

Complaints Procedure

Document	Complaints Procedure
Lead Manager	Director of Quality Teaching and Learning
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1 Introduction

City College's mission is to be an outstanding and responsive college at the heart of Brighton and Hove. We actively seek feedback about our services to help us improve. The following outlines the procedure to be followed to provide feedback, raise causes for concern and the processes for recording and investigation of all formal complaints received by the College.

2 Aim

It is the aim of this procedure to provide a clear framework to ensure that:

- Feedback is received and recorded;
- Those not satisfied with the College's services are permitted to raise their concerns;
- Prompt resolution of complaints at an early informal stage is encouraged;
- Complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly, sensitively and are resolved in a satisfactory manner;
- Action is taken, where appropriate;
- Individuals are supported in making a complaint, where necessary;
- Responsibilities and duties of members of staff in relation to complaints are defined and understood;
- Accurate records of complaints and feedback are kept to ensure analysis takes place that will lead to continual improvement of the college's services to students, staff, employers and the general public.

3 Scope

This procedure should be used by anyone who wishes to provide feedback or formally complain about our services, including students, employers, schools, partners, parents/guardians of students under 18, local residents and external agencies.

Complainants may prefer matters to be raised on their behalf by a chosen representative, for example a friend, parent, guardian or support worker. In such cases the complaint should be signed by both parties, unless the complainant is under 18 or a 'vulnerable adult'. This will be taken as permission for information relating to the investigation of the complaint (which may be of a personal nature) to be released to both parties.

This procedure is not applicable for the following:

- Learners wishing to appeal against internal or external assessment decisions. Please refer to the **Learner Appeals Procedure**.
- Members of staff wishing to complain about any aspect of their employment. Please refer to the **Staff Grievance Procedure**.

4 Definitions

Feedback: Compliments, comments or suggestions on how we can improve, but not necessarily requiring a formal written response.

Formal complaint: The College defines a formal complaint as “any expression of dissatisfaction received in writing and requiring a formal, written response”.

5 Staff responsibilities

- 5.1 **Quality Team:** Receives and records formal feedback and complaints. Responsible for monitoring the complaints resolution procedure. Will not be involved in the investigation of complaints but will be able to answer questions about which stage a complaint has reached and which member of staff is responsible for the investigation.
- 5.2 **All College staff** (tutors and front-line staff): Responsible for receiving feedback and complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them appropriately. Whenever possible, complaints should be dealt with informally and promptly. All formal complaints must be forwarded to the Quality Team to be recorded.
- 5.3 **Programme area manager (PAM):** Will usually take the lead role in investigating complaints and responding to the complainant. Take action to change procedures or implement staff training to prevent recurrence of the complaint.
- 5.4 **Assistant principals / Directors:** Support the PAM or take lead in investigating complaints and responding to the complainant. Take action to change procedures or implement staff training to prevent recurrence of the complaint.
- 5.4 **Senior Leadership Team / Principal:** Investigate complaints that have reached the appeals stage. Evaluate complaints and feedback and take action to ensure continual quality improvement.

6 Complainant responsibilities

The complainant will be expected to:

- Bring their complaint to the College’s attention as soon as possible after the reason / event causing them to complain;
- Explain the problem, in writing, as clearly and fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- Allow the College a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the College’s control.

7 Confidentiality

Every attempt will be made to ensure the confidentiality of a complainant and the contents of their complaint. However, where a complaint is of a personal nature against an individual, it is likely that the complainant's identity will be revealed at some stage in all but the most exceptional cases, so that there can be a fair investigation.

8 Data protection

All complaints will be kept and stored according to the relevant Data Protection legislation. If you have concerns about how your personal data is used or stored, or you wish to exercise your rights under the Data Protection Act, please write to: Clerk of the Corporation, City College Brighton & Hove, Pelham Street, Brighton, BN1 4FA.

