## **GLL Employer and Apprentice Complaints Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

The University of Kent is committed to ensuring a high-quality educational experience for its apprentices and providing high quality services for employers of its apprentices. However, there may be instances when employers or an apprentice feels dissatisfied with the experience provided by the University (or its subcontractors) or with the way the University or its staff have acted or omitted to act in its delivery of its services. In such circumstances the University seeks to listen to its stakeholders and find resolutions that are in the best interests of all parties, including apprentices.

**2. Purpose of this Procedure**

2.1 The purpose of this procedure is to provide an opportunity for employers or apprentices to raise any issues or concerns in a way which enables the University to be sensitive to the needs of each case and to reach an outcome which is of the benefit to all parties involved.

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2.3 Complaints will be monitored by the University’s Apprenticeships Governance Committee, both to ensure a prompt response is given, and to ensure that improvements can be made to the way in which Kent manages its apprenticeship provision.

2.4 The University hopes that employers and apprentices have the confidence to raise complaints and know they will receive fair consideration. Therefore, it should be unnecessary for an employer or apprentice to raise a complaint anonymously. If an anonymous complaint is received it makes it difficult for the complaint to be investigated fully under this procedure. Whilst we are unable to respond directly to the complaint, we will note the issues raised and investigate as necessary. We will look to ensure we address the points and concerns raised and these will be logged for quality assurance purposes.

2.5 This procedure has been designed to meet the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and will be administered by Kent’s Global and Lifelong Learning (GLL) department.

2.6 For information on how apprentices should make complaints, or submit appeals, please see section 5 of this policy and procedure.

**3. Complaints Procedure**

**3.1 Stage 1 – Informal Stage**

3.1.1 Prior to submitting a formal complaint, it is recommended that the employer raise any concerns with the University of Kent informally. This provides the opportunity for the University and the employer to discuss the concerns in an attempt to bring about an early resolution.

3.1.2 The employer should, in the first instance, make contact with the GLL Apprenticeship Compliance Manager (apprenticeshipcompliance@kent.ac.uk )

3.1.3 The GLL Apprenticeship Compliance Manager will normally acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it and will arrange to discuss the concern directly with the employer on an informal basis and where possible resolve the complaint.

3.1.4 If the complaint cannot be resolved within 10 working days of the concern first being discussed with the employer, then the GLL Apprenticeship Compliance Manager will ensure that the complainant is kept up-to-date with the progress of their complaint.

3.1.5 If the complaint relates to the Apprenticeship Compliance Manager then it should be raised for consideration via the Dean and Director of Global and Lifelong Learning (deangloballifelong@kent.ac.uk).

3.1.6 The Apprenticeship Compliance Manager will log all informal complaints and will provide a termly report to the Apprenticeships Governance Committee on their progress.

**3.2 Stage 2 – Formal Stage**

3.2.1 Should the employer be dissatisfied following completion of the informal stage of this complaints procedure or feel that their concerns have not been adequately resolved, the employer may refer formally, in writing within 10 days of the outcome, to the Dean and Director for Global & Lifelong Learning at: deangloballifelong@kent.ac.uk for further consideration.

3.2.2 This written complaint should include:

* the nature of the complaint;
* any supporting documentation;
* details of discussions undertaken at the informal stage of the process and the reasons why the complaint has not been adequately resolved; and
* any further information considered relevant

3.2.3 The Director and Dean will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it and will inform the Appeals Conducts and Complaints Office (ACCO) of the complaint for central recording purposes.

3.2.4 The Director and Dean will contact the employer to discuss their concern and understand the issues in more depth. Further steps will then be agreed to try to resolve the complaint.

**4. Dispute Resolution**

4.1 Following completion of the University of Kent Employer Complaints Policy and Procedure (Apprenticeships) where a complaint still remains unresolved the dispute resolution requirements of the contract between the University and employer should be referred to.

