



Compliments, Complaints and

Feedback Policy

Including 'The Procedures'

Issue:	2	Prepared by:	Authorised by:
Original Issue Date:	September 2019	Equality, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager (September 2019) Policy Authors: Quality Improvement Manager	Principal
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Next Review:	April 2025	3 Years	Corporation

1.0 Introduction

Leeds College of Building aims to provide an excellent service to all its customers but understands that sometimes things can go wrong. The College also recognises that students have a right to make a complaint or voice a concern, and the feedback may help staff and the College to learn valuable lessons and improve the quality of the service provided to students and the wider community.

The College believes that its staff and College processes should be credible, reliable and that all students and stakeholders should enjoy good relations with College staff. This is underpinned by the principle that all College Policies and Processes should be designed to ensure they benefit students (based on the 'Trust Equation Model' by founder Charles H. Green 2012). Therefore, the College will aim to ensure complaints are dealt with swiftly and, wherever possible, trust is restored with students and relevant stakeholders.

For the purposes of this Policy, a complaint is defined as; ***“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students, parents/carers/guardians of students under the age of 18 (or up to the age of 25 for students with Education, Health and Care Plans), employers, other stakeholders or members of the public, about a provider’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.”*** This may be related to, but not limited to.

- A failure by the College to meet obligations including those outlined in course/student handbooks or a student charter
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the College
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration, including, where applicable, that provided by a partner provider
- Health & Safety, Safeguarding, or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Issues
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the College
- Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the provider

The Policy complies with best practice guidance for handling complaints from the Education Skills and Funding Agency, the Office for Students and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator¹.

2.0 Purpose

The Policy will aim to achieve the following purposes:

- a) To provide information to students and College staff about the College's Complaint Policy and Procedures.
- b) To ensure that complaints are dealt with swiftly and wherever possible, trust is restored with students and relevant parties.

3.0 Applicability and Scope

3.1 This Policy applies to compliments, complaints and feedback relating to the College's Further Education, Higher Education or Continuing Professional Development courses. The Policy will also apply to complaints received from members of the local community or those who are affected by the College's activities.

3.2 Compliments, complaints and feedback may be submitted by students, parents / carers / guardians of students under the age of 18 (or up to the age of 25 for students with Education, Health and Care Plans), employers, other stakeholders or members of the public.

3.3 It is not expected that fundamental Policy differences will exist between Leeds College of Building and institutions who are delivering courses on behalf the College. Every effort should be made to ensure compatibility between the respective Policy and procedure documents.

- a) Compliments, complaints and feedback Policies for sub contracted programmes run by partner institutions are the responsibility of the partner institution and are not covered by this Policy.
- b) All partner institutions are required to have appropriate Complaint Policies, Procedures and Practices in place.

¹ The principles are drawn from guidance issued by the Ombudsman Association, *Guide to Principles of Good Complaint handling*, British and Irish Ombudsman Association, 2007. *Principles of Good Administration*, Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (2007) and *The Pathway Report: Recommendations for the development of the OIA Scheme*, OIA, February 2010.

- 3.4 A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is deemed unreasonable or untrue, having been put forward so as to abuse the complaints procedure, or an attempt to defame the name or character of another person. In cases where a complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious, the College reserves the right to terminate the investigation of the complaint and may consider an alternative process to address the issue (including disciplinary action against the complainant or referring a matter to the Police).
- 3.5 Multi-Issue Complaints; If a complaint identifies several issues which fall within the remit of other procedures (for example, an admissions decision or an academic appeal), the content of such complaints will be reviewed in accordance with the specific Policy and process outlined in the area of College activity, department or service. In such circumstances, the complainant will then be notified and directed to the relevant Policy.

