

Complaints Policy and Procedure for Learners and their Employers

In this Policy, **Avado** means Avado Group and its subsidiaries, namely Avado Apprenticeships Limited, and FastFutures Limited.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out the process for DfE Skills for Life Bootcamps learners or self-funded apprentices, employer funded apprentices, and their employers to make a complaint about the service provided by Avado.
- 1.2. This complaints policy overviews the relevant systems and controls we adopt to ensure our regulatory obligations are met. All employees and stakeholders will adhere to the provisions within this plan.
- 1.3. We are committed to delivering a high-quality service and take complaints from students, apprentices, and employers very seriously. It is our aim to settle complaints promptly, fairly, and courteously in the best interest of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. We are keen to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded.
- 1.4. Through our complaints process we ensure that:
 - a. complaints are treated fairly, consistently, transparently, and in a timely manner;
 - b. matters of concern can be raised without risk of disadvantage and any matter raised that may be considered in line with the principles of whistleblowing will receive the same protections available to Whistle-blowers;
 - c. where complaints reveal a failure on our part, we take appropriate action to rectify this for the complainant and to identify any others who may have been adversely affected by the same issue;
 - d. we review aspects of our service in the light of any complaints; and
 - e. we maintain duties of confidentiality to third parties, or other legal duties, in responding to complaints.
- 1.5. Complaints are logged centrally so that oversight of any emerging trends in complaints or concerns can be assessed by our management team.

2. Definition

- 2.1. An **'informal complaint'** is defined as an issue which an apprentice, learner or employer wishes to raise with a member of our staff, without using the formal complaints process. Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.
- 2.2. A **'formal complaint'** in this policy is defined as *'The expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of learning opportunities, our action or lack of action or the standard of service provided by, or on our behalf'.*

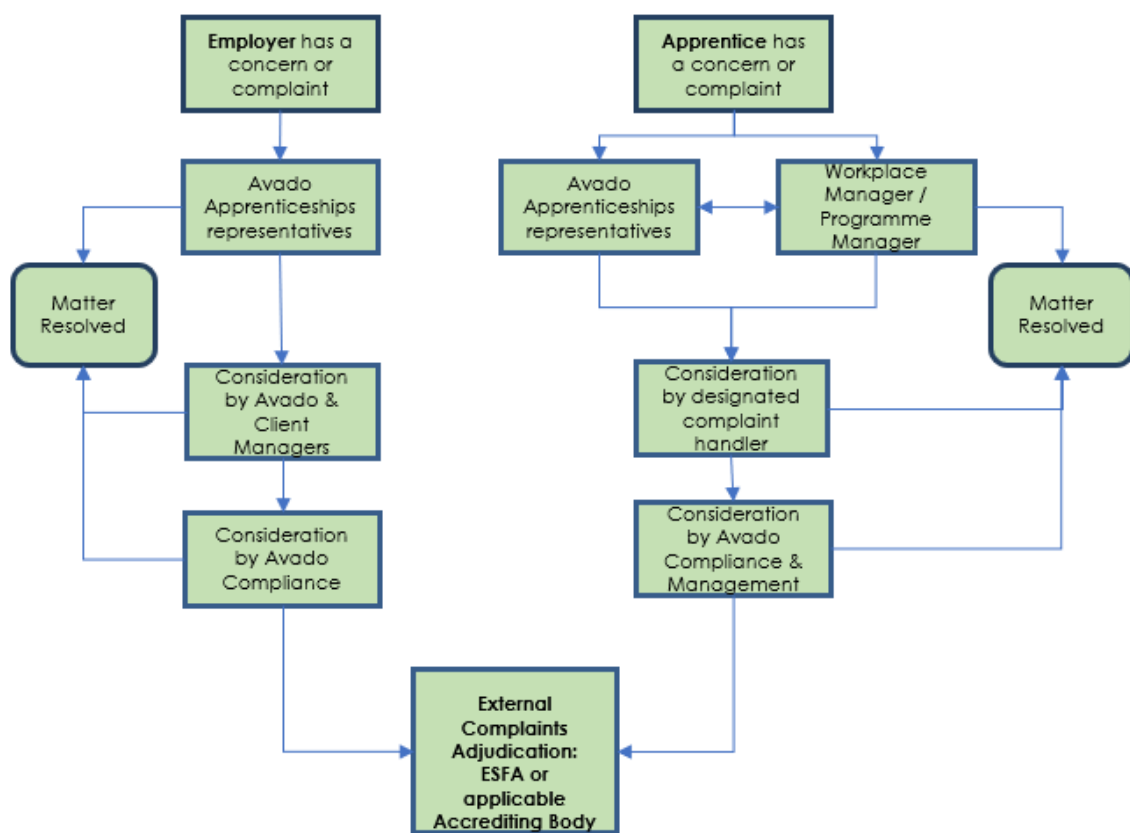
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- 2.3. “Grading Appeals”.** As an apprentice you may appeal an End Point Assessment (EPA) grading decision. The apprenticeship is graded by an Independent Assessor working for the relevant End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). They are subject matter experts and make a judgement based on the work/projects submitted, and the professional discussions held with you. Details of how to Appeal academic decisions are covered in our [Appeals Policy](#).

