



**Issue Date:** September 2017  
**Review Cycle (Years):** Every 3 Years  
**Next Review Date:** September 2020  
**Person Responsible:** Vice Principal,  
 Curriculum & Learning Standards

**COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS POLICY  
 AND PROCEDURES (currently being reviewed)**

**Equality Impact Assessment Status:**

**Date of EIA:**

**Approved by:** SLT

**Approval Date:** October 2017

**Related Documents:**

Student Charter  
 Employer Charter  
 Student Positive Behaviour and  
 Disciplinary Policy  
 Staff Disciplinary Policy and  
 Procedures  
 Student Handbook  
 Student Engagement Strategy  
 Student Council Constitution  
 Student Code of Conduct

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The College is committed to listening and responding to the views of all those using the facilities and services of the College as a key element of its quality review and improvement processes. The College aims to respond to all complaints and suggestions efficiently, effectively and fairly, and recognise compliments. We recognise that our response to complaints and suggestions plays a vital role in our drive to promote equality and diversity, eliminate discrimination and safeguard our customers from abuse and harassment.

**2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

2.1 The purpose of the Complaints and Suggestions Policy is to:

- Provide a clear framework through which complaints and suggestions are fully considered and responded to in a timely, equitable, consistent and professional manner.
- Ensure that information received and actions taken enable continuous improvement.

2.2 The Policy applies to all staff, students, employers, parents, customers, potential students, sub-contracted partners and all other stakeholders who

wish to make a complaint or suggestion either individually or collectively regarding Further or Higher Education.

### 3. POLICY STATEMENT/PRINCIPLES / DETAIL

#### 3.1 Objectives

- To investigate and respond to all complaints in a fair and timely fashion.
- To use feedback and outcomes from complaints and suggestions to facilitate improvements.
- To provide accessible, accurate and complete information on complaints for stakeholders as necessary and appropriate.
- To review complaints through the performance monitoring and review framework.

#### 3.2 Responsibilities

- All staff have a responsibility when faced with a complaint to deal with it sympathetically, helpfully and constructively.
- All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve informal complaints prior to invoking the Complaints Procedure.
- The Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and Student Experience has overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the policy and procedures.

The Quality Department is responsible for:

- Informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and will be investigated.
- Appointing an investigating manager to ensure a complaint is investigated fairly and impartially.
- Seeking a satisfactory resolution for the complainant, where the complaint can be substantiated.
- Informing the complainant of the outcome of the investigation by letter.
- Ensure all compliments are shared with the relevant teams and due recognition is given to the staff involved.
- Maintaining records and information associated with feedback, monitoring feedback and the outcomes.
- Ensure that data is recorded identifying the number of complaints, suggestions and compliments for each area.

The Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and Student Experience or a designated senior manager will hear appeals.

#### 3.3 Implementation and communication

The policy and procedures will be implemented through:

- Meetings and briefings, which will inform staff of their responsibilities in accordance with the policy and procedures, this may be through monthly cross-College management meetings and/or area team meetings where specific instructions and any special responsibilities are discussed.
- Training and/or briefings appropriate to individual staff roles and levels, which will familiarise them with key issues, and clarify roles and responsibilities and the College policies and procedures.

Communication of the policy:

- The procedure (appendix 2 and 3) will be published on the College intranet and website and the Policy will be available upon request.
- 'Dissemination of the procedure within areas to staff and stakeholders is the responsibility of the respective management teams.
- The policy and procedures are communicated to all staff through staff induction, staff intranet, email, training, refresher training and briefings.

#### **4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- The nature of the complaint, the age, gender, ethnicity and disability status of the complainant, along with course and level of study, in the case of students, will be held on a central data base for monitoring and review purposes.
- Complaints will be reviewed termly and monitored and any generic issues of concern will be actioned appropriately.
- A report on complaints, suggestions and compliments, including details of monitoring data, will be submitted to the Governors' Standards Committee on a termly basis and a full Corporation meeting on an annual basis.
- A separate report, specifically to provide assurance on the effectiveness of handling complaints about higher education, will be submitted to governors on an annual basis. The effectiveness, timeliness and resolution of any complaints will be included within this report.
- The policy and procedures, via Equality Impact Assessments, will be assessed to ensure there is not negative impact on any particular groups of people.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or as a result of external governmental policy changes and any amendments will be approved by SLT and endorsed by the Corporation.

#### **5. LIST OF APPENDICES**

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. Procedures
3. Complaints Procedure Flowchart
4. Letter 1 Acknowledgement of Complaint
5. Letter 2 Outcome of Complaint
6. Letter 3 Confirmation of the Appeal Outcome

Initial Equality Impact Assessment	
Audit Prompt	Response
Name of document:	Complaints and Suggestions Policy and Procedures
Author of document:	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Learning Standards
Responsible Senior Manager:	Head of Quality and Development
Initial screening questions	
What is the aim or purpose of the document?	To provide a clear framework through which complaints, compliments and comments are fully considered and responded to in a timely, equitable, consistent and professional manner. To ensure that information received and actions taken enable continuous improvement
Who is affected by the document? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Students (please indicate which groups)</li> <li>• Members of the general public (please specify who)</li> </ul>	Staff Students Employers All stakeholders
Has anyone complained about the document? (if yes, give details)	No
Does the document have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups of people?	No
Does the document make a positive contribution to equality & diversity in the College?	Yes. By giving all staff guidelines to follow and clear measures against which they perform the College is aiming to eliminate discrimination and/or bias in responding to feedback

A full EIA will be needed if this initial screening reveals an adverse impact, or potential for adverse impact on people with protected characteristics.