4.0 Compliments and Feedback

The College welcomes feedback from all users and beneficiaries of the College's services. There are a number of options available to individuals, organisations and groups to provide compliments and feedback to the College. This can include:

- Student Surveys
- Employer Surveys
- Feedback to staff
- Letters or emails to staff

Individuals can also email a compliment or feedback to the Quality Unit by contacting the:

Quality Improvement and Enhancement Co-ordinator

- 0113 222 6013
- qualityunit@lcb.ac.uk
- Leeds College of Building, North Street, Leeds, LS2 7QT

5.0 Fairness and Transparent Admissions

All individuals should expect and receive fair and reasonable treatment during the investigation of a complaint by all staff at Leeds College of Building. Decision making will be unbiased and transparent. Complainants are entitled to receive more detailed feedback on a decision if this is requested.

6.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Leeds College of Building recognises that it is an integral part of the local and wider community. The College serves the needs of a wide range of individuals from the diverse ethnic and social mix of multicultural Britain. The College adheres to the Equality Act 2010, values difference and recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas, perceptions and encourage harmony and understanding in the College community.

6.1 The College will not discriminate against a complainant on any characteristics such as disability, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, political beliefs or socioeconomic status.

6.2 The College will also monitor complaints to the College by ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, age and sexual orientation.

7.0 Special Educational Needs, Mental ill Health or Disability (inc. medical or health conditions)

The College welcomes disabled students and has a dedicated team providing support, advice and guidance to those students.

7.1 If there are overriding concerns relating to fitness to study, ie:

- A presentation of a serious mental ill health issue,
- A learning disability which may restrict a student in engaging with the process, or
- Incidents which cause disruption to the College's ability to provide a service or comply with a relevant legal duty)

the complainant will be involved in discussions to explore options and, if necessary, to find a suitable alternative way of dealing with the complaint. In such circumstances, the Investigating Officer will close the complaint and refer the matter to an alternative procedure.

8.0 Personal Data

8.1 Information held by the College in relation to a complaint, will be treated in confidence, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR. The Complaint will not be discussed with third parties, unless consent has been granted by applicants.

- 8.2 If a crime has been committed, the College may share information with, or refer the matter to, the Police. This will be done in line with the rights of the individual.
- 8.3 Complainants have a right to access personal data held about them by the College by making a 'Data subject access request'. Information on how to do this can be found on the College's website www.lcb.ac.uk.

The Procedures

9.0 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution or Mediation:

It is easier for the College to resolve complaints if individuals raise them as soon as they become aware of the issue, and directly to the service concerned. We always advise individuals to talk to a member of staff within the department they are complaining about so that they can try to resolve any problems on the spot. Individuals will be expected and encouraged to discuss their complaint with the relevant department and if they have not done so, they may be referred back to the department. If individuals do not feel able to speak to anyone in the area about which they are complaining, they should explain this when completing the complaint form.

10. How to submit a formal complaint

Individuals are required to complete the Complaints form (in Appendix 1).

When complaining, tell us: your full name and address, as much as you can about the complaint, what has gone wrong, how you would like us to resolve the matter.

The College may provide advisory support to an individual to help them to draft their complaint or appeal if this is requested. This will be limited to advice on College Policy and Procedure and may also include reasonable adjustments for a student who has declared a disability.

The complaints form should be emailed or posted to the Quality Unit:

Quality Improvement and Enhancement Co-ordinator

- 0113 222 6013
- qualityunit@lcb.ac.uk
- Leeds College of Building, North Street, Leeds, LS2 7QT

What will happen once the complaint is received?

10.1 Stage 2 – Formal

- 10.1(a) The College will acknowledge the complaint, normally within three working days.

- 10.1(b) The complaint will be assigned to the Director who holds responsibility for the College activity, department or service for investigation.
- 10.1(c) The Director may delegate the investigation of the Complaint to the relevant Business Support Services Manager, Curriculum Manager or Assistant Faculty Director (if they have not been involved with the matter). They will aim to complete their investigation within ten working days. If there is any delay, the College will let you know.
- 10.1(d) The Manager investigating your complaint may contact you to discuss your case in more detail.
- *(If the Director / Manager believes that the complainant has not considered or exhausted the 'Informal Resolution and Mediation' stage as outlined in 9.1, the Director / Manager may refer the complainant back to the process in 9.1 and suspend the investigation if it is appropriate to do so).*
- 10.1(e) Once the investigation is complete, the Director / Manager will communicate the decision in writing to the complainant. They will provide them with clear reasons on how the decision was reached.

