

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Written: January 2022. Last reviewed: January 2025

Aims and Objectives

Venture Training & Education Ltd will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly, honestly and consistently. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding. We endeavour to:

- Make the procedure easily accessible and publicised
- Make the procedure simple to use and understand
- Carry out an impartial investigation
- Allow for swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people in-formed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information shar-ing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- Address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary

This procedure applies to issues concerning all types of curriculum provision and service areas, but NOT appeals against exclusions which will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure, a copy of which can be obtained from Venture Training & Education Ltd.

Managers of respective departments are responsible for day to day management and operation of the procedure and for bringing the complaint to a resolution.

This policy does not apply to:

- Employment issues raised by staff. These are dealt with via the Group's Grievance Procedure (for current staff) or via ACAS (for former members of staff).
- Suppliers and contractors. Existing contract management procedures should be referred to.
- Student appeals against exclusions. These are dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- Concerns about corporate malpractice. These are dealt with under Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policy.

Stages of a Complaint

1. Informal Stage

It is recognised that concerns may be raised by students, the general public, external agencies and staff. These concerns aim to be dealt with immediately by the appropriate member of staff concerned.

Venture Training & Education Ltd aims to resolve informal concerns quickly and to reach a satisfactory resolution. To ensure that the matters are dealt with quickly, any concerns, in-formal complaints must be raised within one month of the issue's occurrence.

2. Formal Complaints

Stage 1 – submitting a formal complaint

If you feel that a concern has not been resolved appropriately through informal discussion with the appropriate staff member or it is of serious concern and you wish to have the matter formally investigated, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the Company Operations Director. At the point of review of this policy that person is:

Meagan Cheek
meagan@ventureeducation.co.uk
Tel: 07548 294804

Venture Training & Education Ltd will endeavour to assist with any special requests for additional assistance with this procedure as long as they are made aware at the outset.

Formal complaints must normally be made within two months of the issue's occurrence to enable the Company to take appropriate action where required. The written complaint should be returned, marked confidential, to the respective department for the attention of the respective Director, indicating at which stage you are making the complaint.

It would be helpful if the following information could be included in the complaint to enable us to deal with the complaint as efficiently as possible:

- Your Name
- Your Address
- Postcode
- Daytime telephone number
- Evening telephone number
- Email address for correspondence
- Details of the complaint
- What action if any, you have already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who you spoke to and what their response was)
- What action you feel might resolve the problem at this stage

The relevant Company Director will contact any parties involved in the complaint and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days after receiving it. You will also be provided with a copy of Venture Training & Education Ltd's Complaints Procedure. The complaint will be investigated, and a response sent to you within 21 calendar days. If it is not possible to conclude the investigation within this time frame the Company will keep you advised of progress and a revised date for a resolution.

If the nature of the complaint is of a serious nature and could constitute gross misconduct by a member of staff, the matter will be referred to the Head of HR for investigation. Examples may include theft, inappropriate behaviour, bullying/harassment, discrimination, fraud, breach of safeguarding, breach of legislation or Company procedures etc.

In order to ensure that a thorough investigation of a complaint is made, we expect to be able to collect appropriate information from all the parties involved. Where a complaint is made anonymously this is not possible and therefore, no action will normally be taken in the event of an anonymous complaint being raised, although it would be sent to the relevant manager for noting.

A complainant may be invited to discuss the complaint or attend a meeting to establish further details regarding the cause of dissatisfaction or explore the solution being sought. At any meetings held as part of the investigation the complainant will have the right to be accompanied by one person (for example a friend, relative), who also has the right to speak on behalf of the complainant.

However, this person is in addition to the complainant, not a substitute. The complainant must also be present, unless there is a good reason why this is not possible. A group of students may use this procedure to make a collective complaint, but the group must nominate one person to be the main contact for purposes of communication and the spokes-person for the group, representing the group in all matters relating to the complaint.

All information received as a result of a complaint investigation will remain confidential to those involved in the process. However, it should be noted that all parties involved in the complaint have the right to know the full details of the complaint, including its source. Potential complainants may want to obtain advice regarding the procedure prior to submitting a complaint, the Administration Manager will be able to provide guidance.

Stage 2 - Appeals

If the concern/complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved under Stage 1, you have the option to request an appeal. This must be submitted in writing to: Operations Director, Venture Training & Education Ltd.

Appeals must be submitted within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome letter, clearly stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. If appropriate, the Operations Director will appoint a senior manager who has not been involved in the original complaint to investigate the matter. A response will normally be within 21 calendar days and you will be informed about the actions which will be taken to investigate your complaint. The Operations Director oversees the complaints procedure and ensures that it is applied fairly and consistently.

Stage 3 - Post appeal

3.1 Further Education programmes Following the action taken at Stage 2, if you still feel that the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction and having exhausted Venture Training & Education's procedure, you may wish to refer your complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Send your complaint in writing, by email or post to the complaints team and the Complaints Adjudicator will deal with it.

Complaints Adjudicator Education and Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT, complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

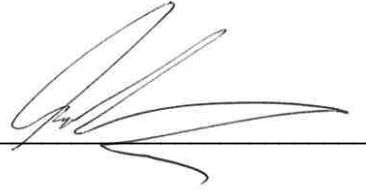
The ESFA will not investigate complaints relating to exam results, curriculum content, employment issues, contractual disputes, cancellation or reimbursement of fees/loans, matters subject to legal action or allegations of fraud, financial irregularity or whistleblowing.

Monitoring and Review

The Operations Director with the Senior Management Team monitors the Complaints Procedure on an annual basis, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.

They review all formal complaints received by Venture Training & Education Ltd, scrutinise how they were resolved and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned over the signature line.

Ian Harris
Company Director

14/01/2025