Refer to full Impact Assessment (Yes/No) and reasons why	No - no adverse impact
If yes, Priority Level (High, Medium, Low)	

Signed:

Name:

Date:

## APPENDIX 2

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

#### 1. Introduction

This document describes the procedures for making/receiving a complaint. A summary of the Complaints Procedure is also included on the 'Have your Say' form.

#### 2. Making a Complaint

A complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more Individuals about a College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the College.'

The Complaints Procedure can be used by anyone (except College staff who should adhere to the Grievance Policy) and covers complaints about services we provide and the treatment received whilst at the College. It does not cover complaints about student assessments e.g. grades and marks. Students wishing to make a complaint related to this should adhere to the Academic Appeals Procedure (FE) or the Higher Education Assessment Policy and Code of Practice (HE).

A complainant may be a student, prospective student, parent, employer, or any other interested party that indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service.

If a student has a complaint it will initially be raised with the lecturer, a Class Rep or an alternative member of staff/manager, whichever is appropriate. A member of staff/manager must take every opportunity to resolve the complaint informally. Staff dealing with informal complaints should keep records of conversation and actions. These will be requested should a complaint escalate to a formal stage.

If an informal resolution is not possible you can email your complaint to [sstanford@coventrycollege.ac.uk](mailto:sstanford@coventrycollege.ac.uk) or a hard written/typed copy handed in to Reception or Student Services. Complaints must include as much detail as possible, but most importantly, the complainant's full name and contact details.

When a formal complaint is received it is the responsibility of those receiving the complaint to notify the Quality Department on receipt so that the complaint can be centrally recorded (see Appendix 3).

To note: If multiple issues are involved within the complaint the Quality Department will advise the relevant managers as appropriate (e.g. an allegation of criminal assault which then may involve criminal proceedings, complaint procedures and staff disciplinary procedures).

If a student needs help in presenting a complaint, advice is available from Student Advisors or a member of Student Services. If the form is being completed on behalf of the complainant, additional information is required to identify third party details.

If the complaint is communicated by telephone or email, the member of staff can record the details on behalf of the complainant and send it to the Quality Department.

External complainants make contact directly using [sstanford@coventrycollege.ac.uk](mailto:sstanford@coventrycollege.ac.uk) or in writing to Sheila Stanford, Coventry College, Henley Campus, Coventry CV2 1ED.

### **3. Recording, gathering, analysing and reporting feedback**

#### **3.1 Recording**

Accurate and comprehensive records of any unsolicited feedback received through complaints should be kept by those receiving the feedback. The Quality Department must be notified of the nature of all feedback received and the detail where necessary.

Unresolved complaints' records will be kept securely for 6 years for reference should further issues arise.

#### **3.2 Gathering and analysing feedback**

The Quality Department will collate data and information received.

Disaggregated reports (by relevant area) will be provided, on request to the Head of Quality and Development.

#### **3.3 Reporting**

The following committees will receive reports on complaints, formally and informally:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Equality and Diversity Committee
- Governors Standards Committee
- Corporation

### **4. Malicious, abusive or persistent complaints**

Coventry College does not tolerate malicious complaints received in any form and will initiate appropriate disciplinary action against such actions, i.e. complaints that are not true, or use of foul language in any communication that are sent to staff.

All complainants should be aware that staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and any violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.

A complainant, who continues to contact the College with unreasonable demands following a complaint investigation, may be considered an unreasonable or persistent complainant. Unreasonable demands can include seeking excessive amounts of information, excessive email or telephone contact, demanding an unrealistic nature or scale of service, or seeking to prolong contact with the College by continually raising new issues throughout an investigation.

If it is agreed that a complainant is unreasonable, the most appropriate action will be taken, informing the complainant that the College has responded in full to their concerns and has nothing further to add, so will not enter into any further discussion. Complainants who have displayed unreasonable behaviour in the past have the right to make new complaints in the future.

### **5. Appeals**

If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, then the complainant has the right of appeal. Appeals will be heard by the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Learning Standards or a senior manager designated by the Principal. The findings will be reported within 10 working days. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Learning Standards or designated senior manager will respond to the complainant and conclude the complaint (see Letter 3).

All appeals should be sent in writing to the Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and Student Experience or emailed within 10 working days of the outcome letter (see Letter 2) to:  
[ddonnarumma@coventrycollege.ac.uk](mailto:ddonnarumma@coventrycollege.ac.uk)

This will be the final route of escalation within the Organisation.