9 Child protection and safeguarding

If the College receives information that a young person is, or has been, put at risk of harm then, after a full discussion with the young person involved, the information may have to be shared with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Policy.

10 Feedback

We welcome all feedback (comments, compliments or suggestions) from students, parent(s) / guardian(s), employers and members of the public about the services we provide. Anyone wishing to provide feedback can do so by writing to the college. Where appropriate, it is also encouraged to speak to a member of the college staff or talk to a course representative or member of the Students' Union or email quality@ccb.ac.uk. Feedback will not necessarily be followed by a written response, unless this is specifically requested.

Feedback received will be recorded by the Quality team and analysed on a termly basis by the Quality Manager. A summary will be presented to SLT, Executive and Governors to ensure continual quality improvement.

11 Complaints procedure

Where possible, the informal resolution of a complaint will be sought in the first instance.

11.1 Concerns should be raised with the person or area concerned as soon as possible. If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the person complaining and the area they are complaining about to arrive at an agreed resolution.

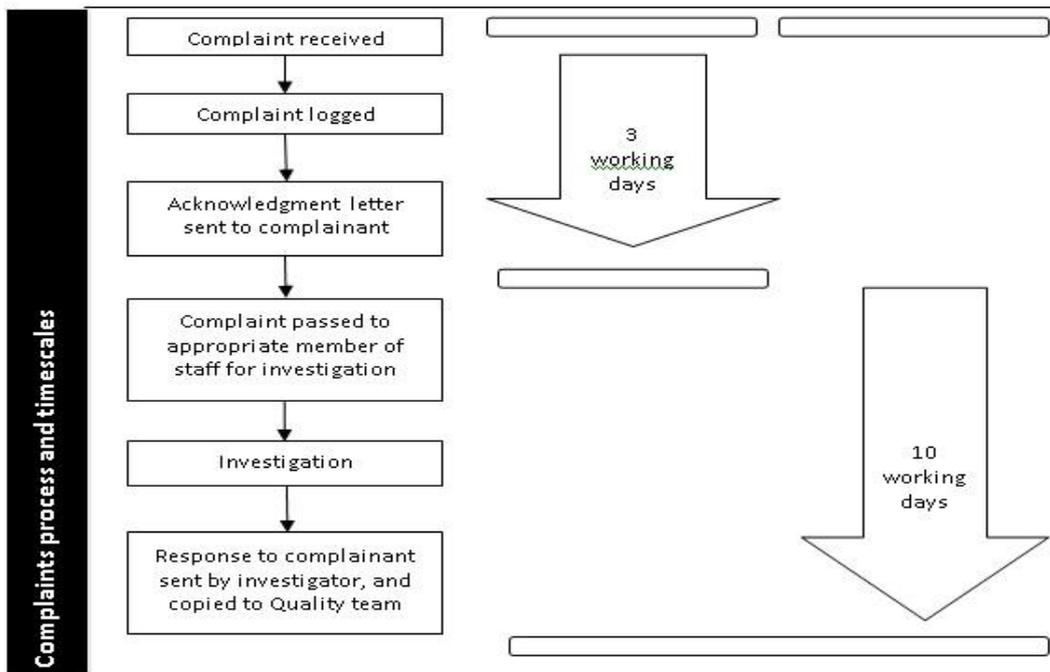
- 11.2 If a complaint is about a member of staff it should be referred to the relevant line manager.
- 11.3 At the informal stage complaints can be made in person, by phone or by email.
- 11.4 Staff should record details of all informal complaints, even if satisfactorily resolved.

Where the concern has not been resolved informally or in the case of serious complaints or concerns, the complainant should raise a formal complaint.

