

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	The Complaints Policy (Section: Where does it apply) defines a complaint in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service definition.	The policy explicitly adopts the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint, ensuring compliance.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	Complaints Policy states that dissatisfaction will be recognised as a complaint regardless of terminology used.	This ensures accessibility, as staff are trained to identify complaints even if the term “complaint” is not used.
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be	Yes	The policy distinguishes complaints from service requests, stating that initial requests for services do not constitute complaints.	The policy clarifies that service requests require action to resolve an issue, while complaints involve dissatisfaction with service standards.

	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	The Complaints Policy ensures complaints are raised when dissatisfaction with service requests is reported.	The policy ensures that unresolved service requests can escalate to formal complaints, preventing unresolved issues from being ignored.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	The Complaints Policy specifies that complaints must be formally recorded.	The policy ensures that feedback from surveys does not replace a formal complaint process but provides a route for escalation.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Complaints Policy outlines valid exclusions, such as complaints over six months old or matters under legal proceedings.	The policy ensures complaints are only excluded based on justifiable reasons and each case is assessed individually.
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. 	Yes	Section "Where does it apply" provides a list of exclusions	The exclusions are fair and reasonable, ensuring residents are aware of valid complaint criteria.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	The policy specifies a six-month limit but allows for flexibility in certain cases.	The organisation considers complaints beyond this timeframe when necessary, particularly where safeguarding or health and safety concerns are involved.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Policy states residents will be informed in writing if a complaint is not accepted.	The explanation includes the right to escalate the issue to the Ombudsman.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Each complaint is assessed individually.	The organisation considers unique circumstances before making exclusion decisions, ensuring fairness.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints Policy states multiple complaint channels, including online, phone, and letter.	The policy commits to accessibility and reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Policy allows for complaints to be submitted in any format.	Staff are trained to direct complaints appropriately, ensuring no barriers to raising concerns.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	Complaint statistics are regularly reviewed.	The organisation recognises that low complaint volumes could signal difficulties in accessing the process and takes steps to improve visibility.

3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints Policy states that it will be made available in multiple formats.	Staff assist residents with specific needs in accessing the complaints process, ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Complaints Policy includes details on how residents can escalate complaints to the Ombudsman.	Expectations UK ensures policy is accessible online and in other formats.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	The policy allows complaints to be made via an authorised advocate.	Written permission is required for a representative to act on behalf of a resident.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy includes information on the Ombudsman's role.	Details on how to escalate complaints are provided in response letters.

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Complaints Officer is responsible for reviewing and managing complaints.	The officer ensures compliance with the Complaints Policy.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Policy states that the officer liaises with all departments.	Enables prompt resolution of complaints.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Policy commits to training staff on complaint handling.	Ensures a consistent approach to handling complaints.

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Complaints Policy provides a structured two-stage process.	Policy ensures clarity and consistency.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Informal resolution is encouraged before formal complaint stages.	Reduces delays in complaint handling.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Policy outlines Stage 1 (investigation) and Stage 2 (CEO review).	After Stage 2, complaints can be referred to the Ombudsman.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaints Policy states that responses handled by third parties will follow the same two-stage process.	This ensures consistency in complaint handling regardless of who manages the complaint.

5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	The policy confirms that contractors and other third parties must adhere to the complaints process.	The organisation maintains oversight to ensure third-party accountability.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Policy defines complaints at both stages.	Ensures consistency in complaint handling.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Policy requires a clear definition of the complaint and responsibility at each stage.	This helps manage expectations and prevent misunderstandings.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and 	Yes	The Complaints Policy emphasises fair and impartial handling of complaints.	Complaints Officers must not be connected to the complaint to ensure impartiality.

	d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	The policy requires ongoing communication with residents regarding complaint progress.	This ensures transparency and keeps residents informed.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	The policy includes a commitment to reasonable adjustments for residents with specific needs.	Adjustments may include alternative communication formats or additional support.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	The policy allows escalation to Stage 2 unless there are justifiable reasons.	Residents are informed of escalation rights.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and	Yes	The policy requires records to be stored securely in line with data protection regulations.	This ensures a comprehensive audit trail for all complaint stages.

	any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	The policy supports early resolution where possible to avoid unnecessary escalation.	Residents can receive remedies at Stage 1 if appropriate.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	The policy outlines how vexatious or unreasonable complaints will be managed.	This ensures resources are used effectively while maintaining fairness.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	The policy ensures restrictions are applied proportionately and are reviewed regularly.	Residents are informed of any restrictions placed on their contact.

