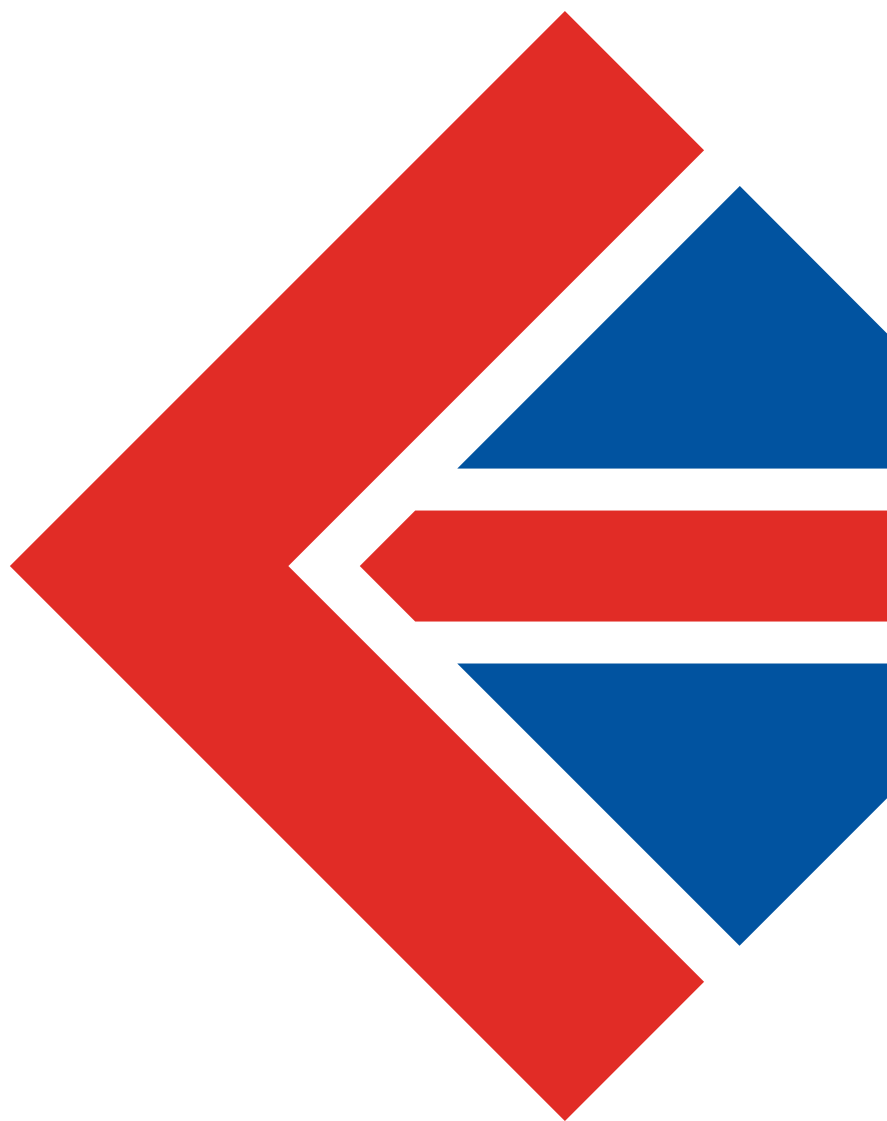


STUDENT COMPLAINTS' PROCEDURE

(English)



Complaints against English UK member centres

This document outlines how English UK handles complaints against its language centre members.

Background

Around 400,000 students a year attend English language courses at English UK member schools, universities or colleges. We receive about 35 complaints a year and of these about 3 or 4 cases are referred to the independent Ombudsman for a judgement.

Members of English UK are all accredited by the Accreditation UK scheme (formerly known as the English in Britain Accreditation Scheme), which we run jointly with the British Council. This involves independent inspections every four years, and unannounced interim visits by the inspectors. Members must maintain the standards required by the Accreditation Scheme at all times. The criteria for the Accreditation Scheme can be found on the British Council website (see www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-students.htm)

We take all complaints seriously, but attempt to achieve an amicable resolution if at all possible.

Process

The process used for handling your complaint depends upon the type of institution you are studying at – please refer to the appropriate section below:

1. Complaints against private sector schools
2. Complaints against universities/higher education institutions
3. Complaints against further education colleges

1. Complaints against private sector schools

Every member school has an internal complaints process. We cannot accept a complaint until it has gone through the school's own process. If you feel you have a complaint against the school where you are studying, please first arrange a discussion with the Principal or an appropriate member of staff (for example, the Director of Studies, Accommodation Officer, or Student Counsellor).

If the reply you get from the school does not satisfy you, please write in English to English UK for the attention of the Chief Executive or e-mail tony@englishuk.com

We cannot accept complaints over the telephone because we need a record of the complaint in case it has to be referred to the Ombudsman.

We can only deal with complaints from international students on an English language course at a member school. We cannot accept complaints:

- from teachers or other staff, agents or host families about problems with schools;
- from people unwilling to give their names;
- about courses such as computing or business studies, or work experience placements, even if these are at member schools; OR,
- about schools which are not full members of English UK.

Unless there are exceptional reasons, we will not normally consider complaints about a course that has ended more than 6 months ago.

We can accept complaints made on behalf of a student by a close family member (parents, brother/sister, uncle or aunt). We can also accept complaints by a representative if the student has given written authorisation for the representative to pursue the complaint.

In outlining your complaint, keep to the facts and include a copy of any relevant documents (enrolment form, invoice, letters) which support your case. Pay particular attention to the school's terms and conditions, which you accepted when enrolling. Say what you have done to try to resolve the complaint directly with the school.

When English UK receives your complaint, we will write to you to let you know that we have received it, and at the same time we will write to the Principal of the school concerned to ask for a response within two weeks. We will reply to you in a letter based on this response.

If you are still not satisfied, we will write to the school with your further views and ask them to reconsider. We will reply to you with their response.

If the school's second response still does not satisfy you, we will refer the complaint to the independent Ombudsman. We will send him all the letters on the case, and he can ask to see any other documents that he thinks may be helpful. He can also ask questions of the school or the complainant, or anyone else, in order to come to a view on the case. He will prepare a report in writing giving a decision. This report will be sent to you and the school. His judgement is binding on the school: it must do what he says. The Ombudsman normally takes between 4 and 6 weeks to come to a decision. There is no cost to you, and going to the Ombudsman does not affect your right to take legal action subsequently if you wish to do so. The Ombudsman process is intended to be a relatively fast and cost free way for students to have a complaint considered.

Once the Ombudsman has given his judgement and it has been carried out, the English UK complaints process is at an end. The Ombudsman will not engage in subsequent correspondence with either the school or the student, and English UK itself will regard the Ombudsman's judgement as final.

If you decide at any point in the process to start legal proceedings against the school, English UK will suspend its consideration of your complaint until the legal proceedings are complete so that no comment by us should prove prejudicial to the legal proceedings.

How to contact us

Write to: The Chief Executive, English UK, 219 St John Street, London, EC1V 4LY
Or e-mail tony@englishuk.com

2. Complaints against universities/higher education institutions

You should first discuss your complaint with your course tutor and then follow the internal complaints procedures of your higher education institution. If you have exhausted the internal complaints procedure and you do not consider that your complaint has been satisfactorily dealt with, you may have the option of taking your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

Please visit their website www.oiahe.org.uk for further information or contact them at The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, Fifth Floor, Thames Tower, Station Road, Reading RG1 1LX or email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

3. Complaints against further education colleges

You should first register your complaint within the college's internal complaints process. If you then feel that the complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, and it is regarding an English language course leading to an external qualification, you can take it forward to the relevant Examination Board or qualifications awarding body. If your concerns are about other non-academic matters, you may be able to complain to the Learning and Skills Council, either regionally or nationally. Please visit their website www.lsc.gov.uk for additional information.



Registered Office 219 St John Street London EC1V 4LY

t +44 20 7608 7960 | **e** info@englishuk.com
f +44 20 7608 7961 | **w** www.englishuk.com