



Complaints Policy & Procedures

Version	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Written by	DCI	DCI	CM	AA	LDH	BC	LP		
EIA Carried out							LP		
Authorised by	REJ	LB	AA	SMT	BC	LB	LB		
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 As a result of the various activities of the College, the number of students, customers, clients, parents and guardians involved and the large number of businesses, organisations with which the College works, complaints do, from time to time, arise.
- 1.2 In this context complaints are deemed to involve an expression of dissatisfaction, grievance or fault finding about the College.
- 1.3 All issues are logged, whether dealt with as a formal or informal complaint, to ensure fairness and to mitigate any further complaint.

2. Application and Scope

- 2.1 The College will thoroughly investigate any complaint, whether informal or formal, relating to the day-to-day operation of the College and the standards of service we provide.
- 2.2 Areas excluded from the policy are:
 - Curriculum content or examination results where other forms of redress are more appropriate such as the examining body or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and in the cases complainants should be referred to the appropriate body.
 - Employment issues which are covered by staff Grievance Procedures.
 - Any matter that is the subject of legal action.
 - Any complaint which is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation.

3. The Procedures

There are three main areas of the complaints policy and procedures; informal complaints, formal complaints and appeals:

3.1 Informal Complaints

3.1.1 There can be instances when a complainant may wish to remain anonymous or request that the issue be dealt with informally. Such individuals should be directed to the person who is directly concerned or best suited to resolve that issue. The details can be emailed to the relevant person if preferred. For students, this is likely to be the Personal Tutor, Course Manager or Programme Leader. In circumstances where these individuals are the source of the complaint then the Head of Faculty or Support Area Manager should be contacted. Details should be logged as 'informal' on the complaints spreadsheet.

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3.1.2 For those individuals who are unsure as to whom to contact then in the first instance they should contact the Reception desk of the College who will direct them to the relevant Head of Faculty or Support Area Manager to deal with the issue.

3.1.3 In most instances informal complaints will not receive a formal written response but nevertheless must be dealt with promptly.

3.1.4 Responsibility for the prompt follow up of informal complaints will lie with the relevant manager. The manager should endeavour to resolve the complaint but should refer it if it is evident that a resolution is not likely to be met. This should be done to prevent it becoming a more serious matter.

3.2 Formal Complaints

3.2.1 Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and addressed to Jo Tapp, the Complaints Administrator.

3.2.2 Any other member of staff receiving a formal letter of complaint must pass the complaint to the Complaints Administrator on the day of receipt together with any additional information they may hold on the incident. This may help to speed up the response time.

3.2.3 A written acknowledgement will be sent by the Complaints Administrator within two working days and a summary of the details logged for checking and reporting purposes. Any written details will be filed securely along with a tracking sheet.

3.2.4 Any letter submitted should clearly set out the circumstances of the complaint, any individuals or witnesses involved and any relevant dates or times.

3.2.5 Where possible, and to provide the greatest opportunity for the complaint to be actioned, complaints should be submitted in as timely a fashion in order to facilitate a resolution.

3.2.6 Complaints will be investigated fairly and quickly with the intention of satisfactorily resolving the matter, identifying the causes and symptoms and upholding or rejecting the complaint for the benefit of all involved.

3.2.7 A considered College view on the complaint will be made by the Head of Faculty, Support Area Manager or relevant member of the Senior Management Team. They will ensure that a detailed report with evidence is sent to the Complaints Administrator within the prescribed timescale. The Associate Principal Quality & Staff Development will respond within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the complaint. If the investigation is going to take more than fifteen working days, then the Complaints Administrator should send a further holding letter.

3.2.8 In resolving a complaint, the College should provide the complainant with written details of the outcome of the investigation.

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3.2.9 Following the resolution of the complaint the Head of Faculty, Support Area Manager or Senior Management Team member to complete the Action Plan in Appendix 1 to address the issues raised.

3.3 Appeals

3.3.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied or aggrieved or in disagreement with the decision made or reasons given, they may appeal against the decision. The reason for the appeal should be clearly stated in writing and sent to The Appeal Panel, Student Support Services (see address below). From then, stages 3.2.3-3.2.7 above are repeated with the intention of fairly resolving the complaint to the satisfaction of the people involved.

3.3.2 A complainant has ten working days in which to submit an appeal. The appeal panel will consist of at least two members of Senior Management Team who were not involved in dealing with the original complaint. They will consider all the documentation available relating to the issues raised. The decision at the end of this stage is final and any response should indicate this.

3.3.3 If the College cannot settle the complaint to the satisfaction of the person involved, then a complaint can be referred to the Skills Funding Agency or direct to the appropriate Secretary of State. If the complaint is justified, the Secretary of State can insist that things are put right.

3.3.4 The Associate Principal, Quality & Staff Development will produce a report for SMT at the end of each academic year giving a summary of any complaints. Any structural or strategic issues raised by this report will be discussed and, if necessary, incorporated in the College's Quality Development Plan. This report will also inform the College's Self Assessment Report.

Addresses for correspondence:

Complaints Administrator
Hadlow College
Hadlow
Tonbridge
Kent TN11 0AL

The Appeal Panel
Hadlow College
Hadlow
Tonbridge
Kent TN11 0AL



Appendix 1

Action Plan as a result of complaint

[Insert Name of Faculty/Support Area] Complaints Action Plan 2011 – 2012 (add this to your SAR QIAP)

Complaints: These should where appropriate be shared with teams and actions addressed in relevant policies							
Action to address areas for improvement	Intended Outcome	Resources required	Target completion date	Monitoring activities (including review / dates)	Person(s) Responsible	Progress to date – Review in February and May 2012	SMT person responsible