SOUTHEND SCITT

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE POLICY
Contents

SCOPE .......................................................................................................................... 3
PHILOSOPHY .................................................................................................................. 3
PRINCIPLES .................................................................................................................. 3
OUTLINE OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS ...................................................................... 4
Appendix A – Flow Chart ............................................................................................... 6
APPENDIX B - Procedure for the informal resolution of trainee (or stakeholder) concerns .......... 7
INTRODUCTION: ............................................................................................................. 7
SOME PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE USE OF THIS FORM: .............................................. 7
Procedure for resolving trainee (or stakeholder) concerns .............................................. 8
Informal Enquiry Form .................................................................................................. 8
SCOPE
A complaint is defined as any specific concern about the SCITT or one of its partner schools, including provision of a programme of study or related academic support service. The procedures also include the investigations of those complaints which may involve trainees. This document should be read in conjunction with the ‘Disciplinary Policy and Procedures for Trainees’ and the ‘Trainee Suitability to Practice Policy and Procedures.’

PHILOSOPHY
We believe that taking informal concerns seriously is the best way of meeting the needs of our stakeholders, of providing an excellent service and of preserving the good name of the SCITT. In so doing it is anticipated that the need for further escalation can be avoided. Informal concerns are best dealt with immediately or within a short time frame and without the need for formal complaints and appeals procedures. If concerns develop into formal complaints, we will investigate them and apply the procedures recommended by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) http://www.oiahe.org.uk

PRINCIPLES
1. The Trainees’ Complaints Procedures are designed to ensure that trainees have an opportunity to raise individually or collectively matters of proper concern to them without fear of disadvantage, and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected.
2. Where it is necessary to disclose the identity of the complainant to progress a complaint, the complainant will be informed of this in writing and asked to give permission for disclosure before proceeding with the complaint. There may be occasions when anonymity limits the extent to which a complaint can be investigated and/or resolved. If such circumstances arise, then they will be discussed with the complainant so that s/he can decide upon the course of action they wish to be taken.
3. The SCITT will respond to complaints and, if substantiated, will take appropriate action to remedy the complaint.
4. Since it is difficult to investigate complaints after a lapse of time, the procedures require that the Trainee must raise the matter within a given period of time, varying according to the type of complaint. These time limits are intended to allow a sufficient period for matters to be resolved informally wherever possible. A formal complaint must be brought within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally. No complaint may be made in any circumstances later than two months after the last day of enrolment on the programme.
5. Complainants are expected to follow the procedures as set out. However, discretion will be exercised, as appropriate, to ensure that complaints are not automatically discounted because of minor procedural deficiencies in the application.
6. At whatever stage of the Complaints Procedures the Trainee lodges the complaint s/he must declare herself/himself not satisfied within twenty working days of the date of the written response and request that the complaint be taken forward to the next stage. The absence of a response will be deemed to confirm the complainant has been satisfied.

7. Where it is deemed a Trainee is abusing the procedures through making complaints which are insubstantial or unsupported by a sufficient level of evidence, the complaint will be rejected at the earliest possible time with reasons given. Where apparently false and/or malicious complaints are made, the Course Director, under the Trainee Disciplinary Procedures, may instigate investigations.

8. Anonymous or third party complaints may be investigated at the discretion of the Executive Director.

9. Where a complaint is upheld, the Course Director will take appropriate remedial action and the complainant will be informed in writing of the action taken.

10. Where a trainee instigates a complaint but then withdraws the complaint prior to its conclusion the same complaint may not then be reinstated.

11. The Course Director will log all formal trainee complaints, and make an annual return to the Steering Group.

12. Informal comments and suggestions for the improvement of the SCITT are welcomed and should be addressed to the Course Director via the trainee reps.

**OUTLINE OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS**
(see Complaints and Appeals flow chart Appendix A)

There is a 3 stage procedure as detailed below:

1. Wherever possible, the SCITT seeks to resolve complaints *informally*, with complaints procedures operating, in the first instance, at the level at which the matter arose. Initially the trainee should discuss the matter with their mentor and/or ITT Co-ordinator. In all cases, concerns or complaints will be recorded on the Informal Enquiry Form (Appendix B). If the trainee withdraws a complaint at this stage the Course Director will formally close the process.

2. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the trainee may request a formal *investigation* to be conducted in the first instance by the Course Director. The trainee should write to the Course Director within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally. No complaint may be made later than two months after the informal stage. A formal complaint should be in writing and must detail any specific concern, indicate the outcome sought, (although complainants should note that the outcome may be different from the one sought) and be accompanied by appropriate evidence. The trainee will be invited to speak with the
Course Director in person or at distance, for example over the telephone. NB where the complaint concerns the SCITT Director the complaint is to be directed to the Accounting Officer of the SCITT. There is a commitment to respond to the complaint or appeal in writing within ten working days of the complaint being received.

3. If the trainee is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation carried out by the Course Director, the trainee can request the complaint/appeal be reviewed by the SCITT Steering Group. The appeal must be made in writing within twenty working days of the date of the formal written response from the Course Director or Accounting Officer. The Steering Group will review all correspondence relating to the complaint or appeal and seek a resolution. If the trainee is not satisfied with this outcome they may then refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and a ‘Completion of Procedure’ is issued. It is not possible to refer the matter to the OIA until the completion of the internal procedures. Trainees must submit their complaint to the OIA within three months of the issue of the ‘Completion of Procedure’ letter.

