



Enterprise & Training Company Limited

COMPLAINT HANDLING PRINCIPLES & PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

To ensure that feedback about ETC's service is processed appropriately and professionally. Feedback, including complaints, helps ETC improve its services. Responding to a complaint is also an essential part of providing a quality service.

POLICY

The Complaint Handling Principles and Procedures sets out a fair and transparent approach to handling complaints from the public that:

- Provides guidance for ETC employees who may be required to receive and/or address public complaints
- Ensures complaints are handled in a manner which is fair, courteous and respectful of privacy, and in line with ETC's EEO Principles
- Reasons are provided for decisions made in relation to any complaint received
- All employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding handling complaints
- All reasonable assistance is given to those who choose to make a complaint

DEFINITION

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, policies, procedures, costs, or staff of ETC.

SCOPE OF POLICY

All ETC managers, staff and contractors acting on its behalf.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The **employee** is to deal with the complaint in a professional, timely and courteous manner and respect the privacy of the complainant. Where appropriate, they provide assistance and information to people looking to make a complaint in accordance with this Principle.

While employees may not agree with the behaviour of a complainant, our focus must be on resolving the substance of the complaint.

Human Resources Manager is responsible for:

- Receiving and recording the complaint along with documents relating to the complaint on the Feedback Register
- Forwarding the complaint onto the relevant Manager.

Executives & Managers are responsible for:

- The complaints being effectively addressed in accordance with this Principle
- Working in a constructive manner to address and identify opportunities to resolve complaints as promptly as possible, and to avoid their escalation

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Drafted by	Human Resources Manager	Approved on	March 2019
Approved by	Executive Management Team	Scheduled review date	March 2021

- Informing Human Resources Manager of the complaint to enter onto the Feedback Register
- Ensuring appropriate records are kept
- The process to be followed at all times
- The complainant being communicated to, in line with this Principle
- Notifying the Human Resources Manager if any change is required to this Principle
- Notifying the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of any lapse in process outlined in this Principle.

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Reviewing the available information and determining the most appropriate approach to addressing serious complaints;
- Monitoring the progress of serious complaint processes and ensuring complainants receive a response/decision within 5 days, or otherwise receive an explanation as to when a response will be provided.

PROCEDURES

Managing Feedback & Complaints

For many customers, just asking for help can be difficult and stressful. Customers have a right to know they can complain, and how to go about it. ETC is also aware that customers may have diverse needs, such as people with a disability, or those who have difficulty speaking or understanding English well, and will ensure they have equitable access to the complaint process.

Fixing a problem early not only increases customer satisfaction, it makes the most effective use of our limited resources. We need to be fair and impartial; handling a complaint in that way also reduces the risk of it escalating further.

Effective communication with complainants throughout the process can help avoid complaints escalating further. All complaints will be acknowledged and complainants kept informed about the progress of their matters, particularly when delays occur.

Upon accepting a complaint, employees should clarify with the customer the outcome they are seeking, especially if it has not been clearly specified. A written response to the complainant is also important.

Keeping accurate records enables a complaint to be reviewed efficiently. It means ETC has reliable data about complaints, so we can use to improve services and help identify areas that need improvement. Careful analysis of complaint sources and trends will also assist decisions about planning and resourcing those improvements.

Employees must respect requests from a customer for a complaint to be handled confidentially or anonymously.

Any complaints that require a change in process, procedure or improvement will require the manager dealing with the complaint to lodge this suggested change through the MAD program and lodged in the MAD register.

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LEVEL 1 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

Wherever possible, complaints are best resolved informally by the people involved. If a complaint falls within the scope of this Principle, it should firstly be directed to the person responsible for the decision, conduct, policy or procedure about which the complaint is being made, or their immediate Manager. If there is doubt as to whom the complaint should be directed, it should be lodged with the Executive Manager of the area responsible for the issue relating to the complaint. Complaints at this stage may or may not be in writing.

Once a complaint is received, the person handling the complaint should ensure they fully understand the issue before endeavouring to resolve it directly with those involved or, if they are not the best person to deal with it, refer the complaint to the Manager of that area.