10.2 Stage 3 – Appeal to the Principal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, he or she can request a review if they feel the decision was made unfairly. The complainant must submit the appeal using the Complaints form in 'Appendix 1' within 10 working days of receiving the decision at Stage 2.

At Stage 3, the Principal or a Vice Principal will review the decision at Stage 2. A request for a review may be limited to the following grounds, but not confined to:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- new material evidence which the complainant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

An appeal under the Policy will be accepted if the complainant indicates one of the following:

- 10.2(a) the decision maker did not take relevant information into account and this led to an incorrect or unfair decision being reached.
- 10.2(b) there is evidence of prejudice or bias relating to an equality and diversity issue and this has influenced the outcome.
- 10.2(c) there is evidence that procedural irregularities have occurred.

The complainant must state clearly which part of the decision they disagreed with and why. If the complainant has not indicated clearly a reason outlined in 10.2(a-c), the appeal may not be accepted, or this may delay the timescale for responding to the appeal.

- 10.2(d) The complainant will also be required to provide evidence of the unfair treatment if they are submitting an appeal (or they must indicate any lines of enquiry which the reviewer should take).

Once the Appeal is received:

- 10.2(e) The College will acknowledge the appeal, normally within three working days.
- 10.2(f) The appeal will be assigned to the Principal.
- 10.2(g) The Principal may delegate the appeal to the relevant Manager or Vice Principal (if they have not been involved with the matter). They will aim to complete their investigation within ten working days. If there is any delay, the College will let the complainant know.
- 10.2(h) The Principal / Vice Principal investigating the complaint may contact the complainant to discuss their case in more detail.
- 10.2(i) Once the investigation is complete, the Director / Manager will communicate the decision in writing to the complainant. They will provide them with clear reasons on how the decision was reached. The decision of the Principal / Vice Principal will be final.

- 10.2(f) Following the final decision of the Principal / Vice Principal, a student on a Higher Education course is entitled to ask the OIA, the independent ombudsman service, to review his or her complaint about the outcome of the provider's complaints process. The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

