



Complaints

Policy & Procedure 2026-27

Principal and CEO

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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 an assigned member of the Executive Team.
- 1.4 The Quality team 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.
- 2.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the College or its staff, requiring a response.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The procedure applies to complainants. A complainant is a stakeholder (a current or prospective student or apprentice, a parent/carer or an employer) or a visitor that indicates dissatisfaction.
- 3.2 Complaints should be submitted as soon as reasonably practicable after the event giving rise to the complaint and, in all cases, within the same academic year in which the matter occurred.
- 3.3 This policy and procedure do not cover complaints about student or apprentice assessments e.g. grades and marks. Complainants wishing to make a complaint regarding outcomes should fully exhaust the College's 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 or complaint, it should initially be raised with a member of college staff. Staff are expected to make every effort to resolve the issue informally at this stage. A record of any discussions and actions taken should be maintained, as this information may be required if the matter progresses to a formal complaint.

- 4.1.2 If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, the student or apprentice can submit a formal complaint in writing. This should include as much detail as possible and must clearly state the complainant's full name and contact information.
- 4.1.3 A formal complaint must be submitted within a timely manner to the dissatisfaction and be within the same academic year in which the issue occurred.
- 4.1.4 Formal complaints can be submitted using the following methods:
 - a) A 'Have Your Say' form can be submitted via the [website](#)
 - b) A hard copy of the 'Have Your Say' form can be completed and scanned to complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk
 - c) A letter or a 'Have Your Say' form addressed to the Quality Team and posted to any College campus
 - d) A letter or a 'Have Your Say' form handed to a member of staff who will pass on to Quality
 - e) A letter or email sent directly to complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk
- 4.1.5 If a student or apprentice needs help in presenting a complaint, advice can be sought from a member of staff. If completed on behalf of the complainant, additional information may be required.
- 4.1.6 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

4.2 Investigating a complaint

- 4.2.1 The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt. At this point, an Investigation Lead will be assigned. The Quality team may contact the complainant to request or provide additional information.
- 4.2.2 The Quality team will liaise with the Investigation Lead to examine the concerns raised. If possible, the Investigation Lead will be independent of the area involved in the complaint. However, in certain cases, a manager from the relevant area may be appointed, due to their subject matter expertise.
- 4.2.3 There is no entitlement to a meeting to discuss matters. Meetings will only take place where the College determines that they are necessary to support the investigation stage.
- 4.2.4 The Investigation Lead will aim to complete the investigation within ten working days. If the complaint is complex or external factors cause delays, this timeframe may be extended, and the complainant will be informed accordingly.
- 4.2.5 The Quality team will monitor the progress of the investigation throughout the process.
- 4.2.6 In exceptional circumstances - such as during a pandemic or outside of term time - procedures may be adapted to reflect operational constraints.

4.3 Complaint outcomes

- 4.3.1 Following the investigation, an outcome and response will be formed by the Investigating Lead and communicated to the assigned Executive Member responsible for complaints. Written findings will be formed and sent to the complainant.
- 4.3.2 There is no entitlement to a meeting to discuss outcome matters. Meetings will only take place where the College determines that they are necessary to support the outcome stage.
- 4.3.3 In the event that a complaint is raised relating to a Higher Education (HE) course, or a programme at Level 4 and above covered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Scheme Rules, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter as part of its final response. This will be provided either following the response to any appeal, or after the expiry of the appeal period where no appeal has been submitted. The Completion of Procedures Letter serves four main purposes:
 - 1. It fixes the date when the student completes the college's complaints policy and procedures.
 - 2. It clarifies the issues considered by the college under those procedures.
 - 3. It establishes the timescale for bringing a complaint to the OIA.
 - 4. It advises the student or apprentice of the possibility of bringing a complaint to the OIA.

- 4.4 Where a complaint results in actions relating to a member of staff, the College will not disclose details of any action taken to the complainant. This is because such matters are confidential and subject to employment law, data protection legislation and the College's duty of confidentiality. The College will, however, assure complainants that their concerns have been fully considered and that appropriate action has been considered and/or taken where required.

- 4.4.1 By way of example, a response may include the following statement:

"The concern or complaint has been investigated, and appropriate action has been taken where necessary. However, we are unable to provide further details, as any action concerning individual members of staff is confidential."

- 4.5 The College will ensure that students and apprentices will not be treated less favourably following a complaint.
- 4.6 All formal complaints are recorded on a central tracking system.

5. Appeals

- 5.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may submit an appeal within five working days from the date of the response.