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Policy encourages early resolution to avoid formal escalation where possible.	Mediation is offered to resolve issues quickly and fairly.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Policy states complaints will be logged and acknowledged within 5 working days.	Residents are kept informed throughout the process.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints Policy outlines a 10-working-day response time for Stage 1 complaints.	Extensions are only granted in exceptional circumstances.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident	Yes	The policy allows extensions only in exceptional circumstances with resident agreement.	Extensions are capped at 10 working days unless otherwise agreed.

	of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Policy states that Ombudsman details are provided if an extension is required.	This ensures residents are aware of escalation options.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	The policy requires residents to be updated when the outcome is known, with actions tracked separately.	This ensures timely communication even if actions are ongoing.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	The policy requires responses to address all aspects of the complaint.	Clear reasons for decisions are provided to maintain transparency.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being	Yes	The policy allows for additional issues to be logged separately or added if related.	This ensures thoroughness without delaying the initial complaint.

	investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.			
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	The policy outlines the need for clear, plain-language responses.	This improves resident understanding of the outcome.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Policy confirms that unresolved complaints progress to Stage 2.	The escalation process is clearly defined.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure	Yes	The policy states that Stage 2 requests are acknowledged within five working days.	This ensures timely progression of escalated complaints.

	within five working days of the escalation request being received.			
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	The policy allows escalation without requiring residents to provide additional justification.	This avoids placing unnecessary burdens on residents.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Policy ensures that the CEO or a different senior officer handles Stage 2 complaints.	This ensures an independent review.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Policy states the CEO will review Stage 2 complaints and respond within 15 working days, with a possible 10-day extension if necessary.	This ensures stage 2 is responded to adequately prior to the 20 working days period
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Policy allows extensions in exceptional cases, with a maximum of 20 working days.	Residents are informed of any delays.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Policy confirms that Ombudsman details are provided with any extension notice.	This ensures residents know their rights.

6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		Policy states that residents receive a final response when the outcome is known.	Ongoing actions are tracked separately.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	The policy requires clear reasoning for all decisions made.	Transparency is maintained throughout the process.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	Policy confirms that the final response will detail decisions, remedies, and escalation routes.	This ensures residents understand the outcome.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff	Yes	The policy allows relevant staff to contribute to Stage 2 responses.	This ensures a thorough and informed decision.

	members needed to issue such a response.			
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Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	Complaints Policy states that Expectations UK will acknowledge issues and take corrective action.	Remedies include apologies, service improvements, and compensation where appropriate.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Policy commits to fair and proportionate remedies.	Compensation is provided where appropriate.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in	Yes	Policy requires resolutions to be actioned promptly.	Residents are kept informed about progress.

	agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.			
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	The policy ensures alignment with Ombudsman recommendations.	Ensures fairness in resolving complaints.

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	Complaints Policy commits to publishing an annual report.	Complaint trends are analysed to inform service improvements.

8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Policy states the report will be reviewed by the Board.	Ensures transparency and accountability.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The policy includes a section on non-compliance and corrective actions.	Expectations UK ensures compliance with the Housing Ombudsman guidance.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Policy requires lessons from complaints to be incorporated into service improvements.	Ensures continuous improvement.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Policy commits to reviewing and acting on Ombudsman findings.	Supports accountability.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy commits to learning from complaints.	Trends are reviewed to improve service delivery.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Policy states that complaint insights inform service improvements.	Data is analysed to identify systemic issues and implement changes.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Annual reports include data and learning outcomes.	Transparency is maintained with residents and governing bodies.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	The policy assigns a senior leader to review themes and trends.	This ensures accountability at a high level.

9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').		Policy states a senior leader is accountable for complaints oversight.	Ensures leadership involvement.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Complaints data is reported to the Board.	Ensures oversight and accountability.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and	Yes	Policy includes regular reporting on complaints handling performance.	Data informs service improvements.

	d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	Yes	Policy requires teamwork in complaint resolution.	Ensures a culture of problem-solving.