



Suffolk
New
College

Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy

Policy Title:	Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy
Issue date (m/y):	Revised 07/2018
Author(s):	Deputy Principal
Approved by:	SMT
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Related Policies & Procedures:	UoS Student Complaints Procedure Internal Appeals Policy Grievance Procedure Student Involvement Strategy Management of Courses Guidance



Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of Policy: Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	No	
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative/	No	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The College is committed to providing a quality service for all its users and stakeholders. It strives to improve the service by listening and responding to the views of the College community, including students and staff, parents and carers, visitors, local businesses and community groups.
- 1.2 The College's Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy supports positive feedback, informal concerns and formal complaints.
- 1.3 The Policy aims to ensure that making a Compliment, Comment or Complaint is as easy as possible and that responses are timely and appropriate.

2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Users – a user is a person who participates in education or training including study programme students, student on advanced learner loans, apprentices and adult students, employers; hires College facilities; or is a customer of College services such as Shelley's restaurant and The Zone salons.
- 2.2 Stakeholders – stakeholders are groups or individuals that are affected by and/or have an interest in the operations and objectives of the College.
- 2.3 A Comment is an informal concern, this may be received as part of student feedback.
- 2.4 A Complaint is a clear expression of dissatisfaction.
- 2.5 A Compliment is an expression of satisfaction.

3 EXCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Complaints from Higher Education students: these are dealt with under the University of Suffolk Student Complaints Procedure.
- 3.2 Complaints around assessment feedback or exam marking; these are dealt with through the Internal Appeals Policy or the Awarding Body's published information on complaints.
- 3.3 Employment issues: these are covered by the Grievance Procedure.
- 3.4 Any matter subject to legal action.
- 3.5 Any complaint deemed malicious or vexatious following an investigation.
- 3.6 Anonymous complaints can not be responded to which impacts on whether an investigation can be carried out. This impacts on weight given to the complaint and any possible actions as a result, however any important points to note will be taken into consideration.

4 AIMS

The College aims to:-

- 4.1 Encourage the complainant (person raising the issue of concern or dissatisfaction) to resolve their issue through informal procedures in the first instance. For complainants aged 16-18 the College will respond to concerns and complaints raised by parents/carers; for those aged 19 years and older the College will seek permission to respond from the student if a complaint is received on their behalf.
- 4.2 Any apprentices, or their employer, should raise their complaint in the first instance with the Apprenticeship Manager who will immediately look into the issues raised. If the complaint is not resolved then it should be progressed to the Director of Apprenticeships, Business and Commercial Services. For serious complaints or ones not resolved by the Director these should be sent to the College's Deputy Principal who will carry out an investigation into the issues raised.
- 4.3 Provide a clear procedure for customers and stakeholders to raise their Compliments, Comments or Complaints in a straight forward and open manner without fear of reprisal or recrimination.
- 4.4 Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and a response given in a timely manner. Where a complex complaint is raised, the College aims to keep the complainant informed of progress.
- 4.5 Provide a more senior level of manager to look at the complaint if dissatisfaction continues.
- 4.6 Offer guidance and support for students to make complaints if sought.
- 4.7 Ensure staff dealing with complaints have necessary guidance and support to handle complaints efficiently and effectively.
- 4.8 Analyse complaints and use findings to support quality improvements of all aspects of its service.
- 4.9 Make managers aware of any compliments received, and disseminate as appropriate to inform embedding of good practice.

5 COMMENTS

Informal concerns raised by students or apprentices with teachers, assessors or Heads of Area will be recorded by the Head of Area as part of student feedback. The teacher or Head of Area will seek to resolve, usually through discussion with the student. Any 'comments' will be reported at the next team meeting and actions agreed that will minimise any repetition.

6 MAKING A COMPLAINT

All complaints should be submitted in writing to the Executive Team at Suffolk New College, Rope Walk, Ipswich IP4 1LT. The Executive Team comprises of the Principal,

Deputy Principal and Vice Principal, whereby the relevant executive member will investigate the issues raised in the complaint.

7 CLASSIFICATION OF CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

All complaints from enrolled students or their parent/guardian/carer where under 18 years old will be attributed to their Curriculum Area for analysis. All other complaints will be attributed to the department or Curriculum Area to which the complaint applies. Please see appendix 1 for flowchart outlining the process below.

All complaints will be classified as:-

Yellow - cause for concern – requires Head of Area response (informal concerns, often verbal from a student);

Orange - serious – requires Director of Curriculum Area/Business Support Manager response (could be from parent or employer; user of Shelley's or The Zone; member of community; hirer of facilities; may be a cause for concern that has escalated from Head of Area and now a complaint);

Red - most serious – requires Senior Postholder or Principal response (may be a complaint not resolved at Curriculum Area or departmental level).

8 RECORDING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

All concerns and complaints will be considered genuine, but if found to be unfounded they will not be classified or recorded.

Wherever a concern or complaint is received in the institution it should be logged (see Appendix 2 for details). The Executives' PA's will log all complaints they receive to support tracking, and pass on to appropriate Curriculum Area or department, if not classified 'Red'. The Curriculum Area /department should classify and complete Appendix 3.

If the person receiving the complaint is not the individual to deal with it then they are responsible for ensuring the complaint is received by the correct person.

9 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

We will expect all concerns and complaints to be acknowledged/responded to in 2 working days (but it may not be possible to resolve them in that time). All 'cause for concerns' (Yellow) should normally be resolved in 5 working days and the outcome communicated to the student appropriately.

