Complaints & Appeals Procedure & Process

Document Authorisation	*Job Role*
Document Owner	Director of Apprenticeships
Authorised By	SLT

1. Availability

This policy, procedure and process is made available directly to learners 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

At Decoded, our learners 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 endeavour 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. Confidentially

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: FAO: Director of Apprenticeships

81 Rivington St,

London,

EC2A 3AY

5. How Your Complaint Will Be Initially Handled

5.1 When a complaint is received, the Client Director (CD) who is working with you (learner or employer) will be given the opportunity to resolve the matter informally with you.

5.2 The CD 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 CD 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 CD will refer you to the Director of Apprenticeships for Decoded. You will be contacted by either the Director of Apprenticeships or another senior manager within 2 working days. They will endeavour to resolve your complaint during a telephone/video conference 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 Apprenticeships or another senior manager will write to you acknowledging receipt and confirming that they are investigating the complaint.

6.3 Should the Director of Apprenticeships 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 Apprenticeships 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 the checking of all relevant details. The investigation will also consider the activity history recorded on the learner 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 Apprenticeships or other senior manager is unable to respond within this timescale. In such circumstances, they will write to you and explain 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 to acknowledge receipt and confirm 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 should contact the regulator who will be able to independently review your complaint and our decision if appropriate:

Email: helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk
Website: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

8. Appealing An Assessment Outcome

Learners 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. Internal Appeal

Stage 1: If a learner wishes to complain/appeal, this complaint/appeal should be lodged, in writing, to the Decoded Director of Apprenticeships, within 10 days of them being notified of the assessment decision.

Stage 2: The Director of Apprenticeships 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. Decoded will endeavour to support the individual by providing the contact details of the appropriate awarding body.

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

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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
1.2	BVP	19th October 2021	Full review
1.3	TJJ	19th October 2022	Full review
1.4	JCH	23rd July 2024	Review in line with requirement; ESFA escalation routes added
1.5	JCH	8th September 2025	Review in line with requirement, DfE escalation route updated
1.6	JCH	17th August 2026	Review in line with requirement; address change