

Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy

Our commitment

Psychotherapy Institute is committed to providing a professional, ethical and supportive training environment for all our trainees and anyone attending our courses.

We value your feedback and regularly ask for it at the end of each module and CPD programme. We review this feedback and use it to improve our courses, policies and processes. We are committed to learning, developing and continually improving as a training organisation.

We recognise that, occasionally, things may not go as expected. If you have a concern or wish to make a complaint, we will listen and aim to address it in a respectful, fair and confidential way.

Our complaints procedure is designed to make sure that concerns are handled consistently and that you receive a response within a reasonable timeframe. It also helps us identify where our services, policies or practices could be improved.

Our complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure aims to be:

- **Accessible** – clear, easy to understand and straightforward to use.
- **Timely** – with clear timescales for responding and taking action.
- **Confidential** – respecting everyone's privacy wherever possible.
- **Fair and impartial** – ensuring complaints are considered objectively.
- **Responsive** – taking appropriate action where a complaint is upheld.
- **Supportive** – providing appropriate support and feedback throughout the process.
- **Improvement-focused** – helping us learn from concerns and improve our services.

What can I complain about?

The formal complaints procedure covers concerns about your educational experience at Psychotherapy Institute. This may include concerns about:

- Your relationship with a member of staff, trainer or other representative of the Institute.
- Unprofessional behaviour or conduct.
- Unfair or biased treatment.
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, faith, disability or sexual orientation.
- Mistakes or unreasonable delays.
- A failure to take appropriate action.
- A failure to follow our published policies or procedures without reasonable explanation.

The complaints procedure does not cover other types of grievance.

Our approach to resolving complaints

Our complaints process is underpinned by some of the core principles of Transactional Analysis. We aim to:

1. Seek a **win-win outcome**, recognising and valuing everyone involved.
2. Encourage everyone involved to think clearly and take responsibility for their position.
3. Create opportunities for reflection and, where appropriate, for people to reconsider their position.
4. Follow the ethical principles and professional standards of UKATA throughout the process.

Making a Complaint

We encourage you to raise concerns as soon as possible. Early resolution can often prevent a situation from becoming more difficult and can help us resolve matters quickly.

There are two stages to our complaints process.

Stage 1: Personal Resolution

Where appropriate, we encourage you to raise your concern directly with the person involved in the complaint.

This should be done as soon as reasonably possible and, where appropriate, you may ask a third party to be present to support the conversation.

The outcome will depend on the circumstances but could include:

- Putting something right.
- An apology.
- Clarification of a misunderstanding.
- A change to a policy or practice.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can move to the formal complaints process.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If your concern cannot be resolved informally, you can submit a formal complaint in writing to:

Email: office@psychotherapyinstitute.co.uk

The Office will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and notify the **Quality & Ethics (Q&E) Committee**, who will be asked to review the complaint in line with the timescales set out in this policy.

Your complaint should include:

- The date and time the incident or concern occurred.
- The people involved.
- Details of the concern or alleged breach of policy.
- Any steps you have already taken to try to resolve the matter.
- The outcome of those steps.
- Any supporting information or evidence.

What happens next?

The Q&E Committee will review the complaint and any relevant information and will determine whether the complaint, or any part of it, is upheld.

The Committee will ensure that the complaint is considered fairly, objectively and confidentially, and that all relevant parties have an opportunity to provide information where appropriate.

If a member of the Q&E Committee is named in, or is otherwise directly involved in, the complaint, they will take no part in the review or decision-making process. They will be excluded from the complaints process to ensure that the complaint is considered independently and without a conflict of interest.

We aim to notify all relevant parties of the outcome within **six weeks** of receiving the formal complaint. The outcome will include details of any actions that need to be taken.

Mediation

Where appropriate, a mediated meeting may be offered to help the parties reach a resolution.

If mediation involves costs, the assessing officer will determine how these costs should be allocated between the parties. Where costs are applicable, they must be paid immediately by the relevant party or parties.

Complaints That Are Upheld

Where a complaint is upheld, the action taken will depend on the circumstances and seriousness of the matter.

Psychotherapy Institute may apply an appropriate sanction at any level within the following range. In doing so, we will consider the interests of everyone involved, including the trainee, trainer, Institute, clients, placement providers and the wider psychotherapy profession.

Where appropriate, we may seek advice from the UKATA Ethics Committee and also UKCP's Regulation and Quality Assurance Team.

Possible outcomes may include:

- An apology to the complainant.
- An undertaking to stop a particular practice or behaviour.
- An undertaking not to work with particular trainees or supervisees.
- A requirement to undertake personal therapy, with confirmation from the therapist or supervisor that the matter has been satisfactorily addressed.
- A requirement to undertake supervision.
- A requirement to undertake additional training.
- A requirement to access additional academic support.

