

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 Leadership Team (SLT), Principal Sixth Form Provision and Quality Manager.

PROCEDURE

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 placement), you should first of all discuss your complaint with your Personal Progress Tutor/Course Director, who will try and resolve it for you within ten working days of your discussion. If the complaint is about your Personal Progress Tutor/Course Director, you should contact the Head of Pastoral Support/Head of Department. Your complaint will be kept confidential if you wish, provided it is practicable to do so.

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

- The assessment of your work is governed by the College's Appeals Procedure. This is published in the Course Handbook, and you can ask your Course Director for more information about this.
- There is a separate appeals procedure for Higher Education. This information is published on the University Studies website. You cannot appeal the professional judgement regarding grading.

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However, you can appeal where the assessment process has not been correctly followed.

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally you should put the complaint in writing to the Principal Sixth Form Provision. S/he will either follow the actions as detailed below, or appoint an appropriate person to do so on their behalf:

- 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 including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- Record your complaint on the internal complaints database.
- 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.

If you feel dissatisfied with the outcome of the Principal's investigation, you have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within ten working days of the date of which the complaint outcome was confirmed by the principal. If the Principal appointed an appropriate person to conduct the investigation on their behalf, you should appeal to the Principal Sixth Form Provision.

To appeal you can:

- Involve a member of the Student Council in the handling of your appeal.
- Write to the Principal Sixth Form Provision and state that you are appealing the investigation outcome. The Principal will acknowledge your letter within five working days and will, if appropriate, pass any documentation to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Principal Sixth Form Provision will:

- Investigate your appeal and the decision made by the person appointed to undertake the investigation on their behalf, this may involve a discussion with you. No new evidence can be submitted at the time of the appeal.
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- Where appeals take longer than ten working days to investigate, you will be kept informed on the progress of the appeal and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the appeal has been upheld, rejected, or partially upheld.

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If you are appealing the Principal Sixth Form Provision investigation outcome, your appeal will be sent to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- Investigate your appeal and the decision made by the Principal Sixth Form Provision, this may involve a discussion with you. No new evidence can be submitted at the time of the appeal.
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- Where appeals take longer than ten working days to investigate, you will be kept informed on the progress of the appeal and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the appeal has been upheld, rejected, or partially upheld.

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

- The appropriate funding agency, where your course has been paid for such as the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE), Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) etc.
- The awarding organisation with whom you are registered for the qualification/ element of your study programme concerned such as City and Guilds, Pearson Edexcel etc.
- The relevant qualifications regulatory body; JCQ for examination and assessment protocols; Ofqual, etc.

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

Principal Sixth Form Provision
West Suffolk College
Out Risbygate
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3RL

Parent/Carer/Employer of a Student

If you are a parent/carers or employer of a student and you have a complaint, you should first of all telephone or make an appointment to see the Personal Progress Tutor/Course Director for your son, daughter, or employee in order to discuss the issues of concern informally.

The Personal Progress Tutor/Course 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.

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If your complaint cannot be resolved informally with the Personal Progress Tutor/ Course Director, you should put it in writing to the Principal Sixth Form Provision. S/he will either follow the actions as detailed below, or appoint an appropriate person to do so on their behalf:

- 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 including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- 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.

If you feel dissatisfied with the outcome of the Principal's investigation, you have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within ten working days of the date of which the complaint outcome was confirmed by the Principal. If the Principal appointed an appropriate person to conduct the investigation on their behalf, you should appeal to the Principal Sixth Form Provision.

To appeal you can:

- Involve a member of the Student Council in the handling of your appeal.
- Write to the Principal Sixth Form Provision and state that you are appealing the investigation outcome. The Principal will acknowledge your letter within five working days and will, if appropriate, pass any documentation to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Principal Sixth Form Provision will:

- Investigate your appeal and the decision made by the person appointed to undertake the investigation on their behalf, this may involve a discussion with you. No new evidence can be submitted at the time of the appeal.
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- Where appeals take longer than ten working days to investigate, you will be kept informed on the progress of the appeal and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the appeal has been upheld, rejected, or partially upheld.

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If you are appealing the Principal Sixth Form Provision investigation outcome, your appeal will be sent to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- Investigate your appeal and the decision made by the Principal Sixth Form Provision, this may involve a discussion with you. No new evidence can be submitted at the time of the appeal.
- Write a response to you within ten working days of acknowledgement of your complaint. This will include a full explanation including any rejection of any part (or all) of your complaint, if applicable.
- Where appeals take longer than ten working days to investigate, you will be kept informed on the progress of the appeal and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the appeal has been upheld, rejected, or partially upheld.

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

- The appropriate funding agency, where your course has been paid for such as the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE), Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) etc.
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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 Principal Sixth Form Provision or complete the 'Have your Say' leaflet which is located at various reception areas around the College's Campuses and Learning Centres.

The Principal Sixth Form Provision 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.

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

- Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within ten working days.

