



# Complaints

---

Policy & Procedure 2020-21

Vice Principal Student Engagement

Publication Date: August 2020

Review: August 2021 | Version No. 1

## 1. Policy

- 1.1 At City of Wolverhampton College we are committed to providing high quality services for all our stakeholders and visitors.
- 1.2 The Policy covers complaints about services the College provides and the treatment received whilst at the College.
- 1.3 Overall responsibility lies with the Vice Principal Student Engagement.
- 1.4 Quality are responsible for the management of the processes of timely investigation and communication to complainants. Quality will monitor and track intervention, whilst maintaining accurate records.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 To explain the processes for raising, investigating and concluding raised complaints.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 The procedure applies to complainants. A complainant will be a stakeholder (a current or prospective student or apprentice, a parent/carer or an employer) or a visitor that indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service.
- 3.2 It does not cover complaints about student or apprentice assessments e.g. grades & marks. Complainants wishing to make a complaint related should fully exhaust the Assessment Appeals Procedure before instigating this policy and procedure.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Raising a complaint

- 4.1.1 If a student or apprentice has a concern/complaint it will initially be raised with a member of staff. A member of staff must take every opportunity to resolve the concern/complaint informally. Staff dealing with informal concerns/complaints should keep records of conversation and actions. These will be requested should a concern/complaint escalate to a formal stage.
- 4.1.2 If an informal resolution is not possible, a *'Have Your Say'* form is required to be completed by the student or apprentice with as much detail as possible, but most importantly the complainant's full name and contact details.
- 4.1.3 The *'Have Your Say'* form can take the guise of various methods. This can be:
  - a) submitted access and submitted via the website <https://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/have-your-say/>
  - b) scanned and emailed via [complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk) after a *'Have Your Say'* form has been completed
  - c) posted to Quality, City of Wolverhampton College, Paget Road Campus, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV6 0DU after a *'Have Your Say'* form has been completed
  - d) Handed to a member of staff who will pass on to Quality

- 4.1.4 If a student or apprentice needs help in presenting a complaint, advice can be sought from a member of staff. If the form is being completed on behalf of the complainant, additional information may be required.
  - 4.1.5 If the complainant communicates by telephone, a member of staff can record the details on behalf of the complainant. This should then be forwarded to Quality or scanned to [complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk)
  - 4.1.6 Complaints should be raised within twelve months of the original issue so that evidence is available for the investigation.
- 4.2 Investigating a complaint
- 4.2.1 On receipt of a formal complaint, the complainant will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt and an Investigation Lead allocated. Quality may contact the complainant for further information or to provide any further information.
  - 4.2.2 Quality will then liaise with the Investigation Lead to investigate the issues raised. Where possible, the Investigation Lead will be independent to the scope of the complaint however, in some instances managers of areas may be allocated due to having appropriate background knowledge.
  - 4.2.3 The Investigation Lead will complete an investigation within ten working days (or longer if more complex or investigations are needed due to external factors). Where timeframes are extended, the complainant will be advised.
  - 4.2.4 Quality will continuously monitor the progress of the complaint.
  - 4.2.5 In exceptional circumstances for example in pandemics such as COVID-19, these procedures may be adjusted slightly due to working restrictions.
- 4.3 Complaint outcomes
- 4.3.1 Following the investigation outcome, a response will be communicated to the complainant in writing. This is based on the findings of the Investigating Officer and will be sent by the Vice Principal Student Engagement.
  - 4.3.2 In the event of a complaint being raised relating to Higher Education (HE), under the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Scheme Rules, the College will incorporate in the response the Completion of Procedures Letter. The Completion of Procedures Letter serves four main purposes:
    1. It fixes the date when the student completes the provider's internal complaints procedures
    2. It clarifies the issues considered by the provider under those procedures
    3. It establishes the timescale for bringing a complaint to the OIA
    4. It advises the student of the possibility of bringing a complaint to the OIA.
  - 4.3.3 The College will ensure that students and apprentices will not be treated less favorably following a complaint.
  - 4.3.4 All formal complaints are recorded on a central complaints system.
- 4.4 Appeals
- 4.4.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome they may appeal against the decision within five working days of the response. This must be in writing addressed to the Vice Principal Student Success.

- 4.4.2 The appeal will be investigated by the Vice Principal Student Success or a manager independent of the original complaint and a response issued within ten working days from the date of the appeal.
  - 4.4.3 Where the appeal relates to a complaint about Higher education (HE), under the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Scheme Rules, the College will incorporate in the response the Completion of Procedures Letter.
  - 4.4.4 The outcome of this appeal concludes the complaints process.
  - 4.4.5 All appeals are recorded on a central complaints system.
- 4.5 Malicious, abusive or persistent complaints
- 4.5.1 City of Wolverhampton 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, use of foul language in any communication that are sent to staff.
  - 4.5.2 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.
  - 4.5.3 If it is agreed that a complainant is unreasonable, the Vice Principal Student Engagement will decide the most appropriate actions, 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.
  - 4.5.4 Complainants who have displayed unreasonable behaviour in the past have the right to make new complaints in the future.

## **5. Monitoring & Evaluation**

- 5.1 Complaints analysis will be produced and reports will be compiled on a regular basis concerning the nature of the complaints received and actions emerging for improvement purposes.

**Appendix 1 - Complaint Process Flowchart**