



Development Trading Education (DTE) Complaints Policy

Full name of policy:	Complaints Policy
Name and post of person responsible for policy:	Lorraine Hancock – Compliance Manager
Highest body approving the policy:	Development Trading Education, Board of Directors
Date of approval:	July 2019
Current version	V1.4
Frequency of review:	Annually
Dates of previous reviews:	July 2021
Date of next formal review:	July 2022
Policy Reference:	All required policies can be located on the DTE website / DTEL SharePoint site. A hard copy is kept at the Main Leicester office.
Signed:	 Mat Chapman - Managing Director

Policy Statement

Development Trading Education are committed to providing a supportive working and learning environment to enable all to achieve their goals. We strive to provide the highest quality services and to be responsive to concerns or complaints from any of our customers; whether they are of a teaching, learning or service related nature. Both negative and positive feedback is recognised as a valuable resource to enable us to improve the quality of our services and Apprenticeship provision.

In order that Development Trading Education can learn and improve on feedback given; accurate and complete records of all complaints received, resulting correspondence, interviews and actions taken will be maintained. A report on complaints received and their outcomes will be submitted to the Compliance Manager on a monthly basis. Complaints relating to issues with a direct impact on Apprentice experience will be passed to the Director for consideration to help to improve customer service throughout the business. Effectiveness of the complaints procedure will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Compliance Manager and the Managing Director.

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to enable anyone interacting with Development Trading Education to raise matters of concern about our services or provision to our attention, so that they can be investigated and resolved in the clearest and fairest way possible. In most cases this will be achieved without having to conduct the formal complaints procedure; which should be seen as a last resort in reaching a solution.

What is a complaint?

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about:

- Provisions of Development Trading Education affecting customers (applicants, apprentices, employers, stakeholders)
- Actions or lack of actions by Development Trading Education or its staff
- Standards of service, courses or facilities provided by Development Trading Education

The procedure does not cover the following:

- Matters covered by separate policies or procedures; including Appeals Procedure, Equal Opportunities, Grievance procedure.
- Judgement about individual apprentice performance or awarding organisation assessment decisions
- Requests for new services or provision

This procedure is for use by any existing or prospective apprentice, employer or customer who seeks or receives a service from us. It also extends to anyone who may be directly affected by our services or activities. Anonymous complaints will be logged and monitored but not investigated under normal circumstances.

Complaints Procedure

Apprentices or their employers wishing to complain must do so within 14 working days of the incident or matter with which they are dissatisfied. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. Should apprentices or their employers wish to complain about any elements of the apprenticeship training services provided by Development Trading Education Ltd, they should follow the procedure stated below.

In the unlikely event that apprentices exhaust this procedure and remain dissatisfied with the decision made by Development Trading Education Ltd, they may take their complaint to the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) or another relevant regulator.

Complaints Process

Stage 1

An informal complaint can be made to the apprentices' trainer, coach or mentor. The apprentice trainer, coach or mentor should discuss the complaint with the apprentice and/or their employer and attempt to agree a way forward or a solution that suits both parties. Apprentices should allow the apprentice trainer, coach or mentor sufficient time to investigate or remedy the grievance.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the apprentice or their employer, or if apprentices feel that they cannot make an informal complaint to their apprentice trainer, coach or mentor, the complaint should be submitted in writing using Development Trading Education Ltd Apprentice Complaints Form (see Annex A below) to:

Compliance Manager at Development Trading Education Ltd, Office 410 & 409, 4th Floor, St George's House, 6 St George's Way, Leicester LE1 3SH. Please mark your envelope or email subject line 'in confidence.'

When you contact us, please give us your full name, contact details, and include a daytime telephone number along with:

- A full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known)
- Any names of the people you have dealt with so far; and copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint.