All 'serious' (Orange) and 'most serious' (Red) complaints should normally be resolved (or an update provided to complainant) within 10 working days of receipt and the outcome communicated.

All 'cause for concern' and 'serious' complaints may be escalated to next level if complainant remains dissatisfied. The Principal's or Senior Postholder's response is final (see Section 10 for taking your complaints further).

The College treats all complaints seriously, however in circumstances where a complaint has been responded to but continues to be made in a malicious or vexatious way, the College reserves the right to refuse to respond in any further way.

10 TAKING COMPLAINTS FURTHER

If the complainant remains dissatisfied once the Principal, or another Senior Postholder has responded, the complainant may write to the Education & Skills Funding Agency. A link to their guidance can found in Appendix 4.

11 MONITORING COMPLAINTS

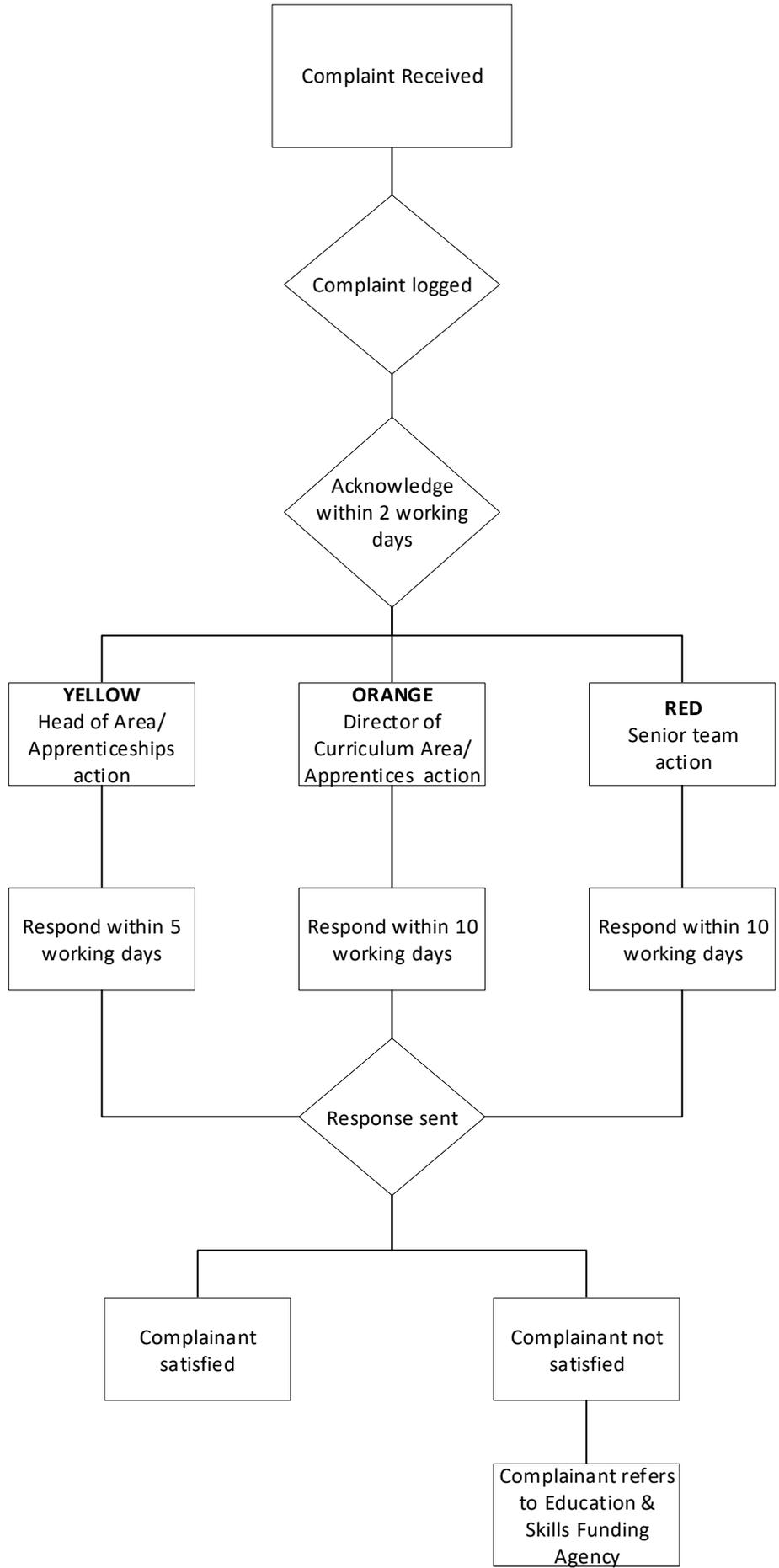
11.1 Informal Concerns

These will be logged (Appendix 2) and responded to as at 9. The log will be considered at each team meeting, along with other student feedback so that actions and improvements can be agreed to minimise repeated similar concerns.

11.2 Complaints

An annual report is produced reviewing the type and classification of complaints received, evaluating resolution time, and summarising changes put in place. This is included in a report to Corporation each October. A summary of complaints received by Curriculum Area /departments and actions taken is summarised each September (Appendix 3) and forwarded to relevant member of Executive.

Appendix 1



APPENDIX 4

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>