5.2 Appeals will normally only be considered where:

5.2.1 New evidence has become available that could not reasonably have been provided during the investigation.

5.2.2 There is evidence that the procedure was not followed correctly.

5.2.3 The outcome was unreasonable based on the evidence considered.

5.3 Requests for information relating to confidential staff matters will not be considered grounds for appeal. The College's obligations to protect the personal data and employment confidentiality of its staff take precedence over any request for disclosure by a complainant.

5.4 Not all appeals received will be considered. In these cases, the complainant will be advised.

5.5 Appeals must be submitted through formal communication, clearly stating the reasons for requesting a review. Channels to submit an appeal can include:

- a) A letter posted to Quality at one of the College campuses.
- b) A letter handed to a member of staff who will pass on to Quality.
- c) An email sent to complaints@wolvcoll.ac.uk

5.6 Appeals will be reviewed by a member of the Executive Management Team (EMT) or Senior Management Team (SMT) who has had no prior involvement in the original complaint. A formal response will be provided within ten working days from the date the appeal is received.

5.7 There is no entitlement to a meeting to discuss appeals matters. Meetings will only take place where the College determines that they are necessary to support the appeal stage.

5.8 For appeals related to Higher Education (HE), the College will include a Completion of Procedures Letter in its response, in accordance with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Scheme Rules.

5.9 Following the appeal outcome, the College's internal complaints procedure will be deemed exhausted and is concluded. No further communication or correspondence will be responded to following this.

5.10 All appeals are logged and tracked through a central monitoring system.

6. Anonymous Complaints

6.1 Anonymous complaints will be considered at the College's discretion. Where insufficient information is provided to investigate the matter, the College may be unable to take further action.

7. Unreasonable, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints and Complainant Behaviour

- 7.1 The College is committed to treating all complainants with courtesy, respect and fairness. In return, the College expects complainants to communicate in a reasonable and respectful manner and not to engage in behaviour that places unreasonable demands on staff or resources.
- 7.2 The College may consider behaviour to be unreasonable where a complainant:
 - 7.2.1 Repeatedly raises the same complaint after the College's complaints procedure has been completed.
 - 7.2.2 Refuses to accept the outcome of a complaint after all stages of the procedure have been exhausted.
 - 7.2.3 Makes excessive contact by telephone, email, letter or social media.
 - 7.2.4 Sends large volumes of correspondence that are repetitive, irrelevant or excessively lengthy.
 - 7.2.5 Uses abusive, threatening, offensive or discriminatory language towards staff, students or apprentices.
 - 7.2.6 Makes unreasonable demands regarding timescales, outcomes or the manner in which a complaint is investigated.
 - 7.2.7 Records meetings, discussions or telephone conversations without the prior knowledge or consent of those involved.
 - 7.2.8 Contacts multiple members of staff simultaneously about the same issue.
 - 7.2.9 Knowingly provides false, misleading or incomplete information.
- 7.3 Where the College considers behaviour to be unreasonable, it may take one or more of the following actions:
 - 7.3.1 Restrict communication to a single named point of contact.
 - 7.3.2 Require communications to be made in writing only.
 - 7.3.3 Limit the frequency of responses provided by the College.
 - 7.3.4 Decline to respond to correspondence that repeats issues already addressed.
 - 7.3.5 End telephone calls or meetings where abusive or threatening behaviour occurs.
 - 7.3.6 Refuse to consider matters that have already been fully investigated and concluded.
 - 7.3.7 Implement reasonable contact arrangements for a specified period.
 - 7.3.8 Refuse face-to-face meetings or being on a College site.
- 7.4 Decisions to impose contact restrictions will be authorised by a member of the College Executive Management Team and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain proportionate.
- 7.5 The College reserves the right to pause or suspend an investigation of a complaint where ongoing abusive, threatening or inappropriate behaviour towards staff compromises the College's ability to conduct a fair investigation. The complaint will resume once appropriate communication arrangements have been established.

- 7.6 The submission of a complaint will not, in itself, affect a student's or apprentice's place of study at the College. However, conduct by the complainant, or by those acting on behalf of the complainant, that is deemed abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise in breach of college policies may be addressed separately under the College's disciplinary procedures, which could result in sanctions up to and including withdrawal from the College.
- 7.7 Where communications contain threats, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory conduct, or behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence, the College reserves the right to report such matters to the Police or other relevant authorities and take any further action considered necessary to protect staff, students or apprentices.

8. Data Protection

- 8.1 Information relating to complaints will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Information will only be shared with those involved in investigating, resolving and overseeing the complaint.

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

- 8.2 Analysis of complaints is produced annually, alongside regular in-year reports, detailing the nature of complaints received and identifying actions taken to support continuous improvement.

Appendix 1 - Complaint Process Flowchart

