

Complaints Policy and Procedure 2017-2018

At Capital City College Group, we want to provide you with an outstanding educational experience and an excellent service. One of the ways in which we can improve what we do is by listening to you and responding to your views. The Colleges value the feedback that students and employers provide and complaints are monitored, evaluated and reported to the Colleges' senior management teams and annually to the Corporation. We aim to deal with complaints in a fair, reasonable and timely manner.

Capital City College Training, City and Islington College, the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and Westminster Kingsway College are members of the Capital City College Group. When signing your Learner Agreement / Employer Contract with your college you are agreeing to the Group's policies and procedures which outline what you can expect from us and what we can expect of you. These policies, including the Complaints Policy, are available on the College websites. Please use the Complaints Policy and Procedure for your College for specific contact details and for avenues of support. Each college policy outlines the same key processes as detailed below.

Introduction

What is a Complaint? A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of a service or facility provided by the College.

Who can make a Complaint?

- Students / Apprentices who are enrolled on a course/programme/activity at the College. This includes students on Higher Education (HE) courses affiliated to partner universities in the first instance. Once the College Complaints Procedure is completed an HE student may then take their complaint to the partner university if they wish.
- Employers who have employees enrolled on a course/programme/activity at the College.

We would not normally accept a complaint from:

- Ex-students unless the complaint is received by the College within eight weeks of the end date of the course.
- An anonymous source.
- Third parties e.g. parents / guardians or legal representatives.

It is expected that complaints are made promptly and normally within 3 months.

If a complaint is about a member of staff, they will be notified and given the opportunity to respond. In all other respects the College will maintain confidentiality regarding complaints and request that students, apprentices and employers do the same.

The College has the right not to accept complaints (e.g. where a complaint is judged by the College to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious).

Separate procedures exist for the following:

- Academic appeals relating to assessment decisions, covered by the Assessment Appeals Procedure
- Complaints relating to disciplinary processes are covered by the Learning and Behaviour Policy
- Complaints relating to bullying and harassment are covered by the Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Complaints relating to admissions are covered by the Admissions Policy

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Complaints Procedure

Stage 1- Informal Complaints Procedure: You should in the first instance raise any concerns with the tutor or a college manager. The Colleges aim to resolve the issues you raise within 10 working days.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaints Procedure: If your complaint has not been resolved using the informal complaints procedure, or if it is inappropriate to use the informal procedure because the complaint is of a serious nature, you may make a formal complaint. Your complaint may be referred back to the informal complaints procedure if you skipped that stage without due consideration.

How to make a formal complaint: Formal complaints must be made in writing using either a Complaint Form or by email. Please see the specific College Policy for contact details.

Your complaint form or email should include clear detailed reasons for your complaint, an indication of the resolution or outcome you seek, and copies of any documents upon which you wish to rely.

The manager responsible for managing the complaints process in your college administers the formal complaints process and will acknowledge, monitor and respond to your complaint.

The Colleges aim to acknowledge, investigate and report on the outcome of your formal complaint and any resulting action within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. These timescales may be extended by the Colleges in certain circumstances e.g. where the issues raised by a complaint are serious ones or to take account of College holidays.

You can normally expect:

- **Complaint acknowledgement:** Your complaint to be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.
- **Complaint investigation, outcome and action:** An investigation of your complaint will be undertaken by a College manager and the College aims to complete this stage within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint.
The investigation may involve speaking with relevant individuals and / or looking at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. You may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student Union Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (e.g. English as a second language, a learning difficulty and / or disability) you may bring a second person with you.
- **Complaint response:** The Colleges aim to provide a written response to within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. If after 10 working days of getting a response you do not request a review, the College will regard your complaint as closed.

Stage 3 - Review of Formal Complaints: The Colleges aim to investigate and resolve all complaints in a fair and reasonable manner. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your formal complaint you have the right to request a Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- New material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation

- You believe the outcome of the complaint was manifestly unreasonable &/or any resulting action was disproportionate
- The complaints procedure was not followed.

If you wish to request a Review email within 10 working days of the date of the College's written response to your complaint to: angela.edwards@capitalccg.ac.uk, Director of Performance & Quality at the Capital City College Group.

You must clearly explain the reasons for your request for a Review including the grounds upon which it is based and enclose copies of all the documents you wish to rely upon.

You can normally expect:

- **Complaint acknowledgement:** The Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, will acknowledge your review request within 3 working days of receiving it.
- **Complaint review and action:** The Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, will consider your request for a Review and determine whether it meets one or more of the grounds stated above.
 - If your request for a Review does not meet one or more of the grounds for review, the complaint outcome will not be reviewed. A Completion of Procedures notification will be sent to you by the Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, to close the matter.
 - If the Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, determines that your case needs to be reviewed, you will be notified who will lead the Review (reviewing manager) and what the Review will involve, including timelines. This may include speaking with relevant individuals and / or looking at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. Again, you may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student Union Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (e.g. English as a second language, a learning difficulty and / or disability) you may bring a second person with you.
 - You will receive notification about the Review arrangements or Completion of Procedures within 10 working days of receipt of the Review request.
- **Review outcome:** The outcome of a Review will be either to:
 - Uphold the complaint outcome and/or any action.
 - Substitute an alternative outcome and/or action.

You will be informed of the outcome of the Review normally within 5 working days of it being decided upon by the reviewing manager. The decision of the reviewing manager is final and the Group will not consider your complaint further. The Review outcome will be contained in the Completion of Procedures notification.

External Agencies

Following the conclusion of a Review and the receipt of a Completion of Procedures notification, you may be able to take the matter further with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (www.esfa.gov.uk), or if you are on a Higher Education course, with your College partner University and/or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk>)

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Stage 1 Informal Stage

- The complainant raises the issue(s) or event(s) with a Tutor or College Manager
- The issue is investigated and an early resolution is identified normally within 10 working days
- The learner is satisfied with the outcome and so no further action is required and the case is closed
- The learner is not satisfied with the outcome and is entitled to proceed to Stage 2 (Formal Process)

Stage 2 Formal Stage

- A complaints form is completed or an email submitted about the complaint. An acknowledgement letter is sent usually within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.
- The issue is investigated by a designated manager and an outcome shared with the complainant normally within 20 working days of receiving the complaint.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request a review within 10 working days of receiving the outcome.
- If a Review is not requested the complaint is regarded as closed.

Stage 3 Review Stage

- All requests for a Review must be sent to the Director of Performance & Quality (DPQ) within 10 working days of receiving the outcome stating the grounds for the Review. The DPQ will acknowledge receiving your Review request normally within 3 working days and inform you of the outcome of the Review request usually within 10 working days.
- If the request for a Review is not upheld, you will be informed and a Completion of Procedures notification sent.
- If the request for a Review is upheld, the next stages, including the reviewing manager and the planned timelines will be communicated to you.
- The Review is conducted and outcomes are communicated to you normally within 5 working days of its completion with a Completion of Procedures notification.

Following the conclusion of the Review, FE students may refer to the ESFA (www.esfa.gov.uk) and HE students may refer to the College's partner university or the OIAHE (www.oiahe.org.uk)