## 6. Unsatisfactory Outcome

If complainants do not agree with the Appeal verdict from the internal complaints procedure and the complaint refers to services received relating to the programme of study and the qualification then they should contact the Awarding Organisation, contact details can be provided by the College.

Should the complainant remain unsatisfactory with the outcome then the qualification regulator should be contacted.

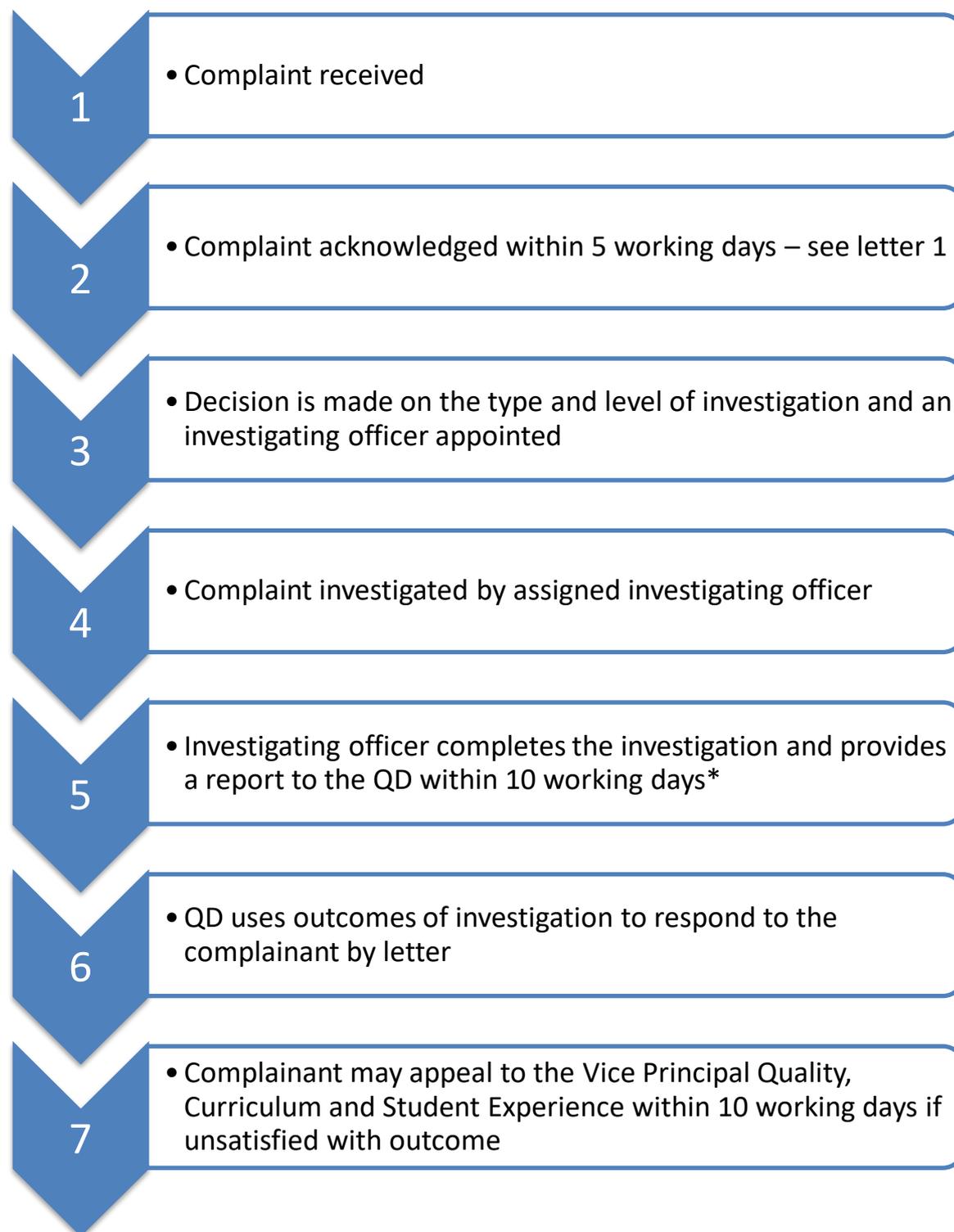
For publicly funded qualifications the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) will consider the complaint once the above procedures have been exhausted. Contact details can be found below:

Complaints Team,  
Education Skills Funding Agency,  
Cheylesmore House,  
Quinton Road,  
Coventry,  
CV1 2WT  
Or email [complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk)

## 7. Higher Education Complaints

Complainants on Higher Education programmes may submit their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for review if they remain dissatisfied following completion of the College's procedures. This must be submitted within three months of the date of the completion of the procedures. Details can be found below:

**Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**  
Third Floor, Kings Reach,  
38-50 Kings Road, Reading,  
RG1 3AA  
Tel: 0118 959 9813,  
Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk)

**Complaints Procedure**

\*Where complaints involve external agencies or lengthy investigation, this may take up to 30 working days. If this is the case, we will update the complainant every 10 working days.