
Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

This policy, and its associated procedure, are designed to define the College's open approach to praise and criticism of the full range of services it provides and to describe the procedures for reporting them.

The college is committed to using the compliments, suggestions and complaints it receives to inform and enhance its practices and procedures.

2. Scope

This policy, and its associated procedure, has been designed to deal with, but is not limited to:

- 2.1. Compliments, suggestions and complaints raised by students (Further Education and Higher Education), parents, guardians, employers, customers or the general public in relation to college activities, staff or any service provided by the College.
- 2.2. Complaints relating to any form of discrimination.
- 2.3. Compliments, suggestions and complaints relating to equipment and facilities.

The associated procedure does not cover the following (which are subject to separate procedures):

- 2.4. Decisions made in examinations and assessments.
- 2.5. Admission decisions.
- 2.6. Academic decisions.
- 2.7. Allegations of misconduct by a student.
- 2.8. Staff members who have a grievance against an individual or the College.

3. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the College's values of ambition, pride, integrity and respect.

Ambition

The compliments, suggestions and complaints policy aims to:

- Identify time limits within which students would normally be expected to submit feedback or complaints
- Allow for the identification of complaints which require particularly swift action.
- Ensure that all compliments, suggestions and complaints are responded to within a specific timeframe and, where applicable, resolved satisfactorily.

Pride

The compliments, suggestions and complaints policy aims to be:

- Accessible, easy to obtain and open to all students and customers of services provided by the college.
- Clear and easy to understand, and includes information about how to access further information or support.
- Responsive to the needs of individuals and contains a commitment that effective records will be kept by all involved.

Integrity

The compliments, suggestions and complaints policy aims to:

- Ensure that the staff involved are appropriately trained, resourced and supported, and able to reach each decision independently and fairly.
- Provide reassurance that feedback and outcomes are being monitored, to ensure that any outcomes or responses are appropriate, timely, reached independently (free from really or perceived conflicts of interest), and inform the development and improvement of services.

Respect

The compliments, suggestions and complaints policy aims to:

- Ensure all parties act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect
- Encourage and allow for an informal process and response, or resolution in the case of complaints, to be pursued before a formal process is initiated, including mediation where possible and appropriate.
- Guarantee equal opportunity for all parties involved to provide information without fear of disadvantage or undue breach of confidentiality.

4. Informal

In the first instance, all stakeholders are strongly encouraged to direct any compliments, suggestions and complaints to the most appropriate member of staff, or staff team, to provide an immediate response or resolution. The associated procedure provides further details of which staff, or staff team, would be the most appropriate in different circumstances.

If the response at this stage is not satisfactory, it is then advised that the formal procedure is followed.

5. Formal

Compliments and suggestions can be submitted formally and directly to the Complaints and Reputation officer at the college. These will then be shared with appropriate staff or teams and a formal response or acknowledgement provided.

A complaint will be regarded as formal if it is submitted in writing and is of a serious nature, or cannot be satisfactorily resolved on an informal basis by the college department against whom it is directed.

The procedure associated with this policy provides details of the process that should be followed in these circumstances.

6. Appeals

This policy, and its associated procedure, includes the provision of an appeal stage, which can be followed if the complainant is unsatisfied with the response, decision or action taken following the completion of the formal stage of the process.

The College hopes and expects that this policy, and its associated procedure will satisfactorily resolve any complaints, but recognises that a complainant may wish to continue the process if unsatisfied with the outcome from the appeal stage. In these circumstances the College is committed to providing clear and impartial advice as to the most appropriate external agency or department that any further complaint should be directed towards. Details will be provided on the 'Completion of procedures' letter sent to you following the Appeals process.

7. Higher Education Students

The associated procedure provides information and processes directed specifically at students and other stakeholders within the College involved with Higher Education programmes.

8. Linked Policies and Procedures

- Compliments, suggestions and complaints procedure
- Student Charter
- Student disciplinary policy
- Access to fair assessment policy
- Teaching, Learning and assessment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Review frequency: Every three years

Lead officer: Complaints and Reputation Officer

Senior Manager Responsible: Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality