

## **Title: Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure**

**Type:** Policy and Procedures

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**Purpose:** This document details the concerns and complaints procedure

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**Scope:** All College stakeholders

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**Responsibility:** Vice Principal Quality and Curriculum

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### **Purpose**

- 1.1. At Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College we are committed to providing high quality services for all our College Community. Taking account of users' views enables us to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement.
- 1.2. This document details the concerns and complaints procedure. Concerns and complaints may be raised by a student (Further Education, Higher Education and subcontracted provision), prospective student, parent, employer, or any other interested party that indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service. All concerns and complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially.
- 1.3. Academic Appeals are not a part of this policy or procedure, nor are appeals related to the admissions processes. Please see the College's Appeals or Admissions Policies.

### **Responsibility**

- 2.1. Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the Vice Principal, Quality & Curriculum
- 2.2. Day-to-day responsibility for implementation of this procedure lies with the Quality Coordinator.

### **Concerns**

- 3.1 The College expects that the majority of issues can be resolved at an early stage through informal discussions. Therefore, if a concern arises, the first step is to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant staff member, either by email or verbally, and discuss it with them.
- 3.2 The College will respond directly to individuals who raise concerns via Social Media Forums. Individuals will be advised to raise their concern with the relevant team within the College in order to address the concern(s).
- 3.3 It should be noted that a written record of issues raised at this early stage will not normally be made.

3.4 If the concern remains unresolved, a formal complaint should be instigated through the College Concerns and Complaints procedure.

## **Complaints**

### **Formal Complaints – Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure**

4.1 Formal complaints are overseen by the Vice Principal for Quality & Curriculum

4.2 A formal complaint can be made in the following ways:

By Email: Sending a completed College Concern and Complaints Form (downloadable from the College Website and at the end of this document) as an attachment to [quality@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality@solihull.ac.uk)

In Writing: Completing the College Concern and Complaints Form (also available from the Student Hub and Reception), and sending it to:

Quality Team, Management Admin,  
Solihull College & University Centre,  
Blossomfield Road,  
Solihull  
West Midlands,  
B91 1SB

4.3 An initial response to the complaint will be sent to the complainant, or to their representative, within 5 working days.

4.4 The complaint will be forwarded to a member of the College's Management Team who will take responsibility to fully investigate the matter and provide the complainant or their representative with a formal response within 10 working days.

4.5 If for any reason it is not possible to provide a formal response within 10 working days, the complainant will be informed as to the reason for the delay and kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

### **Appeals – Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure**

4.6 Should the complainant wish to appeal against the outcome of Stage 1, formal complaint, they should submit this appeal in writing, within 10 working days of the Stage 1 outcome, to:

Vice Principal, Quality & Curriculum,  
Solihull College & University Centre,  
Blossomfield Road,  
Solihull,  
B91 1SB

4.7 The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum will fully investigate the appeal.

4.8 Stage 2 appeals may involve a face to face meeting with the complainant and their representative (where requested).

4.9 Following the outcome of the appeals stage, a formal response will be sent to the complainant, which outlines the College's final response and the completion of procedures.

4.10 This is the final stage of the College's complaints procedure.

## Formal Complaints – External Resolution

- 5.1 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 process, they have the opportunity to appeal to the appropriate external body.
- 5.2 If the complaint relates to a Further Education course funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), including subcontracted provision, and the above Complaints and Appeals Process has been exhausted, the complainant can contact the ESFA within three months of the complaint decision using the contact details below:

Customer Service Team,  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

- 5.3 The ESFA Complaints Team can be e-mailed at: [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk)
- 5.4 If the complaint relates to a Higher Education course, the complainant can appeal to the relevant partner University or Validating Body (Contact details are available from the Quality Team on request, or by clicking the links below).

[University of Northampton](#)  
[Newman University](#)  
[Oxford Brookes University](#)  
[Coventry University](#)  
[Pearson](#)

- 5.5 After seeking resolution with the partner University or Validating Body, if the complainant is still not satisfied, they have the opportunity to seek adjudication from the Office of Independent Adjudication (OIA). The OIA must receive details of the complaint within 12 months of the provider's decision and production of the Completion of Procedures letter.

Please see the OIA website for further information [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

**5.6 Please note that it is normally a requirement of the ESFA & OIA that any complaint has completed Stage 1 and 2 of the College complaints procedure, and, if applicable, the procedure of the relevant partner University or Awarding Body.**

## Policy

- 6.1 The College will investigate a complaint thoroughly and objectively and it will be regularly monitored. The College aims to resolve complaints within 10 working days – however some complaints, especially if the issue is more complex, may take longer to resolve.
- 6.2 For subcontracted provision, the Training Provider shall promptly inform the College of any complaints received relating to the Programme and shall assist the College in the investigation of any such complaint made against either party or against any Delivery Staff and shall cooperate with the College in respect of any remedial action that may be appropriate.
- 6.3 The College will contact the complainant to advise them if the investigation is likely to take more than 10 working days and keep them informed of progress by their preferred method of contact.

