

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 Policy

1.1 Introduction

Africa Risk Institute is committed to providing a high quality experience for all its stakeholders, through its range of professional services. The firm encourages a positive environment in which informal contact and feedback from stakeholders is welcomed and where complaints can be dealt with effectively.

This Complaints Policy and Procedure outlines our strategic intent as well as processes to be used when any stakeholder has cause for concern. Attention is drawn to this document through our website, our internal Administrative Policy and Procedures handbook and during training inductions

1.2 Aims of the Policy

1.2.1 To provide a clear framework to help anyone who is not satisfied with our services to raise their concerns and to ensure that we respond effectively.

1.2.2 To ensure that we have systems in place to make improvements happen as a result of a complaint.

1.2.3 To encourage prompt resolution at an early informal stage.

1.2.4 To ensure that all complaints are dealt with seriously, fairly and sensitively, with no resultant victimization of a complainant.

1.2.5 To raise awareness on the policy and procedures and ensure that staff understand the processes through appropriate training.

1.2.6 To define responsibilities and allocate duties to individual members of staff in relation to the procedures set out.

1.3 Scope

This document should be used by anyone who wishes to formally complain about our services, including trainees, employers, clients, partners, suppliers, and other users of our services.

If anyone wishes to complain on the behalf of another party (including minors) (s)he must produce evidence that they have the authority to act on their behalf.

We have separate procedures for:

1.3.1 Trainees/Candidates wishing to appeal against outcomes of a professional assessment either by ourselves or our certification partners.

1.3.2 Staff wishing to complain about any aspect of their employment. (They should refer to the relevant section of our internal "Administrative Policies and Procedures Handbook") ;

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1.3.3 Parties wishing to get feedback (comment, compliment or make suggestions) on our services: They should use our feedback systems found on our website (www.africariskinstitute.com), at our reception (feedback cards) or by emailing us through feedback@africariskinstitute.com

1.4 Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or inaction, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation. Requests for services or changes to services, comments and suggestions, focus group and questionnaire feedback and assessment, bursary, disciplinary appeals are not considered as complaints and therefore do not fall within this process.

1.5 Our Roles and responsibilities

1.5.1 We have a **Quality Assurance (QA) Team** that receives all formal complaints and is responsible for logging and monitoring the complaints in accordance with the procedures below. The QA Team is constituted of the an independent Director (Chair), Head of Training (secretary) and the manager responsible for subject being discussed.

1.5.2 **All our staff** have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them appropriately. Whenever possible, complaints should be dealt with informally and promptly. All complaints (formal and informal) received by a member of staff must be forwarded to the Chairman of the Quality Assurance Team for recording and action – qa@africariskinstitute.com

1.5.3 **Our managers and directors** have a responsibility to take a lead role in resolving complaints, through investigation (when appropriate) and responding to the complainant. They are also responsible for resolving complaints that have reached the appeals stage.

1.6 Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively and with discretion. If anyone makes a complaint against a member of staff, that member of staff may be informed about the substance of the complaint so that they are in a position to make a response. If, in exceptional circumstances and for justifiable reasons, a complainant wishes to remain anonymous from the individual about whom the complaint is made, this may be considered, for example in cases of harassment.

We will not normally investigate anonymous or malicious complaints.

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2 Procedure

2.1 Informal complaints

2.1.1 It is hoped that most complaints can be dealt with using the informal procedure.

2.1.2 Concerns should be raised in the first instance with the person or area concerned as soon as possible, and not later than three months after the incident. If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the person complaining and the area they are complaining about to arrive at an agreed resolution.

2.1.3 If a complaint is about a member of staff it should be referred to the relevant line manager.

2.1.4 At this informal stage complaints may be made in person, by phone or by email.

2.1.5 All informal complaints, even when satisfactorily resolved, must internally be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Team to be logged as part of on-going service monitoring and continuous improvement.

2.2 Formal complaints procedure

Where complaints are very serious or the matter has not been resolved informally, the complainant should raise a formal complaint under the following procedure.

NB: Complaints made more than three months after the incident will not normally be investigated unless there is a good explanation for this long lapse in time.

