

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCESS - QUALIFICATIONS

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1. POLICY SUMMARY

Employment Education Training Group’s (EET Group) Complaints Policy provides the framework within which anyone who is dissatisfied with the organisation can raise their concerns. The framework also assists staff to deal with complaints from learners, employers, contractors, visitors and other interested parties.

The named complaints manager with responsibility for following through complaints is Operations Director.

2. Aim

The aim the procedure is to provide a framework for each centre to be able to have a complaints procedure which is properly and effectively implemented, and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly and that the organisation are able to learn from the complaints that are received and take steps to address issues where they arise.

3. Goals

The goals of each centre are to ensure that:

- Service users, learners, users and their representatives are aware of how to complain, and that each centre provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within two working days
- Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days
- All complaints are responded to in writing by each centre
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff and service users.
- A record of complaints is kept, reported to the board and lessons learned recorded and implemented

4. Informal Stage

It is recognised that some concerns are raised informally, and these can and should be dealt with immediately. An informal complaint should be raised directly with the relevant Tutor, Trainer, or the Head Office team.

Any such concerns should then be raised promptly and directly with the individual against whom there is a concern where relevant.

We aim to resolve informal concerns quickly and effectively. If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved in this way complainants should follow EET Group’s formal Complaint’s process as outlined below.

5. Formal Stage

The formal procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction.

Responsibility of the Complainant

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, or the complainant does not wish to follow the informal complaint process, they should:

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- Communicate their complaint in writing to:
 , Head of Education
 80 Tottenham Road, De Beauvoir School The Annex, Hackney, London N1 4BZ
 Tel: 02080641577
- Bring their complaint to the attention of EET Group within 6 weeks of the incident occurring.
- Explain the concern as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date and desired outcome.

Responsibility of EET Group

EET Group welcomes feedback to enable us to improve our services. We will respond to any dissatisfaction with our services fairly and promptly.

- You will receive an initial response within 2 working days of receipt of your formal complaint.
- You may be required to attend an investigatory meeting to capture more information.
- Your complaint will be looked into, and a response sent to you within 28 working days detailing our findings.
- You may be offered a meeting with the parties involved if appropriate.
- All informal and formal complaints will be logged on our central log which are reported to the board on a quarterly basis.
- All information collated as part of the investigation will be retained for a period of 2 years following resolution and closure of the complaint at which point all information relating to the complaint will be deleted.

Appeals and escalation process

You may appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint. Your appeal must be submitted within 20 working days from receipt of the complaint response. Your appeal should be sent, in writing to:

Jamie Manicom, Business Development and Strategic Director

80 Tottenham Road

De Beauvoir School The Annex

Hackney, London N1 4BZ

Tel: 020 8064 1577

You should include the reason for your appeal in your written submission.

If you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, have evidence of this and remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Awarding Body.

You can also contact the Awarding Body if you are being prevented from exhausting our complaints procedure, or if you are no longer able to contact us because we are no longer trading.

How to complain to the awarding Body

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The Awarding Body only accepts complaints in writing, by email or letter, except where they are required to make reasonable adjustments. Please let them know if this applies to you, either through a third party or calling them and they will arrange for someone to handle your complaint accordingly.

If you have difficulties in providing details in writing or if you are under 18, they will consider complaints made on your behalf by a third party. You will need to confirm that they can communicate with that third party on your behalf. If the complaint is on behalf of more than one person, they will need written permission from everyone.

When you contact them about your complaint, you will need to provide them with the following:

- the name of our organisation
- details of what your complaint is, together with the relevant documents.
- evidence that you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, including any appeals process (for example, written correspondence confirming the outcome)
- permission to disclose details of your complaint to us.
- if you are acting on behalf of a learner, evidence that you have their permission to do so

What happens next

On receipt of your complaint, they will check:

- if you are a registered student with them
- if it falls into one of the categories, they investigate.
- if the original decision or action complained about occurred more than 12 months ago
- whether you have exhausted our complaints procedure including any appeals process

The Awarding Body will acknowledge receipt and send a copy of their procedure. They will also inform you of whether the complaint is one that they can investigate. If the Awarding Body cannot investigate your complaint, they may also signpost you to another organisation that may be able to help you.

