



# Society for Education and Training (SET): Complaints and Appeals Policy

This document sets out the process for how complaints can be logged and how they are dealt with

Published: September 2020

## 1. Policy statement

1.1. At the Society for Education and Training (SET) we strive for excellence in everything we do. Occasionally we will fall short of the high expectations members and the wider sector have for us. When that happens, we want to know. This allows us to investigate what has happened and have a chance to rectify any mistakes we may have made. A thorough and transparent complaints procedure helps us do this.

1.2. Our policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- Make sure everyone at SET knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired;
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

## 2. Definition

A complaint is a clear expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service provided by SET.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers the behaviour and conduct of SET staff, the Practitioner Advisory Group (PAG) and SET Management Board members, and that of those contracted to work on behalf of SET.
- 3.2. This policy does not cover complaints from SET's own employees, who should use ETF's Grievance Procedures.
- 3.3. If a SET member wishes to lodge a complaint, they should follow the process set out in this policy. Members may lodge a complaint using the ETF Complaints and Appeals Policy, but only for complaints that do not involve SET, its staff, procedures or communications. Members may only use one policy unless lodging separate complaints about completely separate issues.
- 3.4. This policy does not cover appeals against the decision not to award QTLS or ATS, for which there is a separate policy.

#### 4. Informal complaints

- 4.1. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved informally. It may be able to be resolved swiftly and the complainant should aim to do so where possible and appropriate. In this case, the following process should be followed:
  - 4.1.1. Complainant makes an initial complaint to the SET employee.
  - 4.1.2. Complaint logged with the SET Operations (Membership) Manager by the member of staff who received it.
  - 4.1.3. The SET employee hears the complaint, agrees resolution and implements solution.
  - 4.1.4. Complainant confirms that they are satisfied with the resolution.
- 4.2. Informal complaints should be resolved within 5 working days. For the avoidance of doubt, the SET employee should acknowledge the resolution in writing to the complainant.

#### 5. Formal complaints

- 5.1. If complaints cannot be resolved informally, the SET formal complaints procedure has three stages of handling and escalation. All formal complaints should proceed through Step 1 before an appeal can be lodged.
  - 5.1.1. Step 1: Review by the SET Director. If the resolution of the complaint is not accepted by the complainant, the escalation process then becomes:
  - 5.1.2. Step 2: First-stage appeal heard by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).
  - 5.1.3. Step 3: Second-stage appeal by the SET Board Chair, on behalf of the SET Board.
- 5.2. Step 1: Review by the SET Director. Formal complaints should be received and resolved in writing. The following process shall apply:
  - 5.2.1. Complaint is received in writing.
  - 5.2.2. Complaint is logged formally with the SET Director by the member of staff who received it. If the complaint is regarding the SET Director, it will be escalated to the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) COO. If the complaint is regarding the COO it will be escalated to the SET Board Chair (or an alternate trustee), and if the complaint is regarding the Chair it will be escalated to the Senior Independent ETF Director (or an alternate trustee).
  - 5.2.3. Receipt of the complaint is acknowledged within 2 working days.

- 5.2.4. Investigation of the complaint will then proceed.
  - 5.2.5. Complainant will receive a response from the SET Director within 10 working days.
  - 5.2.6. Complainant has 10 working days, after the response has been issued, in which to respond. If no response is received by SET from the complainant, it will be assumed by SET that the complaint is resolved.
- 5.3. Step 2: First-stage appeal - review by the COO. Formal complaints should be received and resolved in writing. The following process shall apply:
- 5.3.1. Complainant confirms in writing (“dissatisfaction notice”) within 10 working days that they are not content with the proposed course of action, explanation or resolution.
  - 5.3.2. Receipt of the dissatisfaction notice is acknowledged within 2 working days and the complainant informed of the next steps that SET will take.
  - 5.3.3. Case is then escalated to the COO. If the complaint is regarding the COO, it will be escalated to the SET Board Chair (or an alternative trustee), and if the complaint is regarding the Chair it will be escalated to the Senior Independent ETF Director (or an alternative trustee).
  - 5.3.4. The COO will then proceed with review of the case and all relevant material.
  - 5.3.5. Complainant will receive a response from SET within 10 working days of receipt of the dissatisfaction notice.
  - 5.3.6. Complainant has 10 working days, after the response has been issued, in which to respond. If no response is received by SET from the complainant, it will be assumed by SET that the complaint is resolved.
- 5.4. Step 3: Second-stage appeal - review by the SET Board Chair. All complaints should be received and resolved in writing.
- 5.4.1. Complainant confirms in writing within 10 working days that they are not content with the proposed course of action, explanation or resolution of Step 2.

- 5.4.2. Receipt of the escalated complaint is acknowledged within 2 working days and the complainant informed of the next steps that SET will take.
- 5.4.3. The SET Board Chair (or an alternative trustee if the SET Board Chair is unavailable) is advised by the SET Director of the complaint. If the complaint is regarding the SET Board Chair, it will be escalated to the Senior Independent ETF Director (or an alternative trustee if the Senior Independent Director is not available).
- 5.4.4. Within 5 working days, the complainant is advised of when the SET Board Chair will be considering the complaint, which will be no more than 30 working days from the date of the acknowledgement of the escalated complaint; the complainant is invited to make a written submission to the Chair.
- 5.4.5. The SET Board Chair will then proceed with review of the substance of the case and its handling.
- 5.4.6. The SET Board Chair's decision is final.

## Complaints and Appeals Policy Timeline