In all cases, the complaint must be dealt with in a fair, prompt and professional manner. The complaint is to be documented on the Feedback Register by the Human Resources Manager. A response whether it be verbal or written should normally be provided within 5 days, otherwise the complainant should be provided with an explanation as to when a response will be forthcoming.

The majority of complaints should be able to be resolved without progressing beyond this first level of the process.

LEVEL 2 COMPLAINTS (SERIOUS NATURE OR ESCALATION OF COMPLAINT)

A complaint may be dealt with by way of a more formal internal review or investigation if it:

- Is of a very serious nature; or
- Has been referred by an employee who was handling the complaint at first level, or if they have suggested to the complainant that they submit the complaint for more formal review; or
- Has already been dealt with at Level One and the complainant is not satisfied with the process or outcome.

In these cases, it is preferred, though not essential, that complaints are made in writing. Regardless of how a complaint is made, information must be provided/collected in relation to the details of the complaint, the names of any employees within ETC who may have already attempted to address the complaint and the complainant's desired outcome/remedy.

These Level Two complaints are to be directed/referred to the relevant Executive Manager who has a responsibility to:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- Review the information provided
- Consult with and seek further information relating to the complaint from the complainant and/or other people involved
- Investigate the complaint directly, or delegate the investigation to another appropriate employee

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- Decide to refer the complaint to the CEO who can more appropriately deal with it
- Monitor progress of the internal review and ensuring the complainant receives a response/decision within 5 days, or otherwise receives an explanation as to when a response will be provided.

A formal investigation of the complaint may need to be conducted by the Executive Manager/CEO or in limited circumstances, a person from outside ETC, appointed by ETC.

ETC or the external investigator will provide all reasonable assistance to those who need help to effectively communicate in relation to the complaint. Assistance may include, for example, access to an interpreter service or agreement to a personal interview during which the details of the complaint can be written down on the complainant's behalf.

ETC is committed to handling complaints in a manner that respects the confidentiality and privacy of those involved. It is important that to appropriately address complaints, it may be necessary for those handling the complaint to contact others to seek and clarify information. If the complainant has any concerns relevant to the confidentiality and privacy of their complaint, they need to be immediately made known to those responsible for handling the complaint.

An investigation generally involves collecting information about the complaint and then making a finding based on the available information. Once a finding is made, the CEO or the external investigator will make recommendations about resolving the complaint.

Steps and actions	Responsibility	Timeline
1. If a member of the public is dissatisfied about the standard of service, policies, procedures, costs, or staff of ETC, they can make a complaint either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbally over the phone or in person • through the feedback form on the ETC website • via social media platforms or • in written form to an employee. If it is a jobactive complaint, there is a DESE Complaints Compliments and Suggestions form which is available in hard copy from reception or from the DESE website.	Member of Public	
2. An employee receives the complaint and either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolves the complaint if possible and notifies the relevant Manager or • Forwards the complaint to the relevant Manager of the area. 	Employee/ Manager	Resolved immediately or within 2 business days

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<p>3. The first level response for handling complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager gathers evidence and if able, resolves the complaint and informs the complainant • Ensures the complaint has been documented and referred to the HR Manager to be placed onto the Feedback Register. 	<p>Manager/HR Manager</p>	<p>Complainant informed in writing of the resolution with 2 days or within 5 days if complaint needs escalation</p>
<p>4. The second level response for handling complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complainant asked to put complaint in writing to HR Manager who then places onto Feedback Register • HR Manager refers complaint onto relevant Executive Manager • Executive Manager investigates complaint • Executive Manager escalates complaint to the CEO • CEO either resolves complaint or appoints and internal/ external investigator to make recommendations/decisions about resolving the complaint. 	<p>Executive Manager, CEO, HR Manager or External Investigator</p>	<p>Complainant informed in writing of the progression of the investigation and the outcomes with 5 days</p>

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- DESE's Customer Feedback Guidelines (available from Provider Portal)
- DESE's Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions Form (available from Provider Portal)
- ETC Complaint Notification (feedback form on ETC's website)
- ETC Feedback Register
- ETC's MAD Register

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