

Complaints & Compliments Appeal Procedure

1. Overview

The complaints policy and its associated procedures are defined to encourage an open and transparent approach to the management of both complimentary and critical feedback. This is applied to the full range of services provided by the college.

- The College strives to provide the best quality of learning and services that meet or exceed the expectations of learners and users. The College promotes a culture that is responsive to feedback, whether complimentary or critical. Comments about our services are actively encouraged and acknowledged as a valuable source of information that we can evaluate and use to improve the quality of our provision to learners and other users. Occasionally services fail and where this leads to dissatisfaction we seek to address and resolve all complaints within a specified time frame, in a manner that does not intimidate and is supported by clear and accessible procedures that ensure thorough investigation and fairness. Likewise we seek to identify what has worked well, to enable spreading of good practice and reward staff.
- In addressing issues that may give rise to complaints, complainants are strongly encouraged to resolve the matter informally with appropriate members of staff. It is the College's experience that good communication between concerned members of staff can frequently stop minor issues from developing into major ones, and can avoid the need for the time and difficulties associated with formal investigations.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to take action to deal quickly with issues as they arise, to communicate with others as needed, and discuss matters with their line managers before recommending that individuals follow the formal complaints procedure. The complaints procedure should not be used by staff as a mechanism to deal with problems arising with other members of staff. These issues should in the first place be referred to the line manager and if necessary referred to the grievance policy/procedure. Similarly, this procedure should not be used where a matter would ordinarily fall under the College's Public Interest Disclosure policy.

2. Process

Through this process the college aims to:

- Recognise and collect complimentary feedback in a formal and structured way.
- Encourage complainants to resolve their dissatisfaction through open and informal procedures in the first instance.
- Provide clear procedures for users of the College's services to raise their comments in a way that is free from intimidation and excessive bureaucracy.
- Ensure that College staff is provided with the necessary guidance and skills to handle compliments and complaints effectively and appropriately, in accordance with the procedures.
- Ensure that the complainant is advised of the outcome of their complaint within the specified timeframes.
- Offer guidance and support to complainants with making their complaints and any subsequent appeals.
- Ensure that privacy and confidentiality is respected when dealing with a complaint.

- Ensure all complaints are investigated thoroughly and fairly.
- Protect the complainant and other parties involved in the complaint from recrimination or reprisal both during a complaint and following its closure.
- Remedy the complaint and recompense complainants where there are sufficient grounds to do so.
- Provide the complainant with the right to appeal the outcome of their complaint.

3. Procedure

a) Objective

The College recognises that there may be aspects of its operations exceed or fall short of its requirements. Its aim is to identify areas of success, to share good that practice and reward appropriately. Alternatively; dissatisfaction should be managed as quickly as possible to improve the quality of service provided. The basic principle of these procedures is that complaints should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

b) Who can Compliment/Complain

- A Student
- A group of students
- A Student representative
- Employers
- Contractors
- Members of the public
- Partners / Next of Kin

4. Roles

- Complimentee – Complete the appropriate Compliment form and send to Quality & Standards for recording
- Complainant – Formal complaints must be documented on the appropriate form (available at reception) and send to “Quality & Standards” at the college.
- Respondent – To respond within the required timeframe (15 working days)

Quality & Standards

- To collect initial complaints
- To distribute to departments
- To monitor
- To produce monthly reports to senior management
- To review procedure annually
- To report to governors on an annual basis

5. Making a Comment

The College welcomes feedback on any aspect of its provision from the full range of stakeholder/users. This gives people an opportunity to draw any issue relating to the College to our attention, without going through the formal complaints process.

6. Making a Compliment

The College encourages a record of positive comments about the services that users have received in the College surveys, or by completing the Compliments form available at

reception. Any written thank you note/card that is received to the college or by individual staff members should be received as a compliment, therefore a copy of the thank you text should be sent to Quality & Standards for recording.

7. Making a Complaint

The College is sorry that anyone experiences a service that has caused someone to consider making a complaint. However, the College is pleased that individuals are prepared to tell the college about any dissatisfaction so that we can identify how to improve the service provided. There are 3 levels at which a complaint can be handled. Our aim is to deal with them as quickly and informally as possible, and for you to feel satisfied with the outcome. We would hope and expect that most complaints will be resolved at level 1.

8. Unresolved complaints & appeals

The complaints and associated appeals process are college procedures. If having made a complaint and appeal you remain unsatisfied by the outcome you are entitled to seek further guidance outside of the college. You may wish to take your complaint to the most appropriate external agency e.g. the awarding or funding body. Further details including contact names and addresses can be provided on request from the college Head of Quality.

9. Closure of Complaints

The College will deem a complaint closed if a request for appeal is not received within 20 working days from the detailing letter of the outcome to the original complaint. Closure will not be reversed. Closure does not affect your statutory rights to submit a petition to external agencies, other regulatory bodies or a court of law.