



# Complaints Policy and Procedures

February 2024

Version 17.0



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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](mailto:customersupport@vtct.org.uk)

Skillsfirst: +44 (0) 1212 705100 / [customerservices@skillsfirst.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@skillsfirst.co.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.

VTCT aim to deal with complaints reasonably, to the customers' satisfaction and as quickly as possible. 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 will do their utmost to reach a satisfactory outcome as quickly as possible, however; it may not always be possible to reach a satisfactory outcome for every 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](mailto:customersupport@vtct.org.uk)

Skillsfirst: +44 (0) 1212 705100 / [customerservices@skillsfirst.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@skillsfirst.co.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.

Upon receipt of a complaint submission form VTCT/iTEC or Skillsfirst 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 will do their utmost to reach a satisfactory outcome as quickly as possible; however it may not always be possible to reach a satisfactory outcome for the complainant.

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.



**VTCT**



**ITEC**



**SKILLSFIRST**

## 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](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

## Document amendment history page

Version	Document Owner	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1	Quality and processing Manager	25/02/2013	Added information on data collection	Quality and Processing Supervisor
v2	Quality and processing Manager	23/12/2013	Information about complaints in Scotland added	Quality and Processing Supervisor
v2.1	Quality and processing Manager	01/04/2014	Brand changes	Qualifications Administrator
v3	Quality and processing Manager	24/11/2014	Updated document formatting	Qualifications Administrator
v4	Quality and processing Manager	01/07/2016	Revised guidance for learners, added Regulator complaints, clarified SPSO information and added information on what complaints VTCT can deal with.	Quality and Processing Supervisor
v5	Quality and processing Manager	10/02/2018	Updated to new branding guidelines	Qualifications Manager
v6	Quality and processing Manager	01/03/2018	Reviewed based on feedback from SQA Accreditation and edited to cover requirements of all relevant regulators, not just Ofqual.	Executive Director of Awarding
V7	Quality and processing Manager	23/07/2018	Added new form and amended timeframes	Quality and Processing Supervisor
V8	Quality and processing Manager	13/08/2018	Split flowchart for complaints against centre and complaints against VTCT.	Quality and Processing Supervisor
V9	Quality and processing Manager	22/01/2019	Updated format onto new Branding. Removed reference to the London office	Compliance Manager
V10	Head of Quality	22/07/2020	COVID-19 Addendum	Compliance Manager
V11	Customer Support Manager	23/02/2021	Following trial of new internal complaints process, process and SLAs for sections 2 and 3 updated	Customer Support Manager



V12	Chief Academic Officer	18/03/21	Review and minor edits to COVID-19 provisions.	Chief Academic Officer
V13	Customer Support Manager	26/04/2022	Review and minor edit to initial response times	Customer Support Manager
V14	Customer Support Manager	18/01/2023	Reviewed to align with Skillsfirst – minor amends; logos updated; Information Classification updated; COVID addendums removed	Customer Support Manager
V15.0	Customer Support Manager	15/08/2023	Minor amend to 1.1 – Sanctions policy was not bullet pointed	Customer Support Manager
V16.0	Customer Support Manager	23/01/2024	Regulator contact information added; Section 1.1 updated; Section 2 renamed and updated; Section 3 updated(3.1 and 3.2 removed); Section 4 renamed and updated	Customer Support Manager
V17.0	Customer Support Manager	01/02/2024	Section 4, Scotland step 3 updated	Customer Support Manager

## Document Review

Role	Review Status
Quality and Processing Manager	Reviewed
Chief Academic Officer	Reviewed and amended

## Document Owner

Document Owner	Document shared with
Quality and processing Manager	Assessment, Qualifications, Whole organisation
Customer Support Manager	Whole organisation

## Document Sign-off

Role	Sign-off Date
Executive Director of Awarding	13/02/2018
Executive Director of Awarding	01/03/2018
Chief Academic Officer	31/01/2019
Chief Academic Officer	18/03/2021