

Hadlow