

# Procedures Manual

## 01.08.01 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**PURPOSE** To ensure consistency when dealing with complaints and compliments

**SCOPE** All College staff

**RESPONSIBILITY** Senior Management Team (SMT), Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience

### PROCEDURE

In order to encourage feedback on our services the College has developed a ‘Have your Say’ leaflet which can be used by students, parents, employers or members of the public. The purpose of the leaflet is to record compliments or suggestions for improvement. The leaflet will be located at various reception desks around the College and learning centres. It will also be in an electronic format on the website.

The College encourages all complaints to be dealt with informally, and if this is not possible it will be progressed to a formal process:

#### Students

If you are a student or apprentice and you have a complaint about any part of either your learning programme or the College in general (including claims of discrimination or harassment whether at College or on work placements), you should first of all discuss your complaint with your tutor who will try and resolve it for you within ten working days of your discussion.

If the complaint is about a member of the teaching/assessing team then you should contact your Curriculum Director. Your complaint will be kept confidential if you wish, provided it is practicable to do so. A record of your complaint and the date on which it was made will be kept by your tutor.

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally with your tutor you should then put it in writing to the Curriculum Director. S/he will:

- Acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receipt.
- Investigate the issues you raise – this may involve a discussion with you.
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation of any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint.
- Record your complaint on the internal complaints database.

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- Where issues take longer than ten working days to investigate you will be kept informed on the progress of the investigation, and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the complaint has been upheld, rejected or partially upheld.

As a student you may also consider appealing an assessment decision:

*Assessment:*

- The assessment of your work is governed by the College's Appeals Procedure. This is published in the Course Handbook.
- There is a separate appeals procedure for HE. This information is published in the University of Suffolk student handbook. You cannot appeal the professional judgement regarding grading. However you can appeal where the assessment process has not been correctly followed.

*To appeal you can:*

- Involve a member of the Student Council in the handling of your appeal.
- If the complaint is rejected then the Curriculum Director should advise the complainant to the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience by writing a letter detailing your complaint and the handling of it to date. The Vice Principal will acknowledge and investigate.

As a last resort, after all the aforementioned procedures have been followed, you may lodge a complaint with the following organisations:

- The appropriate funding agency, where your course has been paid for by either the Higher Education Academy, Skills Funding Agency or Education Funding Agency
- The awarding organisation with whom you are registered for the qualification / element of your study programme concerned
- The relevant qualifications regulatory body; JCQ for examination and assessment protocols; OfQual, etc.

Information pertaining to these organisations can be requested in writing from:

Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience  
West Suffolk College  
Out Risbygate  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 3RL

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### **Parent/Employer of a Student**

If you are a parent or employer of a student and you have a complaint, you should first of all telephone or make an appointment to see the Curriculum Director in which your son, daughter or employee is enrolled in order to discuss the issues of concern informally.

The Curriculum Director will attempt to resolve the issues within ten working days of your discussion. Your complaint will be kept confidential if you wish, provided it is practicable to do so. A record of your complaint and the date on which it was made will be recorded by the Curriculum Director.

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally with the Curriculum Director you should put it in writing to the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience. S/he will:

- acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receipt;
- investigate the issues you raise – this may involve a discussion with you;
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation of any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint.

Where issues take longer than ten working days to investigate you will be kept informed on the progress of the investigation.

As a parent or employer you may also:

- Appeal to the Principal
- As a last resort, after all procedures have been followed, you may complain to the appropriate funding agency, where your course has been paid for by either the Higher Education Academy, Skills Funding Agency or Education Funding Agency. Contact the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience who will be able to advise you further.

### **Member of the Public**

If you are a member of the public and you have a complaint about any aspect of the College's work you should put your complaint in writing to the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience or complete the 'Have your Say' leaflet which is located at various reception areas around the College and Learning Centres.

The Vice Principal will attempt to resolve the issues within ten working days of receipt of your letter. Your complaint will be kept confidential if you wish, provided it is practicable to do so. A record of your complaint and the date on which it was received will be recorded on the reporting system.

### **If your complaint is still not resolved to your satisfaction you may:**

- Appeal to the Principal within ten working days. As a last resort, complain to the Funding Agency; the organisation responsible for your course.

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- All complaints will be logged. The system will be monitored as part of the College's Quality Assurance system and a report taken to Senior Management Team on a monthly basis.

If your complaint is about the Principal then you may write to the Governing Body by contacting the Clerk to the Corporation.

Copies of all complaints relating to HE provision (University of Suffolk Bury St Edmunds) must also be sent to the Assistant Principal Higher Education. Copies of formal complaints made by individual HE students to College managers will be forwarded by the Assistant Principal Higher Education to the Secretary and Clerk's office of the University of Suffolk.

If a complaint is made directly to the Principal, a copy of the letter of complaint or notes from the telephone call will be sent to the appropriate line manager on the day the complaint is received for investigation and response. The complaint will be acknowledged by the Principal's PA, advising the complainant which manager has been asked to respond, and the timescales that will be adhered to.

Issues raised as a result of complaints which are accepted as a weakness on the part of the College will be addressed as part of the College's Quality Improvement system.