The complaint or appeal should be investigated thoroughly and a clear understanding of what the complainant feels would put the matter right should be clarified and noted. At every stage the communication between all parties must be recorded and collated, with all those involved kept informed throughout. Every attempt should be made to secure a satisfactory resolution which may include for example:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review SCITT policies in light of the complaint.
Appendix A – Flow Chart

The Complaints and Appeals Procedure flow chart is designed to assist trainees in understanding the procedure to follow and the stages associated with the process. If you are not satisfied with an aspect of our ITT provision there are three stages you can follow.

**Stage 1**
Initial ‘Cause for Concern’ is raised by the trainee teacher.

Trainee teacher to talk with Mentor or ITT Co-ordinator. Nature of complaint / concern is to be recorded on Informal Enquiry Form by Mentor or ITT Co-ordinator and passed to Course Director.

If the concern is dealt with and all concerned are satisfied with the outcome then the complaint or appeal is resolved. If the trainee teacher is not satisfied with the outcome, they can request a formal investigation to be conducted.

**Stage 2**
Trainee teacher should write to the Course Director within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally.

The trainee teacher must detail any specific concern, indicate the outcome sought and be able to provide appropriate evidence.

Once the written request for a formal investigation to occur is received, it will be investigated by the SCITT Director or Accounting Office. The trainee will be invited to speak with the SCITT Director or Accounting Officer.

If the complaint/appeal is dealt with and all concerned are satisfied with the outcome then the complaint/appeal is resolved. If the trainee teacher is not satisfied with the outcome, a ‘Stage 3 – Formal Review’, by the SCITT Steering Group, is raised.

**Stage 3**
Trainee teacher writes to the Chair of the Steering Group, requesting the matter be reviewed at Stage 3.

The Steering Group will review all of the correspondence relating to the complaint/appeal and may meet with all those involved.

The Steering Group will then meet to discuss all aspects of the complaint/appeal and will then decide on an outcome.

The outcome is then communicated with the trainee teacher. If all parties are satisfied with the outcome, the complaint/appeal is resolved. If the trainee teacher is not satisfied with the outcome they are then eligible to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for external review.
APPENDIX B - Procedure for the informal resolution of trainee (or stakeholder) concerns

INTRODUCTION:
It is the aim of the Southend SCITT to provide the very best quality of training. In any organisation there are times when informal and more formal feedback is required to maintain and continue to improve the quality of service. This form is one part of that process and represents a means of listening to the concerns of any trainee (or stakeholder) in a systematic and supportive way.

SOME PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE USE OF THIS FORM:
An informal but recorded process
When a trainee has a concern (for example, about the support or provision they have received, or an on-going problem that appears to be becoming more troublesome) then a more structured discussion may be undertaken using the following approach with their mentor and/or ITT Co-ordinator.

1. The trainee will be invited to a meeting. The trainee may, if s/he wishes may be accompanied by a friend, union representative or any other person of their choice. The Mentor / ITT co-ordinator may also be accompanied if this is seen as appropriate.
2. At the meeting there will be a discussion about the problem the trainee faces and ways to resolve it will be considered. An informal intervention plan may be produced, if needed, following the meeting.
3. The interview will be structured by the use of questions that encourage reflection and problem solving.
4. The trainee will be sent a copy of the completed form.

A key principle behind this approach is its informal character. Unless the trainee raises a grievance relating to gross misconduct by an employee of the Southend SCITT then any evidence and findings from this meeting will only be used as a way to resolve the problem or to plan how to.
## Procedure for resolving trainee (or stakeholder) concerns

### Informal Enquiry Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This form completed by:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Name of trainee or stakeholder: |  |
| Date this form completed:      |  |

### Semi-Structured Interview

*Please select the relevant questions.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part one: Clarifying the Nature and Cause of Concern:</th>
<th>Notes and comments if needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● What has happened so far?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● What has been the effect of what has happened?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Do you think anyone else been affected by this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● So far, who else have you talked to about this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● How did they respond?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part two: seeking solutions:

- What needs to be thought about now, and what needs to happen next?
- What are you hoping might be the result of talking with me?
- What would be the worst outcome for you?
- What will be an ideal outcome for you in this situation?
- What do you think needs to happen to make this possible?
- Who else ideally needs to be involved in resolving this issue?
- What do you think is the best way to involve these people and when?

### Part three: Deciding on next best steps:

- Before deciding on what we may do together to resolve this issue how far do you feel we have covered the main issues regarding your concerns.

*In two sentences can you summarise, for clarity, exactly what the complaint/concern is.*
• In summary your concerns are as follows:
  (Write down the summary of concerns and read them back)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part four: Agreements for next steps</th>
<th>Agreed interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) It was resolved that The SCITT will:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) It was resolved that The SCITT in partnership with the trainee or stakeholder will:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) It was resolved that The trainee or stakeholder will:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part five**: if required, an informal review meeting will be held on:

*If both parties agree that a second meeting is not necessary part five may be waived.*