

Corporate Ref.	CPP 005a
Level	3
Senior Responsible Officer	Assistant Principal Quality and Improvement
Version	3
EIA	01 February 2019
Approved by	SMT
Approved date	27/05/2021
Superseded version	2
Review date	August 2027

College Policy

Compliments and Complaints

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope	3
3. Key Principles.....	4
4. Lines of Responsibility	5
5. Specific Policies / Related Documents	5
6. Directly Related Legislation.....	6
7. Effective Date	6
End of document	6

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes
3	Complaints Handling Co-ordinator	21/06/2024	Narrative updated.

1. Introduction

Our Complaints Handling Procedure reflects the Edinburgh College commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct, where appropriate, thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints, so that we can make evidence-based decisions.

We recognise that all feedback is valuable information we can use to improve customer satisfaction, make improvements to our services and boost staff morale.

The complaints procedure was developed by College staff who are experienced complaints handlers, working closely with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHPs) were revised in 2019 by the SPSO, in consultation with all sectors. The MCHP includes a core text, which is consistent across all public services in Scotland, with some additional text and examples specific to this sector. This procedure aims to help us 'get it right first time'. The College is committed to a quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early responses by capable, well-trained staff.

2. Scope

This policy covers all aspects of College management, learning and teaching and support services.

Students and members of the public may use this procedure.

The exceptions are:

- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a disagreement with academic judgment
- a concern from a student about another student's conduct
- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for compensation only
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector

- a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- a concern about a child or an adult's safety
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Actions Statement and/or Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying and Harassment guidance for staff.
- a concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

3. Key Principles

All Edinburgh College staff must engage with the complaint's procedure as part of their professional role and will be supported in doing so. Staff will be provided with appropriate training to ensure they are confident in identifying complaints, empowered to resolve simple Stage 1 complaints on the spot, and familiar with how to apply this procedure (including how to record complaints).

Each complaint handled will be given an outcome this may be Upheld, Partially Upheld, Not Upheld or Resolved.

A complaint can be resolved at any stage in the process (when both the College and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide a full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld).

The timescales applied will be five working days for Stage 1 and 20 working days for Stage 2 complaints. Extension to the timeline will only occur when there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so.

All extensions will be communicated with the complainant.

All Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints will be logged so that the College can monitor trends, learn from complaints and identify necessary quality improvements. Clear action to address complaints will be identified.

All Stage 2 investigations must be managed by the Complaints Handling team and recorded on a complaint investigation plan by the Complaint Investigator to enable the Complaints Handling team to draft a satisfactory response to the complainant.

All responses to Stage 2 complaints will be signed off by the Vice Principal.

A report on all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received and the outcomes will be presented to Senior Management quarterly and the College's Board of Management annually.

The outcome of a stage 2 complaint is the final stage in the College's complaint procedure. In its response to the complaint, the College will highlight that the complainant may request independent third-party review by asking SPSO, or if appropriate an awarding body to review the complaint.

All Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received on behalf of another will require a Complaint Authorisation form to be completed and returned to the Complaints Handling team before a complaint investigation can progress.

Appropriate training will be provided to staff on how to conduct a complaint investigation.

4. Lines of Responsibility

The Executive team and Senior Management team has responsibility to ensure compliance with the policy and procedures.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has the responsibility to ensure it monitors the frequency and outcomes of complaints to ensure the College has taken appropriate corrective actions.

Anyone can make a complaint either verbally, in writing, face-to-face, by phone, letter or email, directly to the Complaints Handling team. The service involved can deal directly with a Stage 1 complaint. To ensure all complaints are formally logged, the Complaints Handling team must receive a completed Frontline Resolution Form from the person dealing with the complaint within two working days of closure. The Complaints Handling team will contact the complainant to ensure they are satisfied with the service they have received. The Complaints Handling team must manage all Stage 2 complaints, arrangements for investigation, recording of outcomes and communication with complainant.

5. Specific Policies / Related Documents

Controlled version available
on EC Intranet

5 College Policy Compliments and
Complaints | Version 3

Complaints Handling Procedure Parts 1-5.

The Further Education Model Complaints Handling Procedure (SPSO).

6. Directly Related Legislation

[The Scottish Public Services Ombudsmen Act 2002](#)

Also related (although not directly) – data protection legislation, especially UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

7. Effective Date

This policy becomes effective from May 2024 and supersedes all previous policies and procedures relating to complaints handling.

.....
Jon Buglass, Vice Principal

Date: / /

End of document