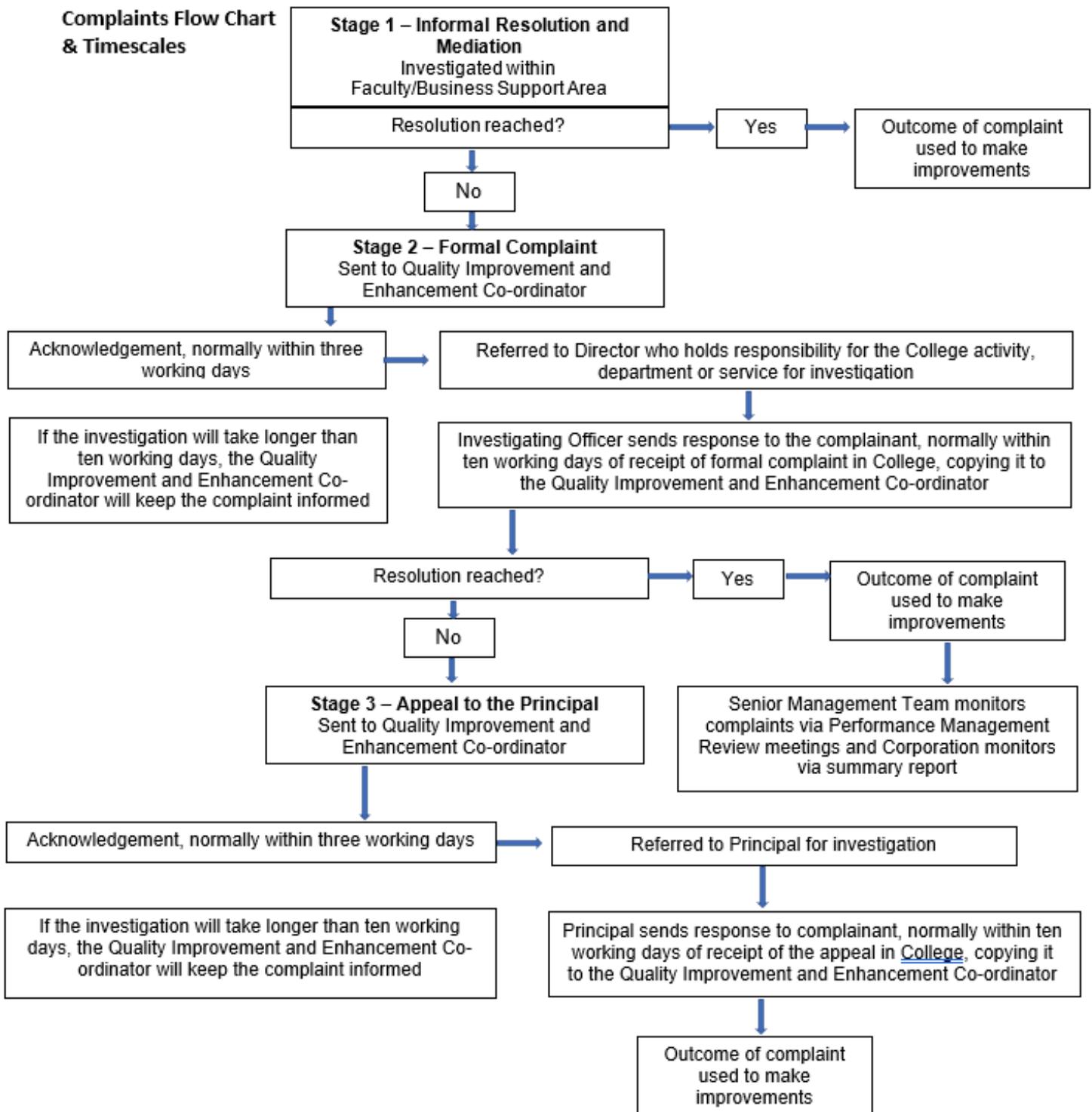
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3AB

Tel: 0118 959 9813
e-mail: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk
www.oiahe.org.uk

11.0 Complaint against the College Principal

In the unlikely event of a complaint against the Principal, the complaint details will be passed to the College's Governance Advisor and Clerk to the Corporation who will refer it to the Vice Chair for investigation and then pass to the Chair if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome and wants to appeal.

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING
Complaints Flow Chart
& Timescales



End of the College’s Complaints Procedure

**LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING
APPENDIX 1 FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM**

Leeds College of Building is committed to providing a high standard of service for all its students, clients and visitors. Your comments and/or suggestions will help us to continually improve our service.

You do not have to give us your contact details, but if you don't, this may mean we cannot investigate your complaint fully. If you want a response to your complaint you will need to provide your contact details.

Your contact details:

Name:						
Course (Students):		Company Name (Employers):				
Address:		Email:				
		Telephone No:				
		Date:				
Postcode:						
Please place X in the appropriate box						
	Student		Visitor		Employer	Other
Tell us what happened, what you have done so far to resolve the issue (Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure), the response(s) from staff you have already had to date, and what outcome you want from the College as a result of this formal complaint.						

When you have completed this complaint form please send it to the Quality Improvement and Enhancement Co-ordinator via: email (qualityunit@lcb.ac.uk), hand in at a reception desk or administrative office in any of the College's buildings or by post to Quality Improvement and Enhancement Coordinator, Leeds College of Building, North Street, Leeds, LS2 7QT.

For office use only			
Complaint Reference:			
Received in Quality Unit by:		Date:	
Acknowledgement sent by:		Date:	
Assigned by Quality Improvement & Enhancement Manager to:		Date:	
Sent for investigation by:		Date:	
Tracking notes:			
Outcome sent by:		Date:	