

National Specialist SCITTs

National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

National Modern Languages SCITT

Complaints Policy

Important: this document can only be considered valid when viewed on the SCITT Intranet or SCITT website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.

The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

Version number:	2.0
Implementation date:	August 2017
Last review:	March 2025
Next review:	March 2026
Name and job title of author:	Katrin Sredzki-Seamer, Director of the National Modern Languages SCITT
Target audience:	Staff / Trainees / O.I.A
Related documents:	SCITT Academic Appeals Policy, SCITT Disciplinary Policy



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1. Purpose

The purpose of any complaints system is to address any such concerns in a positive and structured pro-active way. This policy sets out the procedures to be followed in responding to complaints received to National Specialist SCITTs. Appeals against decisions taken by the SCITT should be dealt with through the appropriate Disciplinary or Appeals policy.

2. Principles

The SCITT will:

- ensure that all trainees have equitable access to its services and resources
- be non-discriminatory and promote the goals of anti-discrimination, access, and equality and
- take reasonable steps to ensure its services, programmes and decision making promote an inclusive culture.

The Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to understand and use
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time
- limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation
- respect people's desire for confidentiality
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the SCITT Strategic Board so that services can be improved.

3. Scope

The scope of the policy covers most complaints that the SCITT is likely to receive.

This includes for example:

- Complaints about ITT personnel

- Complaints about placement schools
- Issues with the ITT programme
- Health & Safety issues
- Complaints regarding the working environment
- Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and in general Dignity at Work concerns.

It is usual to disregard anonymous complaints unless someone is prepared to substantiate them. However, anonymous complaints may be investigated at the discretion of the SCITT Director with advice from Chorus Education Trust HR.

This policy prohibits reprisals against trainees or employees because they have complained or have provided information regarding a complaint. Alleged reprisals are subject to the same complaints procedures and penalties as complaints of discrimination and will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

4. Procedure

When initial informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, then formal complaints and appeals will arise, and formal procedures will be invoked.

Formal complaints will be referred to the SCITT Director in the first instance, who may judge that the complaint is best dealt with by another suitable person. If the complaint is about the SCITT Director, this should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer of Chorus Education Trust for consideration. The same procedures, as detailed below, will apply.

Three stages will normally be sufficient to resolve most complaints:

Stage One

The complaint is heard by a School-Based Subject Mentor, the Course Leader, the Programme Lead or the Hub Lead Teacher, if possible, within five working days. All documentation and communication are collated and available to all parties throughout. The person the complaint is referred to cannot also be the subject of the complaint.

If the matter cannot be resolved at an informal level, the person making the complaint will be asked to put their complaint in writing and also where possible identify the resolution they are hoping to achieve.

Stage Two

The written complaint will be sent to the SCITT Director. There is a commitment to respond to the complaint or appeal, if possible, within five working days. The complaint will be fully investigated, and a resolution is then sought at this stage.

As soon as possible after receiving the complaint, the individuals named in the complaint(s) will be notified and will be asked to provide their response. The respondent has the right to be accompanied at all meetings by a colleague or union representative.

With the consent of the complainant and the respondent, the investigating officer may attempt to mediate a settlement of a complaint at any point prior to or during an investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the investigating officer will prepare a written report summarising investigation findings.

HR advice and support should be provided throughout the process.

Stage Three

The complaint is heard by sub-group of Hub Lead Teachers' Committee; this may also be referred to the SCITT Strategic Board or the Appeals Committee if deemed necessary by the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee. A full review of all correspondence relating to the complaint is then undertaken and a resolution sought. If the trainee is not satisfied with this outcome, they are then eligible to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and a 'Completion of Procedures letter' is issued.

Stage Two and Three will be dealt with, where practicable within 90 calendar days in most circumstances, and may need to be revised, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) – see Publishing policy details below.

Possible Outcomes

The complaint 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 is 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
- Mediation
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been managed 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 considering the complaint
- Disciplinary action or informal warnings/management instruction if complaint is upheld.

Performance

This will be judged by the successful resolution of concerns or complaints monitored by the SCITT Director and the SCITT Strategic Board. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator will also keep a record of complaints they receive concerning the SCITT.

5. Publishing this Policy

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT, is a member of this scheme. If a trainee teacher is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed the Complaints Procedure before you complain to the OIA. The NML SCITT will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your complaint is not upheld, the NML SCITT will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your complaint is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>