quality services to its trainees and Barr Beacon SCITT welcomes comments and suggestions from trainees about the services it provides. Occasionally however, trainees may wish to make a complaint about the services they receive from Barr Beacon SCITT. This policy outlines the process and procedures for making a complaint.

1.2. These procedures are for the use of trainees registered with Barr Beacon SCITT or who have left Barr Beacon SCITT within the last three months and define the grounds for trainees to bring their dissatisfaction or concern to the attention of the SCITT and how the complaint will be investigated and heard.

1.3. These procedures are for complaints regarding an aspect of a trainees' minimum entitlement which leads to the recommendation for Qualified Teacher's Status (QTS) provided by Barr Beacon SCITT. In the event that a trainee wishes to complain about the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), provided by the University of Worcester, the relevant University policy must be followed.

1.4. A trainee must submit a complaint within three months of the incident, event or matter over which a complaint is being raised. Barr Beacon SCITT will not consider complaints made outside of the three-month period. Trainees should be aware that if there has been a significant elapse of time, it might prejudice the proper investigation and make resolving a complaint difficult. For example, staff may leave and recollections of events may be impaired over time. In dealing with a complaint, Barr Beacon SCITT will endeavour to meet the time limits set out in these procedures, but if it takes longer the trainee will be informed of progress on a regular basis.

1.5. These procedures are intended to encourage trainees to seek the resolution of complaints informally in the first instance.

1.6. Barr Beacon SCITT seeks to resolve all complaints through its internal processes: if a trainee starts legal proceedings against the SCITT, any complaint will be paused until those proceedings are complete.

1.7. Collective complaints will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the complaint. Each individual trainee of the collective complaint must provide their individual details and signature as required on the complaints form, tougher with independent confirmation of their support of the complaint and willingness to engage in the complaint process. A collective complaint will be managed in the same way as an individual complaint, in accordance with this procedure.

2. Principles

2.1. No trainee making a complaint under these procedures, whether successfully or otherwise, will be treated less favourably than would have been the case had a complaint not been made.

2.2. All parties are expected to make reasonable efforts to resolve matters on an informal basis before moving to the formal stages of the process. It is in the

interests of the trainees and Barr Beacon SCITT that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible.

2.3. Barr Beacon SCITT will deal with complaints confidentially and expects all parties involved (including the trainee(s)) to respect this approach. Trainees should recognise that it may be necessary to disclose details of a complaint to other persons or organisations for the purposes of investigating the complaint and seeking an effective resolution. Unless there are exceptional considerations, any person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint and to comment on it.

2.4. Staff and trainees who are asked to provide any information or documentation are expected to co-operate with Barr Beacon SCITT in its investigation.

2.5. In the interests of the trainee, the process should be simple and comprehensible.

2.6. Where a trainee has declared a disability to Barr Beacon SCITT, Barr Beacon SCITT will endeavour to ensure that information is available to them at all stages of the procedure in appropriate formats and that any reasonable adjustments are made to the associated proceedings to accommodate the trainee's needs.

2.7. The trainee has the right to be accompanied by a representative, who is not acting in a legal capacity, at any meeting arranged to discuss the complaint. The representative must be a member of the SCITT, i.e.:

2.7.1. A registered trainee;

2.7.2. A member of SCITT staff (e.g. a registered Subject/Class Mentor, Professional Mentor, Subject Course Leader)

2.8. The trainee making the complaint will be allowed reasonable time to seek advice for any meeting which forms part of the process.

2.9. Where these procedures state that certain actions will be taken within a specific timescale, and this is not possible (e.g. because of the timing or because key information takes longer to obtain) the trainee will be kept fully informed of their process of their complaint.

3. Grounds for making a complaint

3.1. The following list indicates examples of the type of complaint covered by the procedure:

3.1.1. Dissatisfaction with the quality of supervision and tuition, the delivery of the programme teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided a partner provider;

3.1.2. Misleading information in prospectuses or in advertising or promotional material;

3.1.3. Deficiencies in standards of service against the trainees' minimum entitlement provided by the SCITT (including support and obligations outlined in the Handbook).

3.1.4. Inadequate facilities, learning resources or services provided by the SCITT;

3.1.5. Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the provider;

3.1.6. The behaviour of a member of SCITT staff towards a trainee. Such complaints may be referred to the Headteacher of Barr Beacon School or the Partner School involved, at the discretion of the SCITT, if it is believed that a colleague has not behaved in line with the Matrix Academy Trust Employee Code of Conduct.

3.1.7. Discrimination by Barr Beacon SCITT on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, faith or sexual orientation.

3.2. Barr Beacon SCITT will not investigate complaints which are made anonymously.

3.3. The following list indicates examples of the type of complaint that are not covered by this procedure:

3.3.1. Complaints made by a third party on behalf of a trainee;

3.3.2. Complaints about the academic award of the PGCE qualification. These should be referred to the relevant University and handled under the local policy.

3.3.3. Complaints about the SCITT's admissions process. These are dealt with under the Recruitment Appeals Procedure Policy.

3.3.4. A complaint that has not been raised within three months of the incident, event or matters over which the complaint is being raised.

3.3.5. QTS award appeals or appeals of a complaint. These are dealt with under the Recruitment Appeals Procedure Policy.

4. Informal resolution

4.1. Trainees are expected to raise issues at an early stage. Complaints will normally be resolved locally by the school/colleague concerned with, or responsible for the matter giving rise to the complaint.

4.2. A trainee could, for example, encounter difficulties if:

4.2.1. The trainee does not receive their minimum entitlement

4.2.2. The trainee/mentor relationship breaks down.

4.3. In this event it is important that the trainee reports this straight away and first speak to the person who is immediately responsible for the situation or their SCITT Manager and try to resolve the cause for concern. These people are best placed to respond to the complaint and to resolve it quickly and effectively.

