

Complaints Policy and Procedures

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

In keeping with our core values, we understand how important it is for you to receive a first class service; however we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. It is therefore important that we have an effective means for you to bring this to our or the approved centres' attention, with an expectation of resolution.

The complaints policy:

- outlines the complaints process
- defines what constitutes a complaint
- indicates which other policies and procedures might be more applicable
- sets out the process for making a complaint to VTCT
- explains the steps taken to resolve complaints and timescales
- outlines how to escalate a complaint to the relevant regulator

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the service provided by your centre or awarding organisation, which is deemed to have fallen below your expectations and our/your centres' own standards.

Customers who wish to convey an expression of dissatisfaction should make sure they follow the relevant policy and/or procedure. Issues relating to assessment decisions should be addressed using the Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedure and others may be covered by the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

All policies are available on the VTCT, iTEC and Skillsfirst websites.

<https://www.vtct.org.uk/our-policies-and-procedures/>

<https://www.itecworld.co.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

<https://www.skillsfirst.co.uk/policies/>

Complainants who are unsure of the correct policy or procedure to follow should contact us for advice:

VTCT/iTEC: +44 (0) 2380 684500 / customersupport@vtct.org.uk

Skillsfirst: +44 (0) 1212 705100 / customersupport@vtct.org.uk

Complaints should be made by the centre/person(s) directly affected by the matter, or a person acting on their We, with their written permission.

Complaints can normally be resolved informally; if this is not achieved a formal complaint can be raised without delay and by no later than 20 days after the occurrence of the issue which gave rise to the original complaint.

1.2. Scope of the policy

This policy is provided for the use of:

- learners who are or have been registered for VTCT, iTEC or Skillsfirst qualifications;
- personnel with responsibilities for managing, delivering, assessing and quality assuring qualifications in approved centres offering VTCT, iTEC or Skillsfirst qualifications;
- members of the public accessing our services; who wish to make a complaint in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by VTCT or one of its approved centres offering VTCT, iTEC or Skillsfirst qualifications

1.3. The regulators

1.3.1. Regulatory requirements

This policy addresses the requirements of the relevant regulatory authorities' criteria.

1.3.2. Situations brought to our attention by the regulators

Where the regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, we will review whether or not a similar failure could affect our own processes and arrangements.

1.4. Responsibilities

VTCT personnel are required to follow the related procedures in order to investigate complaints as transparently, consistently and effectively as possible.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all personnel involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of VTCT, iTEC and Skillsfirst qualifications are fully aware of the policy and conversant with the related procedures.

Centres must have their own internal complaints policy and procedures in place to deal with complaints from learners and members of the public, and must provide easy access to them. Centres who fail to have their own complaints policy and procedures, or to make them available to learners and members of the public, are in breach of the centre agreement.

1.5. Confidentiality and data protection

In following this process an individual might provide us with confidential information, and during our investigation we may need to request information of a confidential nature. Complainants are assured that VTCT complies fully with data protection legislation at all stages. We ensure that confidential information is kept securely and used only for the purposes for which it is intended.

1.6. Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints cannot be considered. VTCT will note their contents and may seek to verify them if this is possible and appropriate. We may include related information in our review activities.

1.7. Review arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually as part of VTCT's self-evaluation activity, which includes consideration of customer and regulatory feedback and good practice guidance. A policy review may also be triggered as an action resulting from the outcome of the investigation of a complaint.

2. Learner complaint about a VTCT/iTEC/Skillsfirst approved centre

Your training centre is the organisation that is responsible for delivering your course and who you have signed up to and paid money to. If you have a complaint about your centre you must take this up with centre through their complaints process in the first instance. If you are unable to locate your centre's complaints policy please contact the centre directly by phone/post or in person.

If you are not satisfied with any of the following then you must take this up with the centre directly as VTCT/iTEC and Skillsfirst do not have any remit to intervene in such matters.

- Financial transactions with the centre
- Business, service and communications with the centre

Escalation

In some cases, excluding the matters listed above, once a learner has exhausted the centre's complaints procedure they may be able to escalate their complaint to VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst. If a learner escalates a complaint they must be able to provide evidence that the centre's complaints procedure has been exhausted.

