

Complaints Procedure 2019-21

Procedure Reference:	PR01	
Created by:	Head of Quality	
Approved by:	SMT	
Date of Approval:	07/2019	
Date of Review	07/2021	
Revision number :	2	
Policy / Procedure(s) linked to	• NCG Complaints Policy	
Groups this Procedure applies to		
16 – 18 full time learners	Yes	If no refer to:
19+ full time learners	Yes	If no refer to:
19+ substantive part time learners	Yes	If no refer to:
19+ non-substantive part time learners	Yes	If no refer to:
Apprentices	Yes	If no refer to:
Higher Education students	Yes	If no refer to:

1. Purpose

NCG has a complaints policy which is delivered via Divisional complaints procedures. These procedures are developed within the Divisions to meet the needs of their business.

West Lancashire College has a staged complaints procedure through which we aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible.

Employees or former employees should use the College's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of Curriculum and Services and staff dealing with stage 1 complaints will

- Ensure all complaints are taken seriously
- Seek a resolution as soon as possible and communicate this in a timely manner
- View complaints as a positive feedback mechanism leading to the opportunity to develop and provide an improved experience
- Monitor patterns in relation to complaints and respond swiftly

Head of Quality will

- Ensure all complaints at Stage 2 are taken seriously
- Seek a resolution to Stage 2 complaints as soon as possible and communicate this in a timely manner
- Log all Stage 2, 3 and appeals complaints and view complaints as a positive feedback mechanism leading to the opportunity to develop and provide an improved experience
- Provide an annual report to NCG on the complaints received at Stage 2 and 3 and actions taken

Member of Senior Management will:

- Ensure all complaints at Stage 3 are taken seriously
- Seek a resolution to Stage 3 complaints as soon as possible and communicate this in a timely manner.
- Log all Stage 3 complaints via the Quality Manager and view complaints as a positive feedback mechanism leading to the opportunity to develop and provide an improved experience
- Co-ordinate the communication relating to complaints by external bodies as described in Stage 4

The Principal will

- Examine information provided that has led to an appeal following a complaint at level 3
- Seek to resolve the appeal as soon as possible and communicate this in a timely manner. Log the outcome of the appeal via the Quality Manager

- Provide advice relating to escalating the complaint by referring to the awarding body and /or the relevant qualifications regulatory body eg Ofqual, SQA

3. Procedure

Learners

Rather than let an issue of concern or an area of dissatisfaction become a complaint, we hope that you will try to resolve your issue by:-

Raising your concerns directly with the person who, in your opinion, is responsible, or directly with your lecturer/tutor/a member of the Student Services Team, or directly with the course leader or manager for your course, or

Using the College's learner surveys to bring concerns to the attention of course teams and/or college managers, or

Using your Course Representative to take forward any concerns

You may wish to take advice and support from Student Services during the Complaints process.

Employers

If you are dissatisfied or have any concerns with the service provided by the college you can raise the issue:

Directly with the Manager for the area

Using an Employer Forum or employer survey to bring concerns to the attention of college managers

General

If you are a member of the public, parent, ex-student or general user of the college and you are dissatisfied or have concerns about the service provided you should in the first instance:

Raise the issue directly with the person who, in your opinion, is responsible, or

raise the issue with the supervisor or manager for the area or service concerned

If you are unsure who to contact each department and service area has a Head or Manager to whom you can speak or write. They will help to deal with your concern.

Telephone: 01695 52300

These are:

Head of Department	Department	email
Collette Collins	Head of Learner Experience and SLC Curriculum	collette.collins@westlancs.ac.uk
Jane Hines	Head of Service: Marketing	jane.hines@westlancs.ac.uk
Lauren Reynolds	Head of Estates and Facilities	lauren.reynolds@westlancs.ac.uk
Louise Stone	Head of Curriculum	louise.stone@westlancs.ac.uk

Details of the four stages of the complaints procedure are outlined below:

