



APAC CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

ACADEMY OF PLAY AND CHILD PSYCHOTHERAPY

contact@apac.org.uk
APAC - The Coach House - Belmont Road - UCKFIELD - TN22 1BP



Introduction

The values of The Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy (APAC) are of the highest academic and professional standards, and we are internationally recognised for the quality of teaching, learning and therapeutic experience offered to our students. APAC is a responsive organisation that welcomes feedback as a learning opportunity to improve our academic provision, professional standards and student experience.

However, APAC recognises that students may sometimes become dissatisfied. Where concerns or complaints are brought to our attention, we commit to investigating the matters raised, clarifying regulatory or procedural issues and, where appropriate, taking the necessary steps to provide remedy and redress. To that end, APAC has established a complaints procedure to deal with all concerns or complaints from students in a proportionate, fair, and efficient manner.

APAC Complaints Philosophy

APAC believes that:

- Most complaints will arise because the complainant's expectations are different from those of the training provider, facilitators, clinical supervisors or placement organisation.
- All trainees have the right to raise concerns about any individual connected with their training course, without any fear that this will impact upon the marking of their assignments or other factors determining their course outcomes.
- All complaints should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly, efficiently and fairly, in a respectful manner.
- The Complaints Officer's approach should remain impartial, non-judgemental and solution-focussed.
- Complaints are a valuable source of feedback for improving professional practice.

At APAC, our procedures are based on this philosophy. APAC will not penalise a student for raising a concern or complaint.

For the purposes of these procedures a complaint is defined as any concern about the provision of a programme of study or a related service by APAC. This may include complaints regarding their Course Director, a fellow student, a group Clinical Supervisor or the venue.

Students cannot use this procedure to pursue matters related to the outcomes of academic assessment: students may find information regarding raising an academic appeal within APAC's Academic Appeals Procedure.

Expectations

At APAC, each of our courses are set out to facilitate and support the achievement of specific learning objectives. Course expectations and outcomes are clearly stated:

- In our promotional literature and on www.apac.org.uk;
- During the application process;



- At the beginning of the course;
- In the Student Handbook;
- In APAC's policies and procedures which are available on www.apac.org.uk

Throughout the course, the material being delivered, and the practical and experiential exercises are related to the learning objectives.

The time to be allowed for each activity is suggested by the Course Directors for agreement by the participants. Progress is checked at least once during the activity to see if an extension is required. Very occasionally, some individuals may require extra support and/or extra time for processing each activity. These will be managed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Course Director. This largely overcomes potential problems of pacing the learning process.

If a student needs an assignment extension or pause to their studies there is a separate process to follow: in the first instance they should discuss their circumstances with their Course Director who will be able to direct them through the Extension/Intermission process.

Course evaluations

Students are required to complete evaluation forms on every topic taught during their course, as well as an overall course evaluation completed at the end of the taught days. Any issues raised will be addressed promptly by the Course Director. All evaluation forms are kept and reviewed by the Learning and Development team to ensure that our high standards are maintained. Any necessary changes to procedures, methods, timescales and equipment etc. will be made going forwards.

Complaints Process

Any individual who wishes to raise a complaint has the right to be listened to and have their concerns taken seriously. APAC encourages students to take action using the guidance set out below – no person will be treated less favourably or suffer any penalty for having raised a complaint or concern made in good faith.

Stage 1: Informal resolution

Where a student has a complaint about a programme of study, or a service provided by APAC they should initially discuss the matter with their Course Director in an informal meeting as soon as possible following the experience that gave rise to the complaint. The opportunity to raise a complaint is given publicly at the start and end of each day's proceedings, privately each day after the conclusion of proceedings and in the evaluation form at the end of the course.

The Course Director will follow this up with an email summarising the discussion and outlining what outcomes were agreed upon during the informal resolution. A copy of this will also be sent to the Learning and Development Team for APAC's internal record keeping.



If the student wishes to pursue the complaint, they should email the APAC **Complaints Officer** directly at coursecomplaints@apac.org.uk who will acknowledge the complaint within 5 days of receipt.

If a student would prefer to raise their complaint by telephone, the office number is 01825 761143. Office staff will record the information given and forward it on to the Complaints Officer who will then arrange a follow up telephone appointment if necessary.

APAC recommends that, where possible and appropriate, attempts to resolve the situation informally should be taken in the first instance. It is however, up to the individual to decide how they wish to proceed.

Stage 2: Formal resolution

Following receipt of a complaint the Complaints Officer will establish the key issues and decide what further action is necessary. We appreciate that situations that cause a student to raise a complaint are often stressful and we endeavour to respond to all complaints as quickly as possible.

At this stage the student does not need to provide a written account of the complaint, although they may if they so wish. The Complaints Officer will carry out any necessary investigations into the complaint. If appropriate, the Complaints Officer will contact the individuals that the complaint relates to.

Following completion of the investigation of the complaint, the Complaints Officer will respond to the complainant in writing. The written communication will detail the outcome of any investigation of the complaint, the conclusion reached and will explain the action taken (if any) to redress the situation. We will ideally come to a conclusion that leaves the complainant satisfied with the outcome.

The CO will electronically store all records of the complaint in line with data protection procedures.

Stage 3: Appeal stage

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 of the procedure, they may request a review within fourteen days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2. The request should be sent to the Complaints Officer, who will acknowledge the email and inform APAC's Executive Board. The Executive Board will appoint a Complaints Appeal Panel, consisting of 3 senior members of APAC who will review the case.

The Complaints Appeal Panel will only consider a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage, and/or a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable, and/or new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.



The Complaints Appeal Panel shall decide whether the appeal is to be upheld, and if upheld, the action to be taken and any further outcomes to be applied. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of this.

Complaints to accrediting Universities

APAC is keen to work with students to internally resolve any complaints they have, although recognise that some students may wish to complain directly to the University with whom they are registered. APAC encourages students to follow the internal complaints procedure, and following this they can contact the Office for Students for their relevant University.

Complaints regarding a Clinical Supervisor

If a student wishes to raise a complaint about a group Clinical Supervisor providing supervision as part of the course the complaint should be made to coursecomplaints@apac.org.uk. The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the email within 5 days and follow the same procedure outlined above.

If a student wishes to raise a complaint about a PTUK registered Clinical Supervisor providing individual supervision they should follow the procedure outlined within PTUK's Complaints and Concerns procedure, which may be found at <https://playtherapy.org.uk/complaints-concerns-procedure/>.

This policy links to:

APAC Academic Appeals Procedure
PTUK Complaints and Concerns Procedure

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:	
Date Written: 21/06/24	Written by: Amber Cawley/Ali Weston
Ratified by: Monika Jephcott, CEO	Date ratified: 01/07/24
Date of next review:	
Date review carried out:	Review completed by:
Date of next review:	