



## **UKFIET (The Education and Development Forum)**

### **Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy**

**UKFIET is the United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training, also known as The Education and Development Forum.**

UKFIET is committed to promoting and strengthening international education and development for all, regardless of gender, race, nationality and other differences. It pursues this objective through:

- Sharing educational ideas, knowledge and expertise between members and across the wider community, in the UK and internationally, through conferences, seminars and other meetings;
- Encouraging the development of teaching, training, research and publication;
- Serving as a resource to policy makers in government, multi-lateral and non-government organisations, and in other institutions; and
- Making representations on issues of common interest,

as stated in the Operational Guidelines (revised September 2023).

UKFIET is a non-profit organisation registered as a limited company in England No. 5725610 with Registered Charity No. 1116614. It is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our website address is: <https://www.ukfiet.org>. UKFIET has a Board of Trustees which oversees its portfolio of activities and an Executive Committee which manages the delivery of the portfolio in accordance with its Operational Guidelines.

#### **Policy statement**

UKFIET encourages and enables its officers, its volunteers and contracted workers, and its conference participants to raise serious concerns within the organisation, rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. Workers are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within an organisation. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation.

While UKFIET does not currently employ any staff as such and depends on member organisation representatives, volunteers, and freelance consultants to undertake its activities, we believe it is good practice for UKFIET to have a complaints procedure and whistleblowing policy to protect its event participants and all its workers – officers, members, consultants, freelancers, casual workers and volunteers who work or have worked with us.



## **Policy aims**

This policy aims to enable and encourage all such individuals to raise concerns where needed. It recognises a worker's legal right to make a protected disclosure to certain prescribed persons or bodies under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

UKFIET is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect anyone who represents or acts for UKFIET, who has serious concerns about any aspect of UKFIET's work to come forward and voice those concerns. We commit to:

- Provide avenues for anyone to make a complaint or raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that any complainant receives a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue the issue if not satisfied.
- Reassure anyone that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made a disclosure or complaint in good faith.

## **What type of concerns are covered?**

- Conduct that is an offence or a breach of law.
- Disclosure related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks and breaches.
- Damage to the environment.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual or physical abuse.
- Other unethical conduct.

## **Safeguards**

UKFIET recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. UKFIET will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

## **Confidentiality**

All complaints and concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal any whistleblower's identity if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, he or she may need to come forward as a witness.



This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- Must disclose the information in good faith.
- Must believe it to be substantially true.
- Must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Must **not** seek any personal gain.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees are responsible and accountable for this Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy.

The designated officers are the Chair of the Executive in the first instance and the Chair of the Trustees as the escalation channel. These designated officers will act as an independent and impartial source of advice to workers at any stage of raising a concern, with access to anyone involved with the organisation.

### **How to raise your concern**

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor or the event organiser. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if you believe that the Executive Committee is involved you should approach the Trustees.

The Treasurer and the Chair of the Board of Trustees should be notified of any allegation related to financial or accounting irregularities or suspected irregularities.

Concerns should be raised in writing, including email ([businessmanager@ukfiet.org](mailto:businessmanager@ukfiet.org)) . The letter or email should set out the background and history of the concerns, giving names, dates, and places where possible, and the reason why the individual is making the disclosure or complaint. If the person does not feel able to make the disclosure in writing, an interview will be arranged.

### **How UKFIET will respond**

Any complaint or concern raised under this policy will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and confidentially.

Any approach to managers and designated officers will be considered in confidence and the worker's identity will not be disclosed without their prior consent. Any complainant or whistleblower will be treated with respect and thanked for their concern.



## **Appeals**

If, for any reason, a worker or an event participant does not feel comfortable raising a concern or complaint with their supervisor or the event organiser, or they are dissatisfied with the result, they should appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the issue is not resolved internally, they could also appeal externally to a 'prescribed body' such as The Charity Commission or The Information Commissioner.

