



Complaints, Suggestions & Compliments Policy

Policy	
Policy owner:	Principal/CEO
Policy Author	Vice Principal for Quality & Student Experience
Review date (annual review)	August 2024
Version	1.1
Objectives in line with College ASPIRE Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious Highly ambitious for our students and staff with a relentless drive for excellence in everything we do • Successful Build resilience and determination to achieve great results, celebrating individual and collective success • Professional Foster high levels of professional standards, with an emphasis on integrity and accountability • Innovative Strive to be at the forefront of innovation for education, skills and employment • Respectful Celebrate our inclusive and diverse culture, valuing our students, staff and stakeholders • Engaging Committed to development partnerships, listening to students, staff and employers to inform our decision making
Applies to:	All college staff, subcontractors and across all premises
Monitoring and evaluation:	Reporting to CLT and annual report on number, nature and outcomes of complaints & compliments to Executive/Governors

Associated documents/policies for this area:

	College Mission & Values
	Student Charter and Behaviour for Learning and Fitness to Study Policies
	Student Handbook
	Associated Quality polices including Assessment, Appeals and Malpractice
	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policies

	Purpose and Scope
Principles	This policy has been developed to ensure that complaints, complements and suggestions are listened to and dealt with in a timely, sensitive and appropriate manner. There are 3

	<p>strands of complaints, compliments and suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal complaints from learners • Formal complaints from partners, employers, visitors and members of the public • Compliments & suggestions from all <p>Informal complaints should be resolved locally in the first instance.</p> <p>Options to make complaints are through forms at reception, Student Service and LRCs. Forms are also available online and can be emailed or handed in to Learning Resources Centre, Reception or Enrolment Offices</p>
Resolution of Informal Complaints	<p>Before sending a formal written complaint learners are encouraged to discuss issues with their teacher, trainer, assessor or a student advisor. Any member of staff receiving a verbal complaint should attempt to resolve this informally and/or with reference with a relevant manager. This informal resolution should be outlined in the Student Handbook.</p> <p>Learner Voice may also be collected via Learner Reps, Student Parliament Student in recording suggestions, complaints or compliments.</p>
Formal Complaint Stage 1	<p>If concerns or complaints are not resolved informally the complainant is asked to email or complete a written form or email of formal complaint.</p> <p>Learners can ask friend or family member or a member of the Student Parliament or Course Learner representative to help them fill in this form but this should be made clear that they have had assistance for recording purposes. This form will be logged, allocated to relevant manager and monitored for resolution by the Quality Administrator to ensure compliance of resolution in a timely fashion.</p> <p>On receipt of a formal complaint, there will be an automatic response if emailed in and Quality will identify the appropriate manager to investigate and inform the complainant of the action being taken within 3 working days of receipt in writing.</p> <p>Complaints will be dealt with at a local level by a relevant designated manager appointed by the Vice Principal for Quality or nominated Quality Manager.</p> <p>All complaints, whether formal or informal, will be recognised and dealt with sympathetically and constructively. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times within the Quality team and the appointed manager. No complainant will be disadvantaged, discriminated against or victimised as a result of making a complaint.</p> <p>The complainant will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint regularly. An outcome of the investigation and any resolution to the complaint should be sent in writing to the complainant within 18 working days of receipt of the original written complaint and the Vice Principal for Quality and Quality Admin must be copied in to all correspondence.</p> <p>All formal complaints at stage 1 are aimed to be resolved within a maximum of 20 working days. Anonymous complaints will be recorded, but not investigated unless they are considered “high-risk” complaints in line with definitions under Whistleblowing or Safeguarding.</p> <p>If the complaint is concerning a disability-related issue, the investigating manager may refer the matter to an external consultancy to ascertain the reasonableness of the complaint. This may extend the duration of the investigation. The complaint must be thoroughly and objectively investigated within the shortest period to determine if the complaint is well-founded and, if so, to work towards a mutually acceptable resolution.</p>
Possible outcomes	Possible outcomes:

from investigations of complaints	<p>Serious failing</p> <p>Medium failing</p> <p>Minor failing</p> <p>Unfounded</p>	<p>Fundamental failure of service delivery with a serious detrimental effect to complainant. Complaint can be resolved to satisfaction of complainant and will include written apology from senior manager. Case brought to attention of Vice Principal for Quality and included in local curriculum/support area QIP as necessary</p> <p>Systems are being applied, but service delivery is uninformed or fails to meet college expectations. Complaint can be resolved amicably and written apology to complainant by investigating manager. Relevant section includes review of performance at team level meetings</p> <p>Concerns and issues which cause irritation and frustration to the complainant. Normally resolved amicably and accompanied by a written apology and a note to the relevant section to improve service.</p> <p>No valid reason for complaint or beyond College control. Letter from investigating manager to complainant outlines reason for judgement and includes reference to appeals procedure.</p>
Formal Complaint Stage 2	<p>In the event that a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the matter should be referred back to the Vice Principal for Quality who will then pursue the investigation by referral to a more senior manager and request that she/he pursues the matter and attempt to reach a satisfactory conclusion.</p> <p>Copies of all documentation are then sent to the appointed senior manager and the complainant informed of developments. Potentially vexatious complaints can be dismissed at this stage by the appointed member of the CLT. Stage 2 complaints are aimed to be completed with 28 working days.</p>	
Appeals	Appeals against stage 2 can be directed to the Vice Principal for Quality.	
Final Appeals	If the complainant is not satisfied by stage 2 or an appeal to the Vice Principal for Quality, final appeals to the Principal must be made in writing within 7 days in an attempt to resolve complaint. Once again records of complaints and the process will be monitored by the Quality Team – usually the administrator.	
Complaints about Senior Managers	Complaints about members of the College Leadership Team will be referred to a member of the Executive. Complaints about members of the Executive, Principal /CEO will be passed to the Governors for investigation and resolution.	
Non resolution	If the College Complaints procedure is exhausted the complainant can refer their complaint to Skills Funding Agency directly.	
Compliments or suggestions	These will be recorded on the tracking system for notes and reference by the Quality Team, usually the Quality Administrator	
Responsibilities	<p>The Quality team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log, register and monitor the formal complaint process at all stages <p>The investigating delegated Manager for Stage 1 will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Quality Team and investigate complaint in line with stage 1 • Arrange and conduct the investigation starting with a face to face meeting or telephone call, investigate, take notes and respond in writing to the complainant • Copy in Quality to all correspondence with an outcome listed above • Complete the formal investigation and written outcome within the 20 working day time limit allocated for stage 1 <p>The Appeal managers at Stage 2/3 will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the complainant of an appeal hearing • Meet and attempt to resolve the complaint • Write to the complainant and Quality Team with the final decision of the appeal and decide to uphold or reject the complaint <p>Copies of documentation relating to the complaint must be kept on file for 3 years.</p>	

Equality & Diversity	Forms can be made available in large print on request or assistance. Student services can offer support on how to complete the form complaint, suggestion or compliments form. For monitoring and reporting purposes learner demographics will be recorded on the Quality Team tracking system.
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**APPENDIX:
Customer Complaints Flowchart:**