- 6.4 If a complaint is made against a member of College staff, the College will raise the details of the complaint with the member of staff concerned and involve them in subsequent investigations and resolution.
- 6.5 The College respects the right to confidentiality. If the complainant would like a concern to remain confidential, they need to raise this immediately. However, the complainant should be aware that a full investigation and resolution might not be possible if the request for confidentiality means that the College would be unable to fully communicate with individuals referred to in the complaint.
- 6.6 A Complaints Form should be completed with as much detail as possible but most importantly full name, date of birth and contact details. If the form is completed on behalf of a complainant, then the form must include full contact details of the complainant's representative. **We regret that the College is unable to accept or act upon anonymous complaints.**
- 6.7 All formal complaints will be recorded on the Complaints System and assigned to an Investigation Lead to fully investigate the issues raised.
- 6.8 Whilst it may not always be necessary to hold face-to-face meetings to resolve complaints, meetings may be arranged in order to aide investigations. If this occurs, the complainant has the right to be accompanied at the meetings by a friend or family member.
- 6.9 The audio recording of meetings is prohibited, unless the College feel that reasonable adjustments are warranted.
- 6.10 The College will continuously monitor a complaint until the issue has been resolved.
- 6.11 The College's decision will be communicated to the complainant by the College using the complainant's preferred method of contact.
- 6.12 The College will identify actions from complaints received to improve and develop its services.
- 6.13 The complaint will be closed on the Complaint System only when the issue has been resolved, or at the end of Stage 2.
- 6.14 The College will ensure that students will not be treated less favourably following their complaint. If this is found to be the case staff disciplinary procedures will be followed.
- 6.15 The College will ask for Equality and Diversity Information for example Gender and Ethnicity, to help to ensure sure that all people are treated fairly.
- 6.16 The College reserves the right not to pursue any malicious, vexatious or abusive complaints (i.e. complaints that are not true or use offensive or abusive language in communication to staff).
- 6.17 Complainants should be aware that our staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and any violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.
- 6.18 All complaints must be raised within twelve months of the original issue so that evidence is available for the investigation.

## Monitoring of Complaints

7.1 The College monitors complaints carefully. A termly report on complaints is produced and shared with the Executive Management Team detailing issues raised, areas of study, timeliness of resolution and any subsequent actions. In addition, the College reports annually to its Governing Body on the operation of the Complaints Procedure and the views of complainants.

Author	Date Created	Approved By	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
Rebecca Gater	2015	Corporation	December 2020 December 2021 December 2022 March 2023	March 2024

### Publication:

Staff Hub/Intranet: Y Website:

Y Student Hub: Y

## Appendix 1 - Concerns and Complaints Form

If you need help to fill in this form please ask a member of College staff.

This form can be made available in alternative formats such as large print/Braille. Please forward to: Quality Team, Solihull College & University Centre, Blossomfield Road, Solihull, B91 1SB. **Telephone:** 0121 678 7307 **email:** [quality@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality@solihull.ac.uk)

Are you raising a: (Please tick relevant box)		Does your Concern/Complaint relate to:	
Concern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Solihull (Blossomfield or Woodlands)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stratford	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1. Personal Details (If you are raising an issue on behalf of somebody else, please refer to the section 2).

Name:		<input type="text"/>					
Address:		<input type="text"/>					
Telephone Number:		<input type="text"/>		Email		<input type="text"/>	
Date of Birth/ID No.		<input type="text"/>					
Course:		<input type="text"/>					
Are you a:							
Learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2. Representative Details

Name:		<input type="text"/>					
Address:		<input type="text"/>					
Telephone Number:		<input type="text"/>		Email		<input type="text"/>	

**Equality and Diversity Information** - Providing the following optional details helps us to make sure that all people are treated fairly.

<b>Age</b>									
Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16 - 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	19- 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	25+	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Disability</b>				<b>Gender</b>							
Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Ethnicity</b>									
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Preferred Contact Details – please circle/indicate</b>	
Please contact <b>me</b> by Phone/Email/In Writing	
Please contact <b>the person above on my behalf</b> by Phone/Email/In Writing	
<b>Concern / Complaint Details:</b>	
Please clearly identify the nature of your complaint and what has been done to attempt to resolve the complaint so far.	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**Data Protection Act 1998**

The College has a duty to protect the personal data it processes. To comply with this legislation, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any person unlawfully as outlined in our Data Protection Policy, a copy of which can be obtained from the Data Protection Officer. Use of personal data contained within this form will only be used for its intended purpose and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. We will not release any personal information to third party organisations without obtaining your written consent.