The Awarding Body will appoint an officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise to investigate your complaint.

If they can investigate, they will email a summary of the complaint to you. In some complex cases, they will request that you agree to the summary.

Within 10 working days of agreeing a summary, the Awarding Body will send the information that you have provided along with a summary of the complaint to us. They will then ask us to share with them:

- details and copies of the relevant procedure
- confirmation that our procedures have been exhausted.
- a response to the summary of complaint, together with relevant documents
- confirmation that they can share the information provided with you.

If our procedures have not been exhausted, the Awarding Body will let you know that they will not investigate the matter further until that has happened. If they decide we have unduly delayed resolving the complaint or will not resolve the complaint within a reasonable timescale, they may continue to investigate.

If the Awarding Body need more information, they may contact those involved to get further information or evidence.

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The Awarding Body aims to finalise the findings within 25 working days of your complaint summary being agreed. They will notify you of the outcome and their findings, and that will conclude the investigation.

If at any point during the investigation, they encounter a delay in responding to or providing correspondence, they will notify you of the delay and provide details of when you can expect a response.

Training

The Manager is responsible for organising and coordination training. All staff should be trained in dealing with, and responding to, complaints. Complaint's policy training should be included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on handling complaints should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

CONFIDENTIALITY

EET Group will keep you informed of progress with your complaint and how we are handling the information provided under this Complaints Procedure. Where an investigation is required, your information may be shared with other EET Group staff members or external third parties. Before sharing your information, we would inform you of this, unless there were exceptional circumstances, for example, where doing so could pose a risk of harm to you or others.

In the case of young people under the age of 18 raising a complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint, we may be obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following changes to Government updates and statutory guidance in relation to Covid-19 and company risk assessment policies and processes.

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COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCESS - APPRENTICESHIPS

POLICY SUMMARY

EET Group's Complaints Policy provides the framework within which anyone who is dissatisfied with the organisation can raise their concerns. The framework also assists staff to effectively deal with complaints from learners, parents, customers, employers, contractors, visitors and other interested parties.

INFORMAL STAGE

It is recognised that some concerns are raised informally, and these can and should be dealt with immediately. An informal complaint should be raised directly with the relevant Tutor, Trainer or Assessor.

Any such concerns should then be raised promptly and directly with the individual against whom there is a concern where relevant.

We aim to resolve informal concerns quickly and effectively.

If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved in this way complainants should follow EET Group's formal Complaint's process as outlined below.

FORMAL STAGE

The formal procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMPLAINANT

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, or the complainant does not wish to follow the informal complaint process, they should:

- Communicate their complaint in writing to:
Operations Manager
80 Tottenham Road
De Beauvoir School The Annex
Hackney, London N1 4BZ
Tel: 020 8064 1577
Bring their complaint to the attention of EET Group within 12 weeks of the incident occurring.
- Explain the concern as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EET Group

EET Group welcomes feedback to enable us to improve our services. We will respond to any dissatisfaction with our services fairly and promptly.

- You will receive an initial response within 2 working days of receipt of your formal complaint.
- You may need to be interviewed as part of the investigation into your complaint

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- Your complaint will be looked into, and a full response sent to you within 28 working days detailing our findings.
- You may be offered a meeting with the parties involved if appropriate.
- All informal and formal complaints will be logged on our central log.
- These will be retained for a period of 2 years following resolution and closure of the complaint at which point all information relating to the complaint will be deleted.

APPEALS AND ESCALATION PROCESS

You may appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint. Your appeal must be submitted within 20 working days from receipt of the complaint response. Your appeal should be sent, in writing to:

Jamie Manicom, Business Development and Strategic Director
 80 Tottenham Road
 De Beauvoir School The Annex
 Hackney, London N1 4BZ
 Tel: 020 8064 1577

You should include the reasons for your appeal.

If you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, have evidence of this and remain dissatisfied, you can contact the ESFA.

