



Policies and Procedures

Operations Department

Complaints Against Foreign Awarding Bodies

Policy Author	Diana Busuttil	Designation	Head of Institution
Policy Reviewer	Rosanne Galea	Designation	Managing Director
Policy Approver	QAC	Revised Date	26/07/2024

Complaints Against Foreign Awarding Bodies

1. Principles and Policy

As the students' service provider, if a student has a complaint against the foreign awarding body, Future Focus undertakes to assume the responsibility to handle the complaint on the student's behalf and ensures that we proceed to sort it out in the best possible manner in the interest of the student.

The first step for the student is to inform us of the issue that he/she would like to bring forward, via a phone call, email or a visit to our administration office and explain the problem. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Further, the student may offer his/her suggested resolution. If the student makes the complaint verbally, a record of the complaint will be made, and he/she will be provided with a written copy. Our efforts shall reflect the student's expectation of resolving the problem without undue delay and the complaint is brought to the attention of the foreign awarding body by Future Focus on behalf of the student.

The student is also offered advice on how the matter should be resolved, however, we seek to respect the student's final opinion on what the ultimate outcome of the complaint should be. Apart from encouraging feedback, this arrangement seeks to improve the provision of our services. When it comes to students, Future Focus strives to listen to views and experiences, positive or negative. Members of staff are available on a daily basis with an "Open-Day" structure between 09:00hrs and 20:00hrs to offer guidance and support.

Many issues can be resolved quickly by speaking directly to the staff at the Centre who will thereon take over the complaint and resolve the matter without the need for further involvement for the student. The student will nonetheless receive an

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

acknowledgement and the offer of a discussion about the handling of the complaint within three working days of receiving the complaint. If the student accepts, the discussion will cover the period within which a response to the complaint is likely to be sent – there is no set timeframe, and it will depend upon the nature of the complaint and the foreign awarding body involved. Where a response is delayed for any reason, the student is kept informed.

The members of staff will review the information given during the complaints process and act as the intermediary. Complaints should preferably be made within a few days of an incident or of the matter coming to the student's attention. However, no time limit exists where there are good reasons for not making the complaint sooner and it shall be equally possible to complete a fair investigation.

Once a complaint has been investigated the student will receive a written response. The response will set out the findings and information about what is being done as a result of the complaint. It will also include information about how the complaint would have been handled.

2. Procedure

Future Focus is committed to providing a quality service for its students. We strive to work in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our students, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right on behalf of the student concerned. This complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

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

Future Focus Ltd.'s responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time – within 3 working days;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint by connecting with the foreign body involved on behalf of the student;
- At this point the foreign awarding body is contacted by email. Where required, Future Focus may also communicate with the foreign Centre by phone or by means of a Skype call.
- take action where appropriate.

The student's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to Future Focus Ltd.'s attention as soon as possible of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in Future Focus;

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow Future Focus a reasonable time to deal with the matter – usually action is taken within 3 days of the complaint being lodged;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Future Focus's control.

Confidentiality: With all cases of complaints except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Future Focus 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 student.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to resolve informal concerns quickly. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved, but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure is followed. In such cases the student is asked to write to a member of staff or the manager. The procedure is as follows:

- i. You are to write out a letter that should set out the details of the complaint, the consequences as a result, and the remedy being sought.
- ii. You can expect the complaint to be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.
- iii. If you are unsure which member of staff to write to, the complaint should be sent to the administration office on admin@futurefocus.com.mt. More

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

contact details can be found on the Contact Us part of the Future Focus Website.

- iv. Future Focus will get in touch with the foreign awarding body and lodge the complaint asking for the matter to be resolved. An explanation with details of the case is given, as based on the student's formal request.
- v. You should get a response and an explanation within 14 working days, informing you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.
- vi. You will be notified with the resulting decision within two days of the matter having been resolved.
- vii. Where the issue concerns a group of students rather than one individual, the response from the authority concerned is made public on the Centre's notice board
- viii. If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, you can write and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the administration office to acknowledge your request within 3 working days of receipt and a response within 15 working days.

Future Focus's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated especially when dealing with complaints made to foreign awarding bodies. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the student 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.