2.2.1 **Filling out a complaints form:** The complainant shall fill out a Complaints Form (**Appendix 1**) having read the Complaints Policy and Procedure (both available from Company Receptions and website – www.africariskinstitute.com). The form shall be returned to Reception or to the Quality Assurance Team at the firm's headquarters at 4th Floor, Suite A12, Daphton Court, Riverside Drive, Nairobi or emailed to the quality assurance team through qa@africariskinstitute.com

2.2.2 All complaints received directly by a member of staff shall internally be passed on immediately to the Quality Assurance Team to ensure proper response.

2.2.3 **Acknowledgment:** the Quality Assurance Team will send an acknowledgment (normally within 3 working days), stating who will be investigating the complaint and giving a firm commitment to respond - within 14 working days - to allow for an in-depth investigation.

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2.2.4 Logging the complaint: the Quality Assurance Team logs all complaints in a register (a spreadsheet of all complaints and their progress) which is circulated to management for review and their information/comments).

2.2.5 Investigation of the complaint: the Quality Assurance Team forwards the complaint (with an Investigation [\(Appendix 2\)](#), clearly identifying timescales) to the most appropriate senior member of staff, normally the Manager responsible for the department. An independent manager/director may be asked to conduct the investigation if appropriate. During this stage the complainant may be contacted for further information or to be invited to meet with the investigating manager (They may be accompanied by a friend or family member. An accompanying person cannot take active part in the proceedings but can offer support to the complainant).

2.2.6 Resolution: the investigating manager will consider the complaint thoroughly and will return the completed investigation form to the Quality Assurance Team.

Based on the facts from the investigation coupled with the recommendations of the investigation manager, the Quality Assurance team will make a judgement to either:

- ✓ Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons.
- ✓ Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, propose an amicable settlement, take appropriate steps to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.

The investigation outcome will normally be communicated to the complainant by the Managing Director while a copy of the letter will be filed by the Quality Assurance Team.

2.2.7 Quality improvement: the QA team will ensure that relevant action is taken to change procedures or implement staff training to prevent recurrence of the complaint.

2.2.8 Monitoring the complaint: the QA Team will monitor all logged complaints to ensure they are resolved within the allotted 14 working days. A member of the QA Team will inform the investigating manager of any unresolved complaints and will notify the complainant if they are unable to meet the agreed timescale – requesting for a further indulgence to finish the investigation.

2.2.9 Evaluation: a record of complaints, appeals and outcomes are recorded on a complaints database (in excel). These will be analysed, summarised and presented to all department heads on a regular basis to ensure actions are carried out to address the issues raised.

2.3 Appeals

2.3.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response they receive as an outcome of the investigation, they may appeal to the Managing Director of the firm (within a further 14 working days of the date on the response letter).

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2.3.2 The appeal should be made in writing stating reasons for the appeal and any action they are seeking.

2.3.3 The Managing Director will constitute an Appeal Committee made up of him/her and two more Directors to investigate the complaint and decide to:

- ✓ Uphold the original decision/dismiss the complaint as unfounded.
- ✓ Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, recommend appropriate steps are taken to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.
- ✓ Invite the complainant to attend the appeal hearing (they may be accompanied by a friend or family member (An accompanying person cannot take an active part in the proceedings but can offer support to the complainant)).

2.3.4 A written notification of the result of the appeal will normally be sent within 14 working days of the firm receiving the appeal, or within 5 working days of an appeal hearing.

2.3.5 The decision of the Appeals Committee (communicated by the Managing Director) is final.



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Appendix 1 - Complaints Form

Before completing this form, you should read the Company's Complaints Policy and Procedure, available on our website (www.africariskinstitute.com) and at the Reception.

When completed, please hand in to Reception or send to: complaints@africariskinstitute.com. If you require assistance to complete this form please ask at Reception.

NAME

COURSE

ADDRESS

TEL NO:

EMAIL

DECLARATION: I have read and understood the Company Complaints Policy and Procedure

SIGNATURE

____/____/_____
DATE DD/MM/YYYY

Have you raised this issue informally?

