



# COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pagoda welcomes feedback from individuals, stakeholders, funding bodies and anyone who works with us on all aspects of our programmes and services. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us to evaluate and improve our programmes. This policy relates to both internal and external complaints and specifies what participants, customers, employees, suppliers, contractors or any other individual should do if they wish to launch a complaint.

This policy also sets out the particular reporting mechanism should participants, employees or any other party involved in our programmes observe discriminatory behaviour or anything else that breaches any of Pagoda's policies. We want to encourage free communication between our team and all our stakeholders to ensure that problems can be resolved quickly to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Pagoda wants to ensure that:

- everyone knows how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be handled,
- complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames,
- individuals are provided with a fair and effective way to complain about our work, and
- that complaints are monitored to improve our services and procedures.

Pagoda also wants to ensure that:

- we listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible,
- we record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act,
- we investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame,
- we notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal,
- we inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence, and
- we report on an annual basis, the number of complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

It is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

If you have any concerns about something that is happening or might happen, please raise this with your Pagoda contact or their manager as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

If you are not happy with the response to your concern and/or you want to make a formal complaint please follow the procedure below.

## 3. PARTICIPANT COMPLAINTS

The following procedure applies to Applicants, Participants and Alumni taking part/that have taken part in our Programmes.

Pre-programme:

- Concerns and minor complaints can be raised either using a direct message on the Pagoda Portal, a Support Ticket on the Pagoda Portal, or via email to the Applicants designated contact in the Admissions Team.
- More serious concerns and complaints will then be escalated to the Admissions Manager, and the Head of Programmes respectively.

During the Programme:



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- During the Orientation, Participants are given the contact details of the local Programme Associates and a designated Programme Coordinator. Participants are informed to raise any concerns or minor complaints directly to their local Programme Associates and/or Programme Coordinator.
- The Programme Coordinator will set out to follow the procedures set out in Pagoda Projects' Risk Assessment and Escalation Procedures and consult the head of their team about any future steps if required.
- Non-urgent complaints such as accommodation or internship-related concerns should be raised via an online form or via the Pagoda Portal and will be prioritised accordingly by our local Programme Associates and the Programme Coordinator.
- Formal complaints can be submitted via email or via the following web page [www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints](http://www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints) or via email to [contracts@pagodaprojects.com](mailto:contracts@pagodaprojects.com) and will be escalated straight to the relevant Programme Manager and escalated to the Head of Programmes where necessary.

## Post-programme:

- The above link can also be used by a Participant should they wish to make a formal complaint in retrospect following programme completion.
- These complaints will be processed by the Head of Programmes.

## Formal Complaints

The details of the formal complaint will be stored on Pagoda's CRM system and will be visible to the Programme Manager and shared with the relevant Programme Associates and Programme Coordinators if necessary and appropriate with the Participant's permission.

If the complaint is serious enough to involve one of Pagoda's partners or another stakeholder (e.g. the complainant's university or one of Pagoda's Host Companies). Then the Manager will seek permission from the Participant before sharing the information with the relevant partner.

If the Participant does not give consent for the complaint to be shared with the relevant Partner university, institution or Host Company, then Pagoda Projects reserves the right to inform that Partner of the nature of the complaint and any resolution that has been reached without disclosing the complainant's name if Pagoda Projects is contractually obliged to do so.

There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:

- Stage One – the complaint
- Stage Two – investigation
- Stage Three – appeal

### Stage One:

The complaint can be written or if the individual prefers they can dictate it to a member of Pagoda Staff, or someone else, who will write it down for them and submitted via the complaint form: [www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints](http://www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints) or via email to [contracts@pagodaprojects.com](mailto:contracts@pagodaprojects.com).

The complaint should include the complainant's name and email address, the nature and date of the complaint and how they want to see it resolved.

On receipt, each complaint will be allocated a reference number and logged on the complaints register. Complainants must receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days of receipt of a complaint.

### Stage Two:



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All complaints at this stage should be dealt with by a manager. If they need to meet/have a call with the complainant, they will do so within seven working days of receiving the written complaint.

Complaints will be fully investigated, and a written response provided to the complainant within ten working days by the investigator.

The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation any recommendations/remedies made, such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training or appropriate improvement to our services.

Where the complaint is upheld an apology should be offered.

Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding email will be sent after ten working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can appeal within fourteen working days of the date of the outcome and progress to Stage Three.

The complaints register will be updated, and any pending complaints flagged so they are followed up.

## Stage Three:

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at stage two, or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature, or concerns a manager then it will be referred to one of the Leadership Team or the Managing Director.

If the complaint is about the Managing Director then the matter will be discussed with another member of the Strategic Leadership Team.

The Managing Director and/or member of the Strategic Leadership Team will acknowledge receipt within three working days, they will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions within ten working days (from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to stage 3):

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- Make changes to the Stage Two recommendations/actions

The complainant should be informed in writing of the outcome of stage three, the decision reached about this complaint will then be final but other options available to the complainant (as listed below) should be detailed in the letter.

If after Pagoda Projects has been through the three stages and the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with Pagoda Projects Ltd but they could approach any of the following agencies for advice:

- The University
- A solicitor
- Citizens Advice Bureau

This should be done within one month of receiving the outcome of the appeal.

## **3. PAGODA TEAM (STAFF AND CONTRACTOR) COMPLAINTS**

Pagoda Projects recognizes that from time to time employees and contractors may wish to seek redress for grievances relating to their employment or contract.



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If our internal staff have a concern or a grievance they are informed primarily to speak to their manager about it and discuss it informally to see if it can be resolved. This informing process can be proceeded through an informal meeting in person, phone call, email or any way that the complainant feels most appropriate. It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved this way. All complaints will be treated seriously, promptly and confidentially.

If employees or contractors feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should set out their grievance in full in writing to Pagoda Projects' managing director, Jamie Bettles, based at Manchester Office. Pagoda Projects will arrange a formal interview/ meeting to discuss any issues and will take appropriate action in dealing with the problem. A written response will be sent out within **5 working days** or for any reason should there be a delay in response you will be informed of this in a timely manner.

#### 4. HOST COMPANY, PARTNER AND SUPPLIER COMPLAINTS

We provide host companies and our university partners with the opportunity to give feedback via our feedback forms and sometimes through post-programmes debrief sessions. The contract or agreement signed with each host company, partner, or supplier will contain the email address to which any formal complaints should be raised.

Issues during our programmes are dealt with on an ad hoc basis and involve the following process:

- A concern or complaint is raised via email or via the Pagoda Portal.
- The Pagoda Team responsible will speak to all parties involved to gather evidence on the issues raised.
- Where possible Pagoda staff will discuss the concerns with those directly involved and set up a meeting to find a mutual resolution for all parties involved.
- For concerns that cannot be resolved, the same official complaints procedure as listed above for participants will be followed for formal complaints that are submitted to [www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints](http://www.pagodaprojects.com/complaints) or via email to [contracts@pagodaprojects.com](mailto:contracts@pagodaprojects.com).

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