You can also contact the ESFA if you are being prevented from exhausting our complaints procedure, or if you are no longer able to contact us because we are no longer trading.

HOW TO COMPLAIN TO THE ESFA

The ESFA only accept complaints in writing, by email or letter, except where they are required to make reasonable adjustments. Please let them know if this applies to you, either through a third party or by **calling them**, and they will arrange for someone to handle your complaint accordingly.

If you have difficulties in providing details in writing or if you are under 18, they will consider complaints made on your behalf by a third party. You will need to confirm that they can communicate with that third party on your behalf. If the complaint is on behalf of more than one person, they will need written permission from everyone.

You should email complaints to complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk, or put them in a letter to:

Customer Service Team
 Education and Skills Funding Agency
 Cheylesmore House
 Quinton Road
 Coventry CV1 2WT

When you contact them about your complaint, you will need to provide them with the following:

- the name of our organisation
- details of what your complaint is, together with the relevant documents.

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- evidence that you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, including any appeals process (for example, written correspondence confirming the outcome)
- permission to disclose details of your complaint to us.
- if you are acting on behalf of a learner, evidence that you have their permission to do so

The ESFA can only investigate on behalf of learners whose courses they fund or employers that they fund. They may ask you for further information to help them confirm this.

What happens next

On receipt of your complaint, they will check:

- if they fund the course/organisation
- if it falls into one of the **categories they can investigate**
- if the original decision or action complained about occurred more than 12 months ago (unless it is about an Advanced Learner Loan)
- whether you have exhausted our complaints procedure including any appeals process

The ESFA will acknowledge receipt and send a copy of this procedure. They will also inform you of whether the complaint is one that they can investigate. If the ESFA cannot investigate your complaint, they may also signpost you to another organisation that may be able to help you.

The ESFA will appoint an officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise to investigate your complaint.

If they can investigate, they will email a summary of the complaint to you. In some complex cases, they will request that you agree to the summary. Where this happens, you will have 5 working days to respond.

Within 10 working days of agreeing a summary, the ESFA will send the information that you have provided along with a summary of the complaint to us. They will then ask us to share with them:

- details and copies of the relevant procedure
- confirmation that our procedures have been exhausted.
- a response to the summary of complaint, together with relevant documents
- confirmation that they can share the information provided with you.

If our procedures have not been exhausted, the ESFA will let you know that they will not investigate the matter further until that has happened. If they decide we have unduly delayed resolving the complaint or will not resolve the complaint within a reasonable timescale, they may continue to investigate. If the ESFA determine that you are self-funded, they will write to you to say that they cannot investigate the matter further.

If the ESFA need more information, they may contact those involved to get further information or evidence.

The ESFA aim to finalise the findings within 25 working days of your complaint summary being agreed. They will notify you of the outcome and their findings, and that will conclude the investigation.

If at any point during the investigation, they encounter a delay in responding to or providing correspondence, they will notify you of the delay and provide details of when you can expect a response.

What action the ESFA will take

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The organisations funded are independent bodies and the ESFA has limited power to intervene in their day-to-day running. ESFA’s role is to ensure we have acted according to their complaint’s procedures.

If your complaint is upheld, they may consider action against us, such as:

- asking us to review our complaints procedure to ensure non-recurrence.
- asking us to review our handling of your case.

Working with other ESFA teams and/or intelligence, they may consider:

- whether they continue to fund us
- invoking clauses from the funding agreements, financial memoranda and/or contract

What to do if you are not satisfied

If you are not happy with the way the ESFA handled your complaint against a provider, you can fill in the **complaint form** to issue a formal complaint about the ESFA.

TRAINING

The Manager is responsible for organizing and co-ordination training. All staff should be trained in dealing with, and responding to, complaints. Complaint’s policy training should be included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on handling complaints should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

CONFIDENTIALITY

EET Group will keep you informed of progress with your complaint and how we are handling the information provided under this Complaints Procedure. Where an investigation is required, your information may be shared with other EET Group staff members or external third parties. Before sharing your information, we would inform you of this, unless there were exceptional circumstances, for example, where doing so could pose a risk of harm to you or others.