All complaints are logged, and a record of the complaint will be maintained until the complaint has been fully investigate and the outcome shared with the complainant. Once the outcome has been shared and the complaint closed, the record will be destroyed in accordance with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). To help the College improve its services, the nature of the complaint will be maintained, but all personal information will be removed. All compliments and complaints are reported to the Senior Executive Team on a regular basis.

If your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer, you may write to the Governing Body by contacting the Clerk to the Corporation.

Copies of all complaints relating to Higher Education (HE) provision (University Studies, Bury St Edmunds) must be sent to the Executive Dean Higher Education. Copies of formal complaints made by individual HE students to college managers will be forwarded by the Executive Dean Higher Education.

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

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

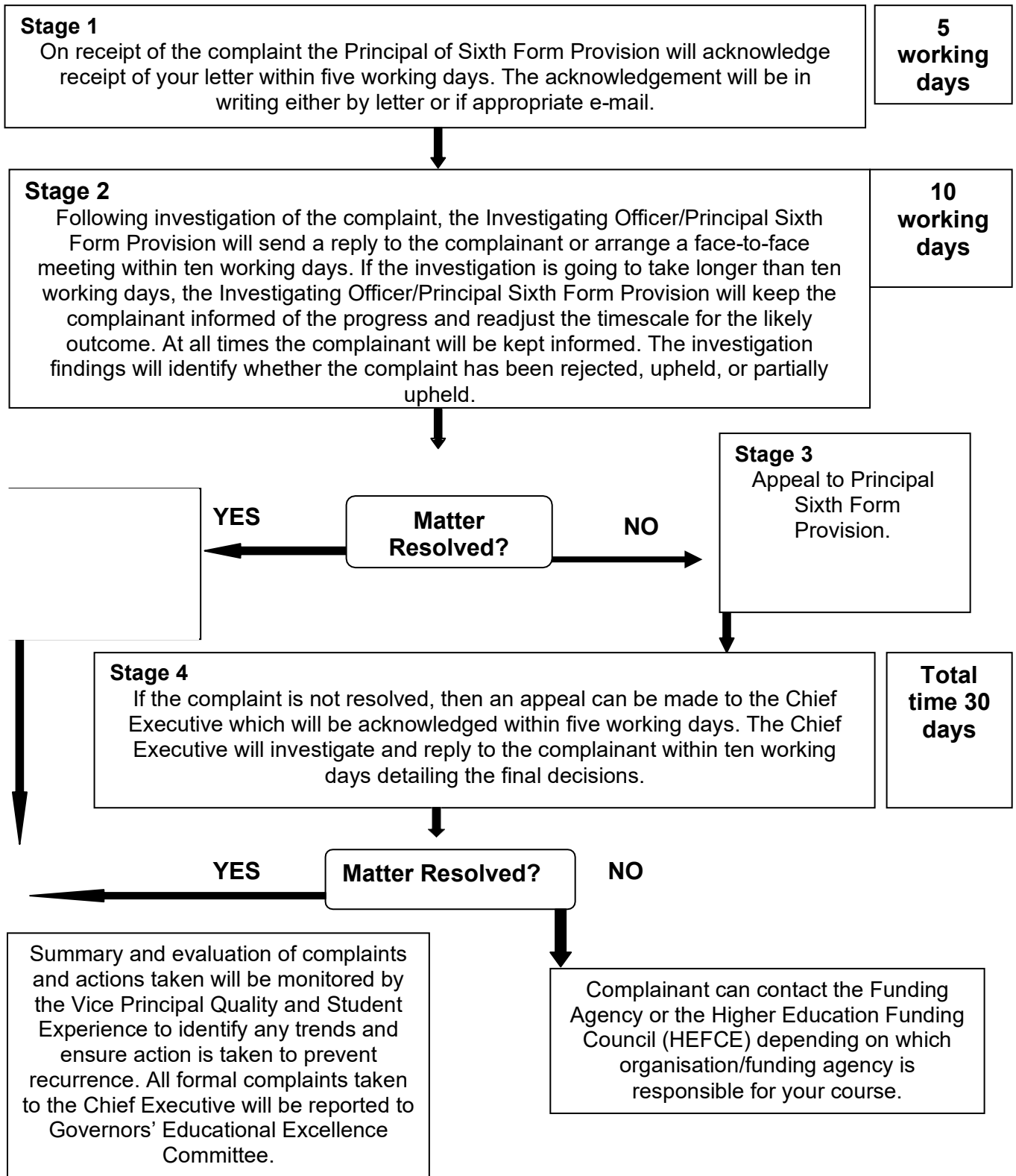
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A complaint against the Corporation as a Governing Body or an individual Governor of the Corporation shall be addressed to the Clerk to the Corporation who shall deal with the matter as appropriate. The response to such a complaint will include details of the arrangements for pursuing the matter with an independent body. If the complaint is against the Chief Executive Officer, 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.

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Formal complaints:



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