

Complaining about Training Providers

If a training provider holds an accredited or quality checked course then the Society can receive a complaint about the provider in some circumstances from a student on that course.

Complaints about training providers will be mapped against the relevant Society standards for the course in question. For example, an accredited course will be required to meet the Society standards for accreditation at the date upon which the course was accredited. If the Society finds that the course did not meet those standards, then it can issue a number of actions including

- **Conditions** imposed upon continued accreditation or re-accreditation
- **Action Points** which must be carried out in a set time frame, or
- **Learning Points** which ask the course provider to ensure it does not make similar mistakes in the future.

The purpose of the procedure is to ensure that training providers continue to meet standards and improve areas of their training provision where needed. Complaints about providers can, therefore, be a useful way of helping the provider improve their training.

The Procedure

Please follow your training provider's internal complaints process first. The Society can only hear complaints about training providers on receipt of evidence that the provider's internal complaints process has been completed, including its appeals procedure, if any.

This ensures that the Society only receives complaints about training providers where an attempt to resolve the complaint has already been undertaken between the student and the provider, and allows the Society to review evidence of how the provider handled the complaint.

Any complaint regarding a training provider must be submitted within 28 days of the training provider's final ruling, having followed their complaints process fully.

Please send a copy of the completed procedures with your training provider to the Society's Public Protection Officer, together with a covering letter or email explaining the basis of your complaint.

You may talk with the Society's PPO in advance of submitting a complaint to assist you in the process, if necessary.

The Society's PPO will initially **review** your complaint to determine whether it is within the Society's remit.

Examples of complaints the Society *cannot* hear include:

- Complaints where the training provider's internal complaints procedure has not been concluded
- Complaints where a "full and final settlement" has been reached, e.g. regarding the refund of fees
- Complaints related to contractual and refund issues – these are best dealt with by civil proceedings if needed.
- Complaints about other students – these should be dealt with by the training provider
- Complaints about failing an examination – these are dealt with by the training provider's own processes and independent assessments

- Complaints about obtaining a placement, supervisor, clinic space or job.
- Complaints which do not relate to our accreditation standards.

If the PPO determines that the Society cannot proceed with your complaint, they will write to you. If more evidence is required, you will be asked to submit your complaint one more time.

The PPO's decision is final; however on an annual basis their decisions are reviewed by the Society's Independent Assessor, who is not otherwise part of our complaints process.

If your complaint can proceed, the PPO will send your complaint and evidence to your training provider and ask them to respond. You will be allowed to see a copy of their response and may write in about it one more time.

The PPO will then send the relevant paperwork to the Society's Professional Standards Committee. They will conduct a paper review of your complaint and the evidence you provide against the criteria of the relevant Society standards, e.g. our standards of accreditation.

The Committee will make a decision as to whether there is evidence that your training provider met the relevant standards; and if it did not do so, how serious this was and what appropriate action your provider may need to take to ensure compliance with the standards in future.

The Committee may issue Conditions, Action Points or Learning Points to the training provider to ensure that they meet the relevant standards and improve their course provision.

The Society cannot instruct a training provider to issue a refund or to make other civil remedies to a student. It also cannot prevent a training provider from offering training.

The Committee's decision is final; however their decisions are subject to annual review by the Society's Independent Assessor.