4.4. Where a member of staff receives a concern, they should investigate it promptly and with due regard for the trainee's privacy and confidentiality. They should respond as soon as possible after the complaint is raised.

4.5. The following procedure will be followed:

4.5.1. The concern will be recorded in writing and reported to the Professional Mentor.

4.5.2. The Professional Mentor will investigate the concern. At the same time inform the SCITT Leadership of the concern.

4.5.3. The outcome of the Professional Mentor's investigation will be one of the following:

4.5.3.1. The Professional Mentor can solve the concern. The Professional Mentor will arrange a review within an appropriate amount of time to

monitor and review the outcome. The Professional Mentor will inform the SCITT Leadership of this outcome.

4.5.3.2. Professional Mentor cannot solve the concern or the Professional Mentor's solution(s) did not work. The Professional Mentor will forward the concern on to the SCITT Manager who will take up the investigation.

4.5.4. The outcome of the SCITT Manager's investigation will be one of the following:

4.5.4.1. SCITT Manager can solve the concern. The SCITT Manager will advise the Professional Mentor of the solution. The SCITT Manager will arrange a review within an appropriate amount of time to monitor and review the outcome.

4.5.4.2. The SCITT Manager is not able to solve the concern. The concern will be forwarded on to the SCITT Director.

4.5.5. In the event that the concern is forwarded on to the SCITT Director the SCITT Director will:

4.5.5.1. Seek solutions to the concern;

4.5.5.2. Endeavour to find an additional school placement.

4.6. Complaints will not normally be considered at a higher level until it is established that the informal stage has been exhausted and cannot be practicably pursued.

5. Formal Stage One – Review by SCITT Director

5.1. In cases where a complaint is not resolved informally, the trainee must put their concerns in writing using the complaints form (Annex A) to the SCITT Director.

5.2. For a complaints form to be considered valid, it must be completed in full and specify:

5.2.1. The full name of the trainee;

5.2.2. Reason(s) for the complaint;

5.2.3. Action(s) taken so far to resolve the issue

5.2.4. Desired resolution(s) of the issue(s)

5.2.5. Be signed and dated by the trainee, unless it is impossible for the trainee to sign;

5.2.6. Be accompanied by the appropriate documentary evidence.

5.3. The trainee should keep a copy of their complaint form and any other documentation submitted for their own records.

5.4. The SCITT Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint. The SCITT Director will check that the complaint is submitted under the correct procedures:

5.4.1. That the complaint is not submitted late;

5.4.2. The complaint should not be referred to a different procedure as identified in Paragraph 3.

5.5. The SCITT Director, after reviewing the complaint, may identify simple and remedial action which may be taken to remedy the complaint to the satisfaction of the trainee. In such cases, the SCITT Director will propose such action in writing to the trainee and submit a report for record.

5.6. In cases where simple and remedial action cannot be taken, the complaint will be investigated by the SCITT Director. The Director may complete the investigation based upon the written submission submitted by the trainee and meeting the other parties to the complaint. The SCITT Director may want to meet with the trainee to discuss their complaint in more detail. This meeting will normally be arranged within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. At this meeting the trainee may be accompanied by a representative, who may participate in the proceedings. Other parties to the complaint may be invited to attend at the discretion of the SCITT Director.

5.7. The meeting will be formally recorded by the SCITT Administrator to maintain a record of the meeting. A copy will be provided to the trainee and all parties involved in the meeting.

5.8. The meeting will normally follow this format:

5.8.1. The trainee will be asked to explain their complaint and present any supporting evidence, with the assistance of their representative as necessary, following which they may be asked questions by the SCITT Director and by other parties present;

5.8.2. If present, other parties to the complaint will then respond to the complaint, following which they may also be asked questions by the SCITT Director and the trainee. If not present, the SCITT Director will make any necessary enquiries.

5.9. The SCITT Director will prepare a full written response to the complaint. The trainee should receive this written response within twenty working days after the SCITT Director has received the complaint. If this is not possible, the trainee will be informed in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their complaint and given a timescale for completion. The written account will detail:

5.9.1. The nature of the complaint

5.9.2. The findings of any investigation carried out

5.9.3. The points covered in the meeting

5.9.4. Any proposed resolution.

5.10. If the complaint is considered justified, the SCITT Director must inform the trainee of the action taken to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is not upheld, then the trainee should receive an explanation of the reason for this decision.

6. Formal Stage Two – review by the appeals panel

6.1. A trainee who is not satisfied and wishes to continue the appeal, must follow the Appeals Guidance outlined in the Recruitment Appeals Procedure Policy.

6.2. A complaint must have been considered at Stage one, before it can progress to stage two.

6.3. Requests for appeal must be received within 10 working days. Requests for review received later than this will not be considered and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued shortly after.

6.4. Following the outcome of the recruitment appeals procedure policy, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued shortly after.

7. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

7.1. A trainee who is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints procedure may request that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) reviews the case. This may be done by completing the OIA scheme application form.

7.2. Where a case is considered eligible, the OIA will provide independent adjudication on the resolution of complaints, once the SCITT's internal procedures have been exhausted.

Annex A

Barr Beacon SCITT Formal Complaints Form

Highly Confidential

The full name of the trainee:	
Please outline the reason(s) for the complaint:	
Please outline the action(s) taken so far to resolve the issue:	
Please outline the desired resolution(s) of the issue(s):	
Signed by the trainee:	
Date signed and submitted:	
I also enclose the following documentary evidence. Please list:	

This form must be e-mailed to the SCITT Director. A copy will be placed on trainee file.