Complaints Policy and Procedure

Item	Details
Policy owner	Kirsty Noble
Position	Quality Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	Learners and Staff
Effective from	August 2026
Review cycle	August 2027

1. Policy Statement

Skills-UK, Education & Training Limited is committed to providing high-quality education, training and associated services in a supportive and professional environment.

Skills-UK welcomes feedback and takes complaints seriously. We aim to resolve concerns promptly, fairly and sensitively and to use complaints as an opportunity to improve our services.

No person will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern or making a complaint in good faith.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that adult learners, employers, partners, commissioners and other users of Skills-UK services understand:

- how to raise a concern or make a complaint;
- how their complaint will be considered;
- the timescales that normally apply;
- how to request a review of the outcome; and
- how Skills-UK uses complaints to improve its services.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a service, action or failure by Skills-UK that requires a response.

This policy does not normally apply to:

- appeals against assessment decisions, which are considered under the Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure;
- concerns about employment, which employees should raise under the Grievance Procedure;

- safeguarding concerns, which will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure;
- protected disclosures, which will be managed under the Whistleblowing Policy; or
- contractual or commercial disputes, which will be considered under the relevant contractual arrangements.

Where a concern is more appropriately considered under another policy or procedure, Skills-UK will explain this and direct it to the appropriate person or process.

3. Principles

Skills-UK will:

- make the complaints process clear and accessible;
- consider complaints fairly, objectively and without unnecessary delay;
- ensure that, wherever possible, a complaint is reviewed by someone who has not been directly involved in the matter;
- give relevant parties a reasonable opportunity to provide information and respond;
- handle information sensitively and share it only where necessary;
- keep the complainant informed where an investigation takes longer than expected;
- explain the outcome and reasons for the decision; and
- identify and implement appropriate improvements or corrective action.

Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may need to be shared to investigate the complaint properly, provide a fair opportunity to respond, meet a legal or contractual obligation, or protect an individual from harm.

4. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint

Skills-UK encourages concerns to be raised as soon as possible so they can be resolved quickly and fairly.

Informal resolution
Where appropriate, a concern should initially be raised with the learner's Tutor, Trainer or another relevant member of Skills-UK staff.

The member of staff will listen to the concern and make reasonable efforts to resolve it informally.

A person may proceed directly to a formal complaint where informal resolution is inappropriate, the matter is serious, or the concern has not been resolved.

Formal complaint
Formal complaints should be sent to:

Kirsty Noble (Quality Director
Email: kirsty@skills-uk.co.uk

The complaint should include, where possible:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- a clear description of the complaint;
- relevant dates, people and programme details;
- any action already taken to resolve the matter;
- copies of relevant information or evidence; and
- the outcome or action being sought.

A complaint should normally be made within 12 weeks of the matter occurring or becoming known. Skills-UK may consider a later complaint where there are reasonable or exceptional circumstances.

Skills-UK will provide reasonable support to anyone who needs assistance making a complaint. An adult learner may authorise a representative or advocate to act on their behalf. Skills-UK may require confirmation of the learner's consent before sharing information with that person.

5. Acknowledgement and Investigation

Skills-UK will normally acknowledge a formal complaint within two working days. The complaint will be reviewed and, where necessary, investigated by the Quality Director or another appropriate person who has not been directly involved in the matter.

The investigation may include:

- reviewing documents and records;
- speaking to the complainant;
- obtaining information from relevant staff or other parties; and
- considering applicable policies, contractual requirements or programme rules.

Skills-UK will aim to provide a written outcome within 10 working days of receiving the formal complaint.

Where the complaint is complex or further time is required, Skills-UK will explain the reason for the delay and provide an expected response date.

6. Complaint Outcome

The written response will normally:

- summarise the complaint and the matters considered;
- state whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- explain the reasons for the decision, as far as it is appropriate and lawful to do so;
- identify any action Skills-UK intends to take; and
- explain how the complainant may request a review.

Where appropriate, action may include an apology, correcting an error, reviewing a decision or process, improving a service, providing staff guidance or training, or taking other proportionate corrective action.
Skills-UK may not be able to provide confidential information about action relating to another individual.

7. Review of the Outcome

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome may request a review by the Managing Director.

The request should be made within 10 working days of receiving the complaint outcome and should explain why a review is requested.

The review will consider whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly and appropriately;
- relevant information was considered;
- the procedure was followed; and
- the outcome was reasonable in the circumstances.

The Managing Director will normally provide a final written response within 10 working days.

Where the Managing Director was directly involved in the matter, Skills-UK will appoint another suitable senior or independent person to undertake the review.

The final response will confirm that Skills-UK's internal complaints procedure has been completed.

8. External Escalation

Once Skills-UK's internal complaints procedure has been completed, the complainant will be informed of any relevant external escalation route.

Depending on the programme, qualification, service or funding arrangement concerned, this may include the relevant funding body, commissioner, awarding organisation, regulator or other responsible organisation.

External organisations may require the complainant to provide evidence that Skills-UK's internal complaints procedure has been completed.

9. Data Protection Complaints

A complaint about how Skills-UK has handled personal information will be directed to the person responsible for data protection and considered in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.

Skills-UK will provide a clear route for raising a data-protection complaint, acknowledge it within the required timeframe, investigate it appropriately and communicate the outcome.

The complainant will also be informed of their right to raise an unresolved data-protection concern with the Information Commissioner's Office where applicable.

10. Unreasonable or Abusive Conduct

Skills-UK will not treat a complaint as unreasonable simply because it is persistent, challenging or is not upheld.

However, Skills-UK may take proportionate steps to manage behaviour that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, knowingly false or unreasonably persistent and which prevents the complaint from being handled effectively.

Any restrictions placed on contact will be reasonable, explained to the person concerned and reviewed where appropriate. Skills-UK will continue to consider any new and relevant information provided.

11. Responsibilities

The Managing Director is responsible for overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

The Quality Director is responsible for:

- managing formal complaints;
- arranging appropriate and impartial investigations;
- maintaining complaint records;
- ensuring agreed actions are completed;
- identifying recurring concerns and improvement opportunities; and
- ensuring staff understand the complaints procedure.

All staff are responsible for responding appropriately to concerns, cooperating with investigations and maintaining confidentiality.

Complainants are expected to provide accurate information, communicate respectfully and allow Skills-UK reasonable time to consider the matter.

12. Recording, Monitoring and Review

Skills-UK will maintain appropriate records of formal complaints, investigations, decisions and resulting actions.

Complaint information will be handled in accordance with Skills-UK's data-protection and records-retention arrangements and will not be kept for longer than necessary.

Complaints will be monitored to identify recurring issues, confirm that agreed actions have been completed and support improvements to the quality of Skills-UK's services. This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there is a significant change to legislation, regulatory requirements, contractual arrangements or Skills-UK's services.

13. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside the following, where relevant:

- Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure;
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure;
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice; and
- Employee Grievance Procedure.