



COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE & PROCESS

<i>Document Authorisation</i>	<i>Job Role</i>
Document Owner	Director of Business Operations
Authorised By	SLT

1. AVAILABILITY

This policy, procedure and process is made available directly to apprentices at the point of enrollment, is available on our website at <http://decoded.com/static/policies/complaints-policy.pdf> and is made available through our apprenticeship management system, Bud.

2. PURPOSE

Decoded defines a complaint as any situation, product or service in which you express your dissatisfaction.

At Decoded, our apprentices and customers are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to supporting you at every step of your journey with us. If, however, you feel that we have fallen short of your expectations, we endeavor to do whatever we can to resolve your issues. We promise to be transparent in all dealings with you during this process.

Decoded will act in accordance with this Complaints Procedure should you feel that you have cause for complaint about your experience with us. This Procedure explains how you can make or escalate a complaint with Decoded Limited and how you can expect it to be handled.

Our Complaints Procedure explains:

- How you can make a complaint
- How your complaint will be initially handled
- What to do if you are dissatisfied with the initial response
- How your complaint can be escalated further
- Appealing an assessment outcome
- Changes to our complaints procedure

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Except in exceptional circumstances such as a Safeguarding or Public Safety issue, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Decoded maintain full confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain

confidentiality and each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant at the earliest possible moment.

Similarly, depending on the circumstances, where a complaint leads to disciplinary action against a Decoded employee, Decoded may need to keep some aspects of the disciplinary action and/or outcome confidential.

4. MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you are unhappy with the service you have received, please contact us, outlining what your complaint is:

Email: complaints@decoded.com

By post:

Director of Business Operations

35-41 Folgate St

London

E1 6BX

5. HOW YOUR COMPLAINT WILL BE INITIALLY HANDLED

5.1 When a complaint is received by you, the Programme Manager (PM) who is working with you (apprentice or employer) or the Account Manager named in your Agreement in Principle (Customers) will be given the opportunity to resolve the matter informally with you.

5.2 The PM/Account Manager will contact you to discuss the complaint informally within a period of 24 hours of being made aware by you of any dissatisfaction. Should the PM/Account Manager be unavailable, another member of the Decoded management team will contact you.

6. WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE INITIAL RESPONSE

6.1 In the event that you are dissatisfied with this informal resolution, the PM/Account Manager will refer you to the Director of Business Operations for Decoded Ltd. You will be contacted by either the Director of Business Operations or another senior manager within 2 working days. They will endeavor to resolve your complaint during a telephone call if possible. If you remain dissatisfied, they will ask you to submit a formal written complaint outlining the full details of your experience so that every point can be investigated and responded to thoroughly.

6.2 Within 5 working days of receipt of any written complaint the Director of Business Operations or another senior manager will write to you acknowledging receipt and confirming that they are investigating the complaint.

6.3 Should the Director of Business Operations be on leave or otherwise unavailable, an alternative senior manager will be designated the responsible person to deal with your complaint in their absence.

6.4 Upon receipt of any written complaint and following acknowledgement the Director of Quality or other senior manager will undertake an investigation of the issues raised. This investigation will include interviews with the persons involved in the case and checking of all relevant details. The investigation will also consider the activity history recorded on the apprentice in question. Once a full investigation is complete, a full, honest and open written response will be sent to you within ten working days.

6.5 There may be exceptional circumstances where the Director of Business Operations or other senior manager is unable to respond within this timescale. In such circumstances, they will write to you and explain

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the reason why they cannot reply during that time and will provide you with an anticipated timescale as to when you are likely to receive a written response to your complaint.

7. HOW YOUR COMPLAINT CAN BE ESCALATED FURTHER

7.1 Should you disagree with our response and wish to escalate (appeal) your complaint, you should notify Decoded of this in writing within 28 days of the date of our written response.

7.2 Your complaint and investigation will then be escalated to our Managing Director.

7.3 Upon receipt of your appeal, you will be contacted by the Managing Director or a member of their team within two working days acknowledging receipt and confirming that they are reviewing your complaint.

7.4 The Managing Director will review all documentation and correspondence relevant to your complaint and will respond with a final decision in writing within ten working days of the receipt of your appeal.

7.5 In the event that you are dissatisfied with the conclusions reached after investigation at the first and second stage of escalation, you will be provided with details of how to contact the regulator who will be able to independently review your complaint and our decision if appropriate.

7.6 If you are unhappy with an apprenticeship and have not been satisfied with the outcome of following the above complaints procedure then you can contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) directly and raise your concerns with them. The ESFA will only accept complaints in writing, by email or letter.

7.7 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, the ESFA 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**

7.8 The ESFA will acknowledge the complaint within 5 days.

If the complainant is still unsatisfied after the ESFA response they can write to the complaints adjudicator to decide on the case

8. APPEALING AN ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Students who feel that: the conduct of an assessment; the adequacy of the range, nature and comprehensiveness of the evidence when set against the national standards and evidence requirements; and/or the adequacy of the opportunities offered to demonstrate competence or attainment have not met their expectations, may raise a complaint/appeal for their assessment outcome.

8.1

Stage 1:

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If a apprentice wishes to complain/appeal, this complaint/appeal should be lodged, in writing, to the Decoded Director of Business Operations, within 10 days of them being notified of the assessment decision.

Stage 2:

The Director of Business Operations will attempt to find a solution, for example through another assessment or re-consideration of the evidence/work by an assessor who was not previously involved in assessment of the students' work for this unit.

8. 2

Appeal to the Awarding Body

If the individual remains unsatisfied with the outcome of any complaint once all internal procedures have been followed, the student will be advised that they may now appeal to the awarding body and follow their appeals and complaints procedure, i.e. the BCS.

9. CHANGES TO OUR COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

We keep our complaints procedure under regular review. Please see the document change tracker for the most recent changes. Any complaints in process when a change is made will be handled under the procedure that was in place when the initial complaint was made until a resolution is found.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Details	Detail
Document Title	Complaints & Appeals Procedure and Process
Status	Internal/External
Version Number	1.2
Classification	Approved
Location	Drive & Website
Last Review	19th October 2021
Next Review	19th October 2022

Version	Author	Issued	Summary of Changes
Draft	BVP	Pending Approval	None
1.0	BVP	14th January 2020	Build
1.1	CFM	17th August 2020	Update email address for complaints

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1.2	BVP	19th October 2021	Full review
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Approver Signature	
Date	19/10/2021