- An informal warning.
- A formal warning, which may state that further breaches of policy, procedure or ethical or professional standards could result in dismissal or termination of contract.
- Termination of employment or contract.
- Termination of contract and, where appropriate, legal action.
- Referral to UKATA or relevant legal or regulatory agencies.
- Any other action considered reasonable, proportionate and ethically appropriate.

Where a contract or course place is terminated as a result of a complaint, course fees will not normally be refunded unless the Committee determines that this would be unfair.

Appeals Process

The appeals process is separate from appeals relating to academic assessments or marking. Please see the **Academic Appeal** section below for information about appealing an academic result.

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled or with the outcome, you may be able to appeal.

Grounds for appeal

An appeal may be made where:

- You disagree with the outcome of the complaint.
- You have new evidence that was not available when the original complaint was considered.
- The complaints procedure was not followed correctly.
- There has been a breach of ethical or professional standards during the complaints process.

How to appeal

Your appeal should be submitted in writing to the Director within **four weeks** of receiving the complaint outcome.

Email: office@psychotherapyinstitute.co.uk

The appeal should include the new evidence or information supporting your appeal. An appeal should not simply repeat information already considered as part of the original complaint.

A new assessing officer will be appointed to review the appeal and determine whether there are sufficient grounds for it to proceed.

We aim to notify all relevant parties of the outcome within **six weeks** of receiving the appeal.

The outcome may include mediation where appropriate.

Where an appeal involves costs, these will normally be met by the person making the appeal.

The appeal is the final stage of Psychotherapy Institute's internal complaints process. If you remain dissatisfied following the appeal, you may contact the **UKATA Ethics & Professional Practice Committee or UKCP's Standards and Quality Assurance Team**.

Further information and contact details are available on the UKATA & UKCP website.

Grievance Procedure for Institute Personnel

This procedure applies to grievances raised by people working for or with Psychotherapy Institute, including employees, trainers and other staff members.

It covers concerns relating to areas such as:

- Ethics and professional practice.
- The Institute's policies and procedures.
- Trainer arrangements.
- Training structures.
- Other matters relating to the individual's role within the organisation.

Complaint or grievance?

We distinguish between a **complaint** and a **grievance**:

- A **complaint** is normally raised by someone using the services of Psychotherapy Institute, such as a trainee or course participant.
- A **grievance** is normally raised by someone working for or with Psychotherapy Institute, whether on a formal, casual or contractual basis.

Stage 1: Personal Resolution

In line with the UKATA Code of Ethics and Requirements and Recommendations for Professional Practice, we encourage staff and trainers to raise grievances directly with the person concerned in the first instance.

Where possible, this should happen as soon as possible after the event so that everyone has a clear understanding of what happened.

A third party may be asked to attend the conversation where appropriate.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the grievance should be submitted in writing to the Director.

Email: office@psychotherapyinstitute.co.uk

The grievance should include:

- The date and time of the event.
- The people involved.
- The nature of the grievance.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the matter.
- The outcome of those steps.
- Any relevant supporting information.

The Director will acknowledge receipt and appoint an appropriate **Mediating Officer** within **two weeks** of receiving the grievance.

The Mediating Officer will facilitate a meeting between the relevant parties with the aim of reaching a resolution.

Following the mediation process, the Mediating Officer will write to the parties involved to confirm whether the grievance has been upheld and any resulting actions.

Legal advice

Where appropriate, Psychotherapy Institute may seek independent legal advice in relation to a grievance.

The Institute cannot accept responsibility for expenses incurred by any party involved in a grievance.

Academic Appeals

If you wish to appeal an academic result, grade, mark or assignment feedback, you must submit your appeal in writing to the Director within **three weeks** of receiving the result or feedback.

Email: office@psychotherapyinstitute.co.uk

Your appeal should include:

- Your name.
- Your current contact address, including email address.
- Your year of study/programme.
- The result, grade or assessment being appealed.
- The grounds for your appeal.
- Supporting evidence.
- The outcome or resolution you are seeking.

What happens next?

The Director will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within **three working days**.

The appeal will then be passed to the **External Examiner**, who will review the evidence and provide a final adjudication on the grade or mark.

The decision will be communicated to you in writing within **21 days** of the Director acknowledging receipt of your appeal.

Questions or Support

If you are unsure whether your concern should be raised as a complaint, grievance or academic appeal, or you would like to discuss the process before submitting anything formally, please contact the Psychotherapy Institute office.



We are committed to ensuring that concerns are handled fairly, respectfully and confidentially, and that feedback helps us continue to improve the experience we provide for our trainees, staff and wider professional community.