A complaint against the Corporation as a Governing Body or an individual Governor of the Corporation shall be addressed to the Clerk to the Corporation who shall deal with the matter as appropriate. The response to such a complaint will include details of the arrangements for pursuing the matter with an independent body. If the complaint is against the Principal the complainant should write to the Corporation via the Clerk to the Corporation. A complaint against the Clerk to the Corporation shall be forwarded to the Chair of the Corporation.

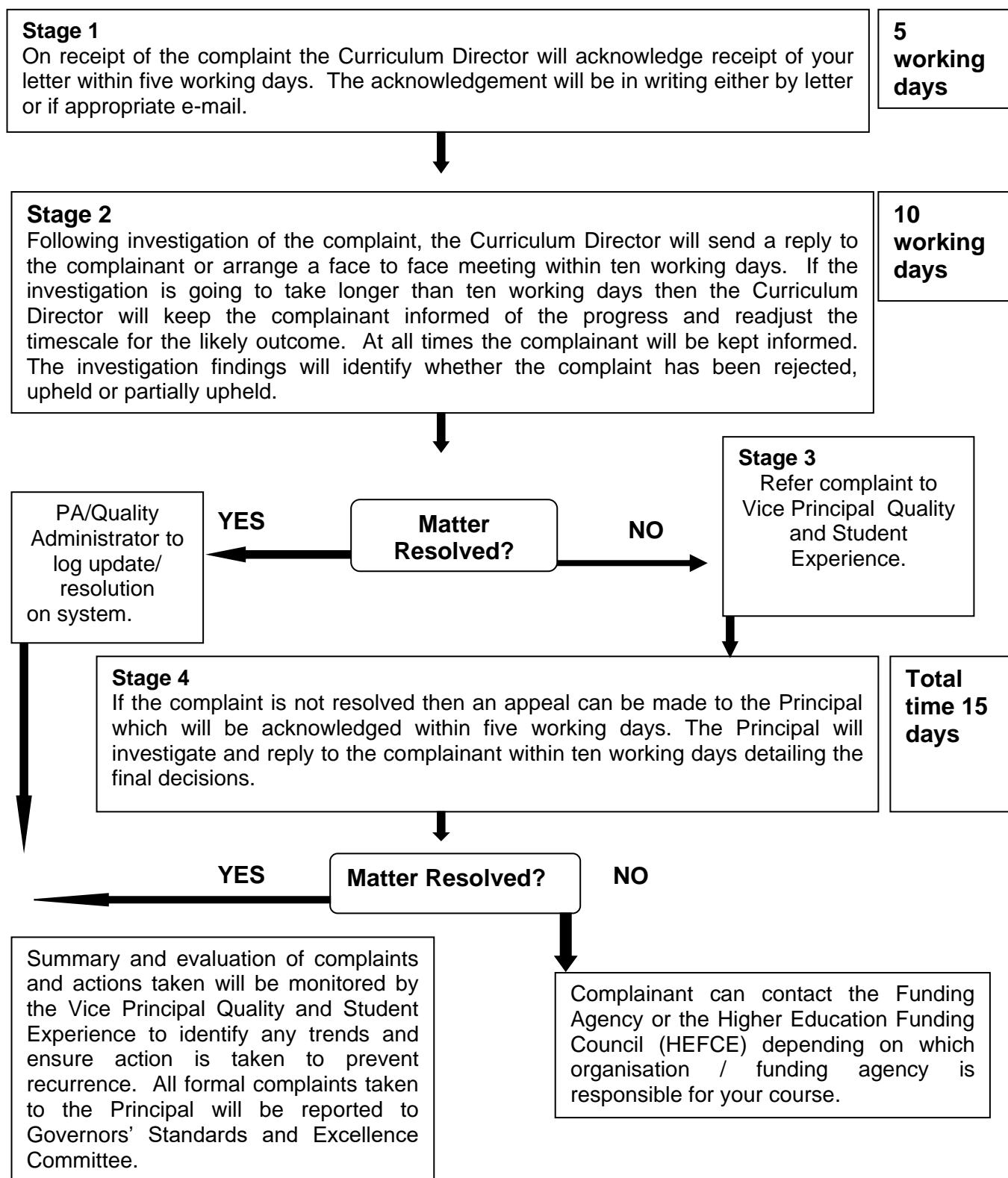
In all responses to formal complaints, the complainant should be informed of their right of appeal, and how to do so and within what timescale, if they so wish.

### **How complaints are managed at West Suffolk College, information for complainants - Informal Complaints:**

- We encourage all complaints to be dealt with informally.
- If you are a student please discuss your complaint with your tutor or Curriculum Director.
- If you are a parent or employer please telephone or make an appointment to see the Curriculum Director.
- If you are a member of the public and you have a complaint about any aspect of the College's work you should put your complaint in writing to the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience or complete the 'Have your Say' leaflet, which is located at various reception points around the College and Learning Centres.
- If you are not satisfied with the response or if the complaint concerns the staff mentioned above, then you can complain formally, in writing or using the 'Have Your Say' leaflet.
- Please address your complaint in the first place to the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience. If the complaint is about the Vice Principal then address your complaint to the Principal.

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**Formal complaints:**



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