



Youth STEM Award Complaints Policy

At the Youth STEM Award (YSA), we are committed to ensuring that everyone who interacts with our programme has a positive experience. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when concerns arise about our programme, activities, or services, including the conduct of our staff. A formal complaint provides us with an opportunity to address issues, learn, and improve.

If you wish to contact us with a general enquiry or provide feedback, please do so via our [\[contact form\]](#).

Raising a Complaint

Complaints must be submitted in writing using the contact us form [\[contact form\]](#). Please include a clear and concise summary of your complaint.

If your concern relates to the delivery of the YSA programme within a school, college, or youth organisation, you must first raise the matter with them and follow their complaints procedure. The YSA will only investigate once their process has been exhausted. If you remain dissatisfied with their response, you may then submit a complaint to us using the form above.

Complaints Process

1. **Acknowledgement:** We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days, outlining the next steps and expected resolution timeframe.
2. **Investigation:** If the complaint concerns a participating school or college, we will refer it to them for resolution. For all other complaints, a named member of YSA staff will coordinate the response.
3. **Resolution:** We aim to resolve complaints within 10 working days and will keep you informed of progress. If more time is required, we will notify you accordingly.
4. **Confidentiality:** Where appropriate, complaints will be handled in confidence.
5. **Outcome:** We will provide a written response, typically via email.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** We use complaints to review and enhance our services.
7. **Right to Appeal:** If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal our decision.
8. **Data Protection Complaints:** You may submit a data protection complaint through our complaints process or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Complaints Acceptance Criteria

To ensure fairness and efficiency, the following criteria apply:

- You must attempt to resolve the issue informally before initiating a formal complaint.
- Complaints about schools or colleges must have been raised with the organisation first, and their complaints process must be concluded before escalating to YSA.
- Anonymous complaints will generally not be investigated.

- Complaints must include sufficient information to identify the relevant parties (e.g., school name, youth group name).
- Complaints raised on behalf of others will not be accepted, except by parents/carers of young people.
- Vexatious or malicious complaints will not be progressed.
- Once we have provided a response, the complaint will be considered resolved unless new, relevant information is presented.
- All complaints must be made in writing.

Appeals Process

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to appeal.

How to Appeal:

- Appeals must be submitted in writing to the YSA staff member who handled your complaint.
- Appeals must be made within 10 days of receiving the complaint outcome.
- We will acknowledge your appeal and respond within 14 days. In complex cases, this timeframe may be extended, and we will inform you accordingly.

Grounds for Appeal: An appeal will only be considered if:

- New evidence or information is provided that could change the outcome.
- The YSA's complaint policy or process was not followed correctly.

Appeal Process:

1. A senior staff member will review whether the appeal meets the eligibility criteria.
2. If accepted, an appeal investigator or panel will be appointed.
3. The appeal will review both the original complaint and any new evidence.
4. A report outlining the findings and recommendations will be compiled.
5. The final appeal outcome will be communicated to all relevant parties.

The appeal decision is final and marks the end of the complaints process.

For any further queries regarding this policy, please contact us via [[contact us form](#)].