Stage	Timescale	Reporting
Stage One – Informal	Stage 1 concerns will be raised immediately and no later than three months after its occurrence	Concerns will be brought by the complainant to the attention of the person who in the opinion of the complainant, is responsible. (For example a tutor, course leader, curriculum or service manager) Whilst this is an informal stage, Colleges must ensure that the issue is recorded in a simple log or similar broadly indicating the nature of complaint, date it was raised, outline resolution and date closed.
Stage Two – form	Stage 2 concerns will be raised within three months of exhausting Stage 1	<p>If the concern is not resolved at the informal stage, or the complainant feels that the issue has not been dealt with, then this will progress to Stage 2.</p> <p>Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Head of Quality. West Lancashire College, College Way, Skelmersdale, West Lancashire WN8 6DX.</p> <p>The procedure will ensure that complaints are acknowledged within three working days of receipt by the Head of Quality.</p> <p>The complaint will be assigned to a named senior manager of appropriately delegated manager, who will take responsibility to fully investigate the matter.</p> <p>The College will work to a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint. Where this is not possible, due to complexity, the complainant must be informed in writing.</p>

<p>Stage 3 Appeal</p>	<p>Stage 3 concerns will be raised within one month of exhausting stage 2.</p>	<p>If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the Stage 2 complaint, the College procedure will include the right to appeal by escalating to Stage 3.</p> <p>The complainant will put their appeal in writing, detail the reason for the dissatisfaction and why they consider the response to the formal complaint (stage 2) to be inadequate. Stage 3 appeals will be sent Head of Quality, West Lancashire College, Skelmersdale Campus, College Way, Skelmersdale, West Lancashire WN8 6DX T: 01695 52300</p> <p>The Principal will review the appeal, fully investigate the matter and provide a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 3 appeal. Where this is not possible, due to complexity, the complainant must be informed in writing.</p>
<p>Stage 4 Group and External referral</p> <p>For Further Education complainants</p>	<p>Stage 4 concerns will be raised within one month of exhausting stage 3.</p>	<p>If the concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and the complainant remains unsatisfied, then a final appeal can be made to the CEO, NCG, Rye Hill House Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7SA</p> <p>Before a complainant proceeds, they must have exhausted all stages above.</p> <p>Colleges/Group Services will work to a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 4 complaint.</p>
		<p>Where this is not possible, due to complexity, the complainant must be informed in writing.</p> <p>If the issue can not be resolved through the CEO's office, then the Executive Director of Quality, will notify the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)</p> <p>Complaints for Group Services will follow the same procedure unless the complaint is about the CEO or a member of the CEO's office.</p>

<p>Stage 4 External</p> <p>For Higher Education</p>	<p>Stage 4 concerns will be raised with the OIA within one calendar year of receiving a "Letter of Completion".</p>	<p>If the concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and the complainant remains unsatisfied, then a final appeal can be made to the CEO, NCG, Rye Hill House Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7SA</p> <p>Before a complainant proceeds, they must have exhausted all stages above.</p> <p>Colleges/Group Services will work to a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 4 complaint</p> <p>If the issue cannot be resolved through the CEO's office, then the Director of HE, will notify the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The complainant will be informed in writing that this is the next stage and that it has been actioned.</p> <p>For service related complaints please contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3AB Tel: 0118 959 9814 Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk Website: http://www.oiahe.org.uk/</p> <p>If you are a learner, you may wish to take advice and support from Learner Services</p> <p>If you are on a course validated by University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) and, if, after exhausting all three stages of the College Complaints Procedure, you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to submit your complaint to the university. https://www.uclan.ac.uk/corporate_information/complaints-procedure.php</p>
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Complaints made via Social Media

Please note where a complaint is received via Social Media, the College will respond advising the complainant to follow the College's Complaints Procedure.

4. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

The Complaints Procedure is quality assured via the Quality department and Heads of Curriculum and Services. NCG monitor complaints through an annual reporting process.

5. Flowchart of Procedure

There is no flowchart associated with this procedure.

Appendices: Documentation Associated with Procedure

There are no appendices associated with this procedure.