4.2 Dispute resolution will normally be in line with the below process and timescales - unless varied by the specific Kent/Employer contract in place.

4.2.1 In the event that the parties have been unable to resolve any Dispute through good faith discussions between their respective representatives then either party may serve written notice on the other stating the nature of the dispute (a Dispute Notice).

4.2.2 After service of the Dispute Notice, the following procedure shall be followed:

4.2.2.1 within five (5) days, the University’s Representative and the Employer’s Representative shall meet to attempt to settle the dispute (each party acting in good faith);

4.2.2.2 if the University’s Representative and the Employer’s Representative are unable to reach a settlement within twenty-one (21) days from the date of service of the Dispute Notice, the Senior Management of each of the parties shall meet within the following fourteen (14) days to attempt to settle the dispute; and

4.2.2.3 if no settlement results from the meeting specified in 4.2.2.2, for the following fifty-six (56) days the parties shall attempt to settle the dispute by mediation in accordance with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Model Mediation Procedure.

4.2.3 Where an employer remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint then it can be escalated, in certain circumstances, to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

ESFA email is complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk, or put the complaint in a letter to:

Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT

4.3 The circumstances in which a complaint can be escalated to the ESFA can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-fundingagency/about/complaints-procedure#checkcomplaint](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure#checkcomplaint)

4.4 For the avoidance of doubt, should an employer have a complaint regarding the behaviour of their apprentice in relation to their apprenticeship, this should be dealt with through the employer’s own internal complaints policy.

4.5 At any stage of the complaints process employers can contact the Apprenticeship Service Support line on 0800150600

**5. Student Complaints and Appeals**

**Stage 1 – Early resolution**

5.1.1 Prior to submitting a formal complaint, it is recommended that the apprentice raises any concerns with the University of Kent as early as possible. This provides the opportunity for the University and the apprentices to discuss the concerns in an attempt to bring about an early resolution.

5.1.2 The apprentice should, in the first instance, make contact with their Apprenticeship Advisor (apprentices will have their individual email address) in an attempt to bring about an early resolution. If the complaint is concerning the Apprentice Advisor, please go straight to 5.1.3.

5.1.3 If the complaint is concerning the Apprenticeship Advisor, or the Apprentice Advisor has not met a satisfactory resolution, apprentices should contact the GLL Apprenticeship Compliance Manager (apprenticeshipcompliance@kent.ac.uk)

**Stage 2 – Formal Stage**

5.1.4 Should the apprentice be dissatisfied following completion of the early resolution stage of this complaints procedure or feel that their concerns have not been adequately resolved, the apprentice should refer to the University’s Student Complaints Procedure, as detailed at:[https://www.kent.ac.uk/regulations/Regulations%20Booklet/Student%20Complaint s%20Procedure%201%20Sept%202020.pdf](https://www.kent.ac.uk/regulations/Regulations%20Booklet/Student%20Complaints%20Procedure%201%20Sept%202020.pdf)

**5.1.5** At any stage of the complaints process Apprentices can contact the Apprenticeship Service Support line on 08000 150 600 or helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

**Appeals**

5.2 If an apprentice wishes to appeal the outcome of the recommendation of a Board of Examiners (where decisions about marks and classifications of awards are made) or the outcome of an Academic Misconduct Committee hearing they should use the process detailed at: [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit- framework/documents/cf2020-annex13-appeals.pdf](https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/documents/cf2020-annex13-appeals.pdf)

**6. Review of this Procedure**

6.1 This apprentice and employer complaints policy and procedure is subject to annual review by the Apprenticeships Governance Committee to ensure that it continues to meet ESFA requirements.

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| Approved by:A close-up of a signature  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | Approved by Apprenticeship Government CommitteeRichard ReeceDeputy Vice Chancellor, Education & Student Experience, Chair of Apprenticeship Governance CommitteeAnd byDr Anthony Manning, Director and Dean of Global and Lifelong Learning |
| Effective from: | 21.01.2025 |
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