- 11.5 **Written complaints:** Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint can do so by completing a Complaint Form which can be found on our website at www.ccb.ac.uk, or a paper copy which can be obtained from all reception areas. All complaints should be addressed to: Quality, City College Brighton and Hove, Pelham Street, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 4FA
- 11.6 **E-mail complaints:** For emails submitted to complaints@ccb.ac.uk, the sender will be prompted to complete the Complaint form and a link to the form will be provided.
- 11.7 **Telephonic complaints:** Where complaints are received by telephone the complainant will be asked to complete the complaint form and submit this or if required the Quality team will complete the form over the telephone with the complainant.
- 11.8 **Support available:** *For any individual with learning difficulties, disabilities or speech/language support requirements the College will offer appropriate support. This may include accepting a complaint by telephone or providing a scribe for a complaint to be made by dictation. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.*
- 11.9 **Acknowledgment:** The Quality team will send an acknowledgment (normally within 3 working days), and inform the complainant that a response will be provided within 10 working days of receiving the acknowledgement.
- 11.10 **Logging the complaint:** The Quality team will maintain a spreadsheet of all complaints, their progress and outcome.
- 11.11 **Investigation:** The Quality Team will forward the complaint to the applicable PAM and alert the Assistant Principal / Director. The PAM will in most instances carry out the investigation, but an independent investigator (Assistant Principal, Director etc.) may be asked to conduct the investigation if appropriate. The complainant may be contacted for further information and could be invited to meet with the investigator. (They may be accompanied by a friend or family member. An accompanying person cannot take active part in the proceedings but can offer support to the complainant).
- 11.12 **Resolution:** The investigator will make a judgement based on evidence gathered and will decide to:
 - Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons.

- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, propose an amicable settlement, take appropriate steps to address the issue.

- 11.13 **Communicating outcome:** The investigator will respond to the complainant and copy the Quality Team in.
- 11.14 **Quality improvement:** The PAM / Assistant principal / Director will ensure that relevant action is taken, where applicable to change procedures or implement staff training to prevent recurrence of the complaint.
- 11.15 **Monitoring the complaint:** The Quality Team will monitor progress of complaints resolution and will inform Assistant Principals / Directors of any unresolved complaints. The complainant should expect to receive a written response within 10 working days of receiving the acknowledgement. If for any reason the College is unable to meet this timescale, the Quality team will inform the complainant in writing and be advised of a revised response time.
- 11.16 **Evaluation:** The complaints, appeals and outcomes recorded on the complaints database will be analysed on a termly basis by the Quality manager. A summary will be presented to SLT, Executive and Governors to ensure actions are carried out to address the issues raised and ensure continual quality improvement.



12 Appeals

- 12.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they have the right to appeal.
- 12.2 Appeals should be in writing and addressed to the Principal, whose decision will be final. It must be sent within 15 working days of receiving the response, providing reasons for the appeal. The appeal may be investigated by a member of the College Senior Leadership Team. The Principal will reply directly to the complainant.
- 12.6 Should the complaint need to be taken further, in some circumstances a complaint about a provider can be made to the Skills Funding Agency. The appropriate officer for our area is: Skills Funding Agency, Eagle Point, Little Park Farm Road, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 5TD

13 Formal Complaints - Higher Education awards

- 13.1 Students who are studying for Higher Education awards who wish to make a complaint about some aspect of course delivery (including resources) at the College, must in the first instance exhaust the College Complaints process. Once complete the College will issue a 'Completion of Procedures' letter enabling the student, if still dissatisfied, to take their complaint about the College to the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).
- 13.2 Where the complaint relates to provision validated by the University of Brighton, links to the decision of an Examination Board, or concerns academic standards, the student must, in the first instance, complete the College Complaints process. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may proceed to submit a 'Stage 3 Request for Review' to the University of Brighton. (Please note that Stages 1 & 2 are not applicable to students at Partner Colleges). This is the final stage of review and thereafter a 'Completion of procedures' letter will be issued within 28 days enabling the student, if still dissatisfied, to bring their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

14 Review

The College will review the Feedback and Complaints procedure annually and any feedback received from complainants regarding the procedure will be taken into account. Students will also be given the opportunity to comment on the procedure through the Learner Voice feedback mechanisms.