VTCT/iTEC and Skillsfirst may not always be in a position to take escalated complaints forward, as their responsibility is to ensure qualifications are delivered in line with their assessment, quality assurance and regulatory requirements.

If at any point the complainant or others involved in the complaint wish to be legally represented in relation to any aspect of the complaint, VTCT must be informed. VTCT reserves the right to be legally represented and to act upon legal advice.

To escalate a complaint please complete the [complaint submission form](#). This form must be submitted within 7 days of the centre's final decision; VTCT reserves the right not to accept submissions after this timeline. Providing a submission is received within 7 days of the centre's final decision then VTCT will:

- review the complaint within 10 working days of receipt
 - upon review, if VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst determine that the complaint falls within their responsibility to investigate, a complaint manager will be allocated to the case and the complainant will be informed
 - upon review, if VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst determine that the complaint does not fall within their responsibility to investigate the complainant will be informed

Complaint managers aim to resolve complaints within 30 working days of acknowledgement, however; in more complex cases this may not be possible. In these circumstances we will ensure that we keep you updated on the progress of your complaint.

If a complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they may request a senior manager review. Requests for a senior manager review must be made within 7 days of the complaint decision; VTCT/iTEC and Skillsfirst reserves the right not to accept requests after this timeline. A senior manager's decision is final and the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Once VTCT's complaints procedure has been exhausted, the complaint may be able to refer to the applicable regulator; relevant contact information can be found in [section 4](#) of this policy.

3. Making a complaint about VTCT/iTEC/Skillsfirst

If an approved centre, learner or member of the public feel that we have not met their expectations, we kindly request that they in the first instance raise the matter the relevant department so that they may investigate and put it right. If you are unsure which department to contact please call or email our Customer Support team, providing details about the expression of dissatisfaction so that they may signpost you to the appropriate department:

VTCT/iTEC: +44 (0) 2380 684500 / customersupport@vtct.org.uk

Skillsfirst: +44 (0) 1212 705100 / customersupport@vtct.org.uk

If a complainant remains unsatisfied after raising an expression of dissatisfaction with relevant department, they may complete the [complaint submission form](#) within 7 days of the initial outcome.

- review the complaint within 10 working days of receipt
 - upon review, if VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst determine that the complaint falls within their responsibility to investigate, a complaint manager will be allocated to the case and the complainant will be informed
 - upon review, if VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst determine that the complaint does not fall within their responsibility to investigate the complainant will be informed

Complaint managers aim to resolve complaints within 30 working days of acknowledgement, however; in more complex cases this may not be possible. In these circumstances we will ensure that we keep you updated on the progress of your complaint.

If a complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they may request a senior manager review. Requests for a senior manager review must be made within 7 days of the final complaint decision; VTCT/iTEC and Skillsfirst reserves the right not to accept requests after this timeline. A senior manager's decision is final and the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

If at any point the complainant or others involved in the complaint wish to be legally represented in relation to any aspect of the complaint, VTCT must be informed. VTCT reserves the right to be legally represented and to act upon legal advice.

Once VTCT's complaints procedure has been exhausted, the complaint may be able to refer to the applicable regulator; relevant contact information can be found in [section 4](#) of this policy.

4. Regulator contact information

England:

Ofqual

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>
2. Using the search function search **complaints**

Wales:

Qualifications Wales

1. <https://www.qualificationswales.org/>
2. Using the search function search **complaints**

Northern Ireland:

CCEA

1. <https://ccea.org.uk/>
2. Using the search function search **complaints**

Scotland:

SQA accreditation

1. <https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home>
2. Using the search function search **complaints**
3. The following relates to complaints regarding public service organisations in Scotland only.

Should you have undertaken a qualification in Scotland through a public service organisation and wish to make a complaint and you have exhausted the procedures of VTCT and SQA Accreditation, if applicable, then you do have one final route of complaint. Please contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) directly, details can be located on their website: www.spsso.org.uk

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