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Please contact us on 01904 770372 or email us at qi-admin@yorkcollege.ac.uk if you would like this document in an alternative format

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Relationship to other documents

This is a procedure which falls under the Quality Improvement Policy and should be read in conjunction with that Policy

Introduction

Staff at York College welcome feedback and take all complaints seriously, whilst also valuing compliments. We will act appropriately whenever complaints are received. The College takes the view that a complaint is an opportunity to improve our level of service.

When a complaint or compliment is received it is forwarded to the Quality Improvement (QI) Team for recording and disseminating as appropriate.

The College categorises complaints as informal or formal.

An informal complaint is just that. No further action will be taken, but the complaint will be recorded and a copy forwarded to the relevant Manager for information. In all cases, the complainant will be made aware that if they want a resolution to their complaint, then they must follow the procedure for a formal complaint as set out below. If a pattern of a particular type of informal complaint begins to emerge, the Head of Quality Improvement may initiate an investigation.

Formal complaints will be investigated by an appropriate manager.

The Complaints and Compliments Procedure does not apply to appeals against an assessment decision relating to an academic award or progression on a programme of study. These matters are covered by the Academic Appeals Procedure. If the College receives a complaint that the College believes would be more appropriately dealt with as an academic appeal, it may decide to follow the Academic Appeals Procedure.

Making a complaint

Ordinarily, anyone wishing to make a complaint should complete a Complaints Form (see page 4). However, it is recognised that it is not always possible to do this and therefore a letter, email, or telephone complaint will suffice. The QI Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days.

The Head of Quality Improvement (or in their absence a member of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)) will direct the complaint to the most appropriate manager to investigate. The investigating manager will respond directly to the complainant.

Once an investigation is initiated, it should be completed and reported upon within ten working days. If that cannot happen, for whatever reason, it is the responsibility of the investigating manager to keep the complainant informed as to the reasons why and the anticipated conclusion date. All complainants will receive a written response outlining the actions taken to resolve it and detailing any mitigating circumstances arising from the investigation. Complainants will be made aware of the appeal procedure at this stage.

Appealing the Outcome of a Complaint

The complainant can appeal against the outcome of the investigation. This must be in writing, and received by the Head of Quality Improvement within ten working days from the date of the written response sent regarding the outcomes of the complaint. The Head of Quality Improvement will then investigate the circumstances surrounding the initial investigation or assign a new investigating (appeal) manager to do this.

Complainants may be invited to a meeting to consider the appeal, and this will ordinarily take place within ten working days of the College receiving a written notice to appeal. Where it is not possible to hold such a meeting within this timescale they will be kept informed and the manager considering the appeal may do this through a telephone conversation.

Complainants will receive written notification of the appeal decision. Ordinarily this will be within five working days of the meeting to consider their appeal.

The decision reached, as a result of the appeal investigation, will be final. Complainants will be sent a "Completion of Procedures" (CoP) letter saying that they have come to the end of the York College complaint procedure and outlining if they have the right to appeal to any external organisation. In many cases external bodies will not accept complaints unless a CoP letter has been issued by the College.

If the complaint is about an aspect of College activity which is not funded from an external funding body then there is no automatic right of appeal. There are three situations in which such appeals can be made. These are:

a) Complaints from students undertaking College run courses, where the Awarding Organisation allow appeals from students studying their qualifications within the College

Some Awarding Organisations (such as CMI, NEBOSH and Signature) allow students who have been studying at the College the right to appeal any complaint that the College has dealt with to them. CoP letters will ensure that complainants are made aware of the contact details, timescales and other information required to appeal the College's decision should that facility exist.

b) Complaints from students undertaking courses funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

Where the course has been funded by the ESFA, appeals about the outcomes of a complaint should be directed to them. The ESFA will not usually investigate complaints until the College's procedure, including the appeal, has been exhausted. Appeals to the ESFA should be made within 3 months of getting a decision from the College. More information can be found on the following website <https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducation>

c) Complaints Relating to Higher Education (HE) provision

If after the internal procedures for York College have been exhausted the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may have the right to refer the matter to the relevant Validating Institution. If this is the case, they may only seek an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) once that Institution's procedures have been completed. If the Validating Institution does not offer this opportunity, the complainant will be able immediately request a review from the OIA. The College's Close of Proceeding's letters will make it clear which of these options is available to the complainant.

The OIA is an independent body established to consider student complaints which have not been resolved internally. Appeals to the OIA should be made within 12 months of getting a decision from the College. This service is free to students. More information can be found on the OIA website: www.oiahe.org.uk

Complaints/Compliments/Comment Form

(Please tick one of the following boxes)



Compliment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informal Complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal Complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>

Personal Details

Name:

Address:

Tel. No(s):

Email Address:

Course Details (if applicable):

Details of your Complaint/Compliment

(if you are making a complaint please describe briefly your cause for complaint i.e. what is the nature of your complaint, when did it take place and who was involved?)

(Please continue on reverse or a separate sheet)

Signature

Date

Please return completed form to QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, York College, Sim Balk Lane, York YO23 2BB or qi-admin@yorkcollege.ac.uk, marked PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL. A Formal Complaint will normally receive an acknowledgment within 3 working days.

Complaints and Compliments Procedure - Diagram