3. Guide to making a complaint.

Summary overview of the complaints process



Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

- 3.1.** A complaint should be made as soon as possible, ideally within ten working days from the date of the incident occurring. This provides the best opportunity for those involved to be able to resolve the complaint quickly. We reserve the right to dismiss a complaint made more than three months after the incident occurred or that should, within reason, have been highlighted at an earlier point.

- 3.2.** A complaint should be raised with an Avado representative (Learning

Development Coach, Tutor, Student Success Operator). Alternatively, apprentices may wish to inform a workplace Line Manager or Programme Manager who will, in turn, liaise with Avado, if appropriate, to help resolve your complaint. The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity.

- 3.3. Once a complaint is raised with Avado you should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days. We will deal with all complaints as promptly as possible and within clearly defined timescales. Where it is not possible to meet these timescales, you will be informed of the progress of your complaint.
- 3.4. Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to you and record a copy of the communication in the Avado Complaint log for reporting purposes.
- 3.5. If, as an employer, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, Avado will liaise with a representative from your organisation, and a senior member of Avado staff, who is independent of the original complaint, who will review the complaint. If following these discussions, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, our compliance team will assess the matter further and issue a final response on behalf of Avado. After a final response has been issued you may approach the Complaints Adjudicator as detailed in Stage 4.
- 3.6. If, as an apprentice (or parent of an apprentice), you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, you may follow the below complaints process

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

- 3.7. If together, we are unable to resolve your complaint informally you should escalate your complaint by writing to the FastFutures Support <FastFutures.Support@avadolearning.com> or submit a [Complaint form](#) via our website.
- 3.8. When submitting your complaint, you should include any evidence you have supporting your concern, what action has been taken to date regarding attempting an informal resolution of your complaint and the resolution you are seeking. If you are unable to submit a complaint in writing due to a reasonable adjustment, please contact the Student Success team +44 203 893 5500 and they will be able to help you submit your complaint.
- 3.9. You will receive confirmation of your formal complaint within five working days and a designated Complaint handler will contact you to discuss what action has already been taken to try to resolve your complaint and if there is anything further, they may be able to facilitate to resolve your complaint at this stage. If there is not and you continue to wish to escalate your complaint through the formal complaints process, the designated Complaint Handler will compile your case to go through a review with the Compliance and Avado Apprenticeship management team.

Stage 3 – Escalation

- 3.10. The complaint will be raised with the Compliance team for an independent review of the complaint. This should take no more than 20 calendar days for

the review to be assessed with Compliance team who will correspond with you if further time is needed or to obtain any additional information to support the final review of the case.

- 3.11.** Your case will be presented to the Avado Apprenticeship management team for final consideration and approval of any final response relating to the outcome of your complaint, after which a formal complaint outcome letter will be sent to you.
- 3.12.** If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint following our internal Complaints process, you may use our final complaint outcome letter to support escalation of your complaint to the ESFA Complaints Team or any applicable accrediting body which may be associated with your apprenticeship.

Stage 4 – Complaints Adjudicator

- 3.13.** Where your apprenticeship includes a professional qualification awarded by an Accrediting Body you may write to any applicable party. If this option is available to you the Complaint handler will include information of which Accrediting Body, you may escalate your complaint.
- 3.14.** You may email or post your complaint to the ESFA complaints team

ESFA complaints team

complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Upon receipt the ESFA will write to you to confirm the next steps.

- 3.15.** If you're unhappy with the ESFA response, you can contact the Department for Education if you are unhappy with how the ESFA has dealt with your complaint.

Document Control

DOCUMENT NAME	VERSION	MASTER COPY LOCATION
Complaints Policy and Procedure for Apprentices and their Employers	V2	Avado Group SharePoint

Unless stated within the body of this document, the owner is responsible for maintaining document control and facilitating compliance, as well as the management of review, updates and changes.

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Revision History

Version	Date	Amended By	Summary of changes
V1.1	2017-07-12	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.2	2018-08-09	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.3	2019-07-27	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.4	2020-08-10	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.5	2021-08-12	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.6	2022-03-28	Keith Harvey	Updated to better represent the complaints procedure.
V1.7	2022-03-28	Jamillah Yakubu	Annual review
V1.7	2022-05-23	Vincent Hannant	Managing Director approval
V1.8	2023-01-12	Keith Harvey	Brand and content update
V1.9	2023-03-20	Simthandile Links	Compliance Officer review of content

Approvals

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This document requires the following approvals for implementation and / or for any change in content.

Version	Name	Title / Role	Approval Status
V2	Keith Harvey	Director of Compliance, Funding and Audit	Approved