Development Trading Education Ltd ask that you raise your complaint as soon as possible after the incident or event so that we can quickly address it and commence an investigation. Apprentices and their employers should use the Complaints Form (Appendix A below) to provide a detailed account of their complaint or grievance. The Compliance Manager has responsibility for handling complaints. they will write to apprentices or their employers to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and outline the course of action to be taken.

The Compliance Manager will carry out an investigation, which will involve the relevant apprentice trainer (where required) and other members of personnel, and will write to the complainant within 20 working days with the findings and a decision as to how we shall respond to the complaint.

Stage 3

If you remain unhappy after your complaint has been investigated and a decision reached, then you may escalate your complaint to the Managing Director. Please include any further items for consideration and state clearly why you remain unhappy with the decision taken so far. The Managing Director will investigate in full and respond to you within 10 working days.

All appeals must be in writing (or by email) and made within 10 days of the original decision being received. Write to Mat Chapman, Managing Director, Development Trading Education Ltd, Office 410 & 409, 4th Floor, St George's House, 6 St George's Way, Leicester LE1 3SH.

This will be the final stage of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our internal complaints procedure and your complaint refers to services you have received relating to your apprenticeship please contact the Institute for Apprenticeships or other, relevant regulator. We recommend that you do this within 20 days of receipt of our final decision. A representative of Development Trading Education Ltd will be able to offer you guidance on the appropriate regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and with consideration to all parties involved. In line with our equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated fairly and not suffer any recrimination or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint. Any person named in a complaint, however, will be informed and have a right of reply as part of the investigative process.

Complaints must be made by complainants themselves, however, we recognise that some apprentices and vulnerable adults may have difficulties with this and so encourage them to use whatever assistance is required from a third party to make their complaint effectively. Their trainer, coach or mentor can provide broad support and advice on procedures; however, it is the complainant's responsibility to seek guidance and support when necessary.

Recording a Complaint

Complaints received are logged onto a central complaints log. The reason for the complaint and all progress made during the life of a complaint is recorded on the log until it is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant or to a point at which Development Trading Education Ltd can reasonably be expected to do no more.

Ownership of a Complaint

Once a complaint has been received and recorded it will be assigned by the Compliance Manager to the appropriate person within the business to resolve. The complaint owner will usually be the one who is most closely aligned to the area of the business against which the complaint has been raised. The owner of the complaint will then be responsible for ensuring the complaint is investigated and resolved. The owner will also be responsible for updating the Compliance Manager and Managing Director.

Progressing a Complaint

The complaint owner will ensure the complaint is fully investigated and that regular communication is maintained with the complainant throughout the life of the complaint.

Under the normal process, we will acknowledge complaints within 48 hours and resolve within 14 working days, but inevitably some issues will be more complex and may take longer. Where this is the case, we will contact the parties within 15 days by phone and in writing with an interim response describing our investigation and when it is expected to be complete. Correspondence will be retained and attached with the complaint log for our records.

Reviewing a Complaint

Once a complaint has been defined by the owner as resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant or to the point where Development Trading Education Ltd can reasonably do no more, the Customer Service team will update the central complaints log with all details of the outcome and mark the complaint as resolved. All documentation will be kept for future reference to defend any potential legal challenge.

The Compliance Manager will review all complaints on a monthly basis and consideration will be given to whether an opportunity exists to avoid a reoccurrence of a similar complaint and to support with implementing any service improvement actions. This will be discussed at monthly team meetings with the Managing Director.

Closing a Complaint

Once the complaint has been investigated and resolved to the complainant's satisfaction – or to the point where Development Trading Education Ltd can reasonably do no more – the central complaint log will be updated with the time, date and name of both the person who has resolved the complaint and also the staff member amending the report to 'resolved.'

Monitoring and Reporting

The Compliance Manager will maintain a central complaint log for Development Trading Education Ltd and provide weekly and monthly updates to the Managing Director. A quarterly report will be produced for the Board, which will identify trends and business risk.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Managing Director and the Compliance Manager.