In the case of young people under the age of 18 raising a complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint, we may be obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following changes to Government updates and statutory guidance in relation to Covid-19 and company risk assessment policies and processes.

Signed:



Jamie Manicom, Business Development Director.

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APPENDIX 1

Summary of Candidate's Access to Complaints/Appeals

Candidate Name:

Enrolment Number:

Assessment Centre Name

1. My Assessment Centre Number is:

2. My Assessor is:

Telephone:

Email:

3. My Internal Verifier is:

Telephone:

Email:

4. The Lead IQA is:

5. The Centre Manager is

6. The Assessments Centre's EQA is

7. My Awarding Body is...and they can be contacted by:

Telephone:

Email:

If I am unhappy about my assessment process these are the people to whom I can complain.

Please sign this form with your assessor as evidence that the appeals process has been explained to you and to indicate that you have received and understood how to use the Complaints/Appeals Procedure.

Candidates Signature

Date

APPENDIX 2

Formal Complaint Form

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It is assumed that in making a formal complaint you will first have taken your complaint through the informal stage.

By submitting a complaint, a learner should understand that EET Group will itself need to gather information about the matters raised, and that this information may include sensitive personal details.

This form is for use by any learner of EET Group, any learner applicant, or by a group of learners acting collectively, provided all named individuals have signed up to it. Please be aware that EET Group takes a strong view about complaints which it finds to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious. If a complaint is found to fall into these categories further action may be taken against the complainant. Anonymous complaints will only exceptionally be considered.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Name of complainant (your name) | | | |
| Employer | | | |
| Address for correspondence | | | |
| Email address | | | |
| Contact telephone number | | Date of complaint submission | |

Description of your complaint

| |
|---|
| <p>Please provide details of:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">the background to your complaint, including stating the relevant facts and events involved chronologically, together with relevant dates.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">the issue(s) which you wish to be considered.</p> <p>If you have several issues, please list these, and provide details of each separately.</p> |
| |

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The History of your Complaint at the Informal Stage

Please provide details of how you have raised these concerns so far including:

- a description of the steps you have taken to resolve this matter informally, for example by raising it with the relevant staff
- details and names of the people with whom you have raised this complaint informally, e.g., your employer or Tutor.
- the outcome of the complaint at the informal stage
- the reasons why you feel that your complaint remains unresolved.

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Additional documents

Please list any additional documents or other evidence you are submitting in support of your complaint.

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|--|

The resolution you seek

Please tell us what resolution you seek and why you believe this remedy is appropriate.

| |
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| |
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Please send your complaint to:

EET Group, 80 Tottenham Road, De Beauvoir School The Annex, Hackney, London N1 4BZ

If you submit your complaint in hard copy, please sign here to verify that it is from you.

| | | | |
|-----------|--|------|--|
| Signature | | Date | |
|-----------|--|------|--|

APPENDIX 3

DEFINITIONS

Complaint

A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of EET Group's services.

Vexatious Complaints

A complaint may be considered to be vexatious when it may or may not be the latest in a series of requests and it:

- clearly does not have any serious purpose or value.
- is designed to cause disruption or annoyance or gives rise to disproportionate inconvenience or expense.
- has the effect of harassing the company, learners and/or staff.
- can otherwise fairly be characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable.

Frivolous Complaints

A complaint may be considered to be frivolous where:

- it is clear that is not serious or sensible in content, attitude or behaviour.
- there is an absence of clear desire for a sensible or reasonable form of redress.

Malicious Complaints

A complaint may be considered to be malicious where:

- there is evidence of intention to do harm or mischief.
- it is reasonable to assume that the complainant intended to do harm or mischief.
- malice may be implied where e.g., it is clear that no redress is sought.

Unsubstantiated Complaints

A complaint may be considered to be unsubstantiated where:

- after investigation of the complaint where during the course of which the complainant was given full opportunity to provide evidence in support of the complaint, no prima facie evidence has been provided to EET Group.