

The Education & Training Foundation

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy statement:

The Foundation strives for excellence in everything we do. Occasionally we will fall short of the high expectations customers and partners have for us. When that happens, we want to know. This allows us to look into what has happened and have a chance to rectify any mistakes we may have made. A thorough and transparent complaints procedure helps us do this.

The Foundation operates a single policy which covers all types of complaint, to ensure that all complaints are treated with due consideration, fairness and equitability. It covers all services and products which we deliver directly, or are delivered by third parties on our behalf; and also the behaviour and conduct of Foundation staff, and that of those contracted to work on behalf of the Foundation.

Procedure:

The Foundation complaints procedure has four stages of handling and escalation:

- 1: Informal Complaints - with resolution by a staff member or delivery partner
- 2: Formal Complaint - with resolution by the Director of the area concerned
- 3: Review by independent Director on behalf of Chief Executive
- 4: Escalation to Board Chair

All complaints should go through stages 1 or 2 before they proceed further. From this point the complaint may then be escalated.

1: Informal Complaint

- Complainant makes a verbal complaint to the Foundation employee/contractor
- The Foundation employee/contractor hears complaint, agrees resolution and implements solution
- Complainant confirms that they are satisfied with the resolution

Timeframe: immediate to within 1 working day

Method: verbal

2: Formal Complaint submission

- Complaint is received either in writing by email, phone or by submission via the Foundation enquiries

- Complaint is logged formally with the Head of CEO's Office by the Foundation member of staff who received it, and the relevant Director is informed
- Case ownership is allocated to a member of the Foundation support team
- Receipt of the complaint is acknowledged within 1 working day
- Investigation of the complaint will then proceed
- Complainant will receive a response from the Foundation within 10 working days
- Complainant has 10 working days, after the response has been issued, in which to respond; after which it will be assumed the complaint is resolved

Timeframe: Between 1 working day and, at the latest, 21 working days after submission of complaint.

Method: email, verbal or written complaint submission; written response

3: Escalation to independent Director (on behalf of the Chief Executive)

- Complainant confirms in writing that they are not content with the proposed course of action, explanation or resolution
- Case is then escalated to an independent Director
- Complainant is informed within 5 working days of the escalation of the next steps which the Foundation will take
- The independent Director will then proceed with review of the case, which will include convening a panel comprising the identified Director and two colleagues not associated with the complaint, who will review the case, and agree a course of action, explanation and/or proposed resolution
- Complainant will receive a response from the Foundation within 10 working days of the review of the case
- Complainant has 10 working days, after the response has been issued, in which to respond; after which it will be assumed the complaint is resolved.

Timeframe: Between 1 working day and, at the latest, 26 working days after submission of dissatisfaction notice.

Method: written dissatisfaction notice, followed by internal panel, and written response

4: Escalation to Board Chair

- Complainant confirms that they are not content with the proposed course of action, explanation or resolution.
- Receipt of the escalated complaint is acknowledged within 1 working day
- The Chair is advised by the Head of the CEO's Office of the complaint
- Within 5 working days, the complainant is advised of when the Chair will be considering the complaint, which will be no more than 4 working weeks from the date of the acknowledgement of the escalated complaints, and is invited to make a verbal or written submission to the Chair.
- Should the Chair decide to seek advice from additional Board members, the Head of the CEO's Office will administer all arrangements and be the minute taker for any meeting/discussions

- If attending the meeting in person, the complainant may be accompanied by an independent person for the purposes of support
- The Board Chair will then proceed with review of the substance of the case and its handling
- The complainant will receive a response from the Foundation within 10 working days after the Chair's consideration
- The Board Chair's decision is final

Timeframe: Between 1 working day and, at the latest, 36 working days after submission of complaint.

Method: written dissatisfaction notice, followed by Chair consideration, and written response