If 'YES', please provide details of the outcome

YES ☐

NO ☐

Section 2: Details of complaint (you may attach additional information)

Details of complaint:

(what is the reason for your complaint, please give locations, names of others (including staff) involved)

How would you like this complaint to be resolved

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Appendix 2 - Complaints Form

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

This form is for formal complaints only. If you wish to feedback on our services (comment, compliment or make a suggestion) please use the Africa Risk Institute feedback systems found on the Company website (www.africariskinstitute.com), at reception (feedback cards) or by emailing feedback@africariskinstitute.com

Stage 1: Informal complaint

Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the member of staff most directly concerned, the aim being to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity

Stage 2: How to make a formal complaint

If you find that stage 1 does not solve your problem, or you feel it is of a serious nature, you should make a formal complaint by completing the Complaints Form and returning it to the Quality Assurance Team at Africa Risk Institute, 4th Floor, Suite A12, Daphton Court, Riverside Drive, Nairobi (or emailing to complaints@africariskinstitute.com).

You will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days, and following an investigation into your complaint, we will send a full response within 14 working days of receiving your complaint (unless you are informed otherwise).

Stage 3: How to appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you may (within 14 working days of the date on your response letter) appeal to the Managing Director of Africa Risk Institute in writing, stating your reasons and any action you are seeking. The Managing Director will constitute an Appeal Panel which will review your matter and notify you in writing of the result of your appeal (normally within 14 working days of the firm receiving your appeal). The decision of the appeal panel is representative of the position of the firm and is final.

For a full copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure please contact the Quality and Assessment Team, ask at Reception or refer to the website www.africariskinstitute.com

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Appendix 3 - Complaints Investigation Summary Form

Investigating Manager	[name]
Department	[name]

Section 1: Personal details	
NAME	COURSE
ADDRESS	
TEL NO:	EMAIL
Summary of complaint (background and issues – attach original complaints form)	

Staff involved:
Date complaint received: DD/MM/YYYY Deadline for reply: DD/MM/YYYY

Investigation (time line and process)	
Evidence reference in brackets	
DATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Africa Risk Institute	

Findings
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendation	By Whom
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

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Reply letter

SENT BY

Signature

(INVESTIGATING MANAGER)

DATE [DD/MM/YYYY]

Please return completed form with any other supporting information to the Quality and Assessment Team.



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Appendix 4 - Appeals Against Internal Assessment Of Work For External Qualifications

Note: Appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade submitted by the Institute for moderation by the Awarding Body.

Africa Risk Institute is committed to ensuring that:

- Internal assessments are conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Assessment evidence provided by candidates has been produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the specification.
- The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through internal standardisation as necessary.
- Staff responsible for internal standardisation attend any compulsory training sessions.

If a candidate is unhappy about the mark awarded for internal assessment they should:

- Ask the Institute (through the Quality Assurance Team) for an explanation on why the mark was given.
- The Quality Assurance Team will follow the normal complaint procedure to resolve and advise the results.
- If not satisfied with the explanation they should appeal to the Managing Director for further investigation. This will be handled in accordance with the Institute's Internal Appeals procedure – refer to 2.3 above)
- The purpose of the appeal should be to decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body.
- Appeals should be made as early as possible and at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examination series.
- Appeals should be made in writing, to the Managing Director, stating the details of the complaint and the reasons for the appeal. This will then be investigated in accordance with the appeals procedure.
- The candidate will be informed, in writing, of the outcome of the appeal; including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment. The candidate will be allowed to request a personal hearing if they are not happy with the written response.
- A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

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Appendix 5 - Appeals Against External Assessment Marks

Where a candidate is unhappy with the mark awarded for a particular examination unit (eg. written exam, coursework, practical assessment, etc) a clerical check or re-mark may be requested via the Quality Assurance Team. The candidate will be required to acknowledge that his/her grade may be confirmed, raised or lowered and will be responsible for paying the relevant fee at the time of the request.

Please note: each awarding body specifies detailed criteria for the internal assessment of work. In addition, the awarding body must moderate the assessment and the final judgement on marks awarded is that of the awarding body. Appeals against matters outside the Institute's control will not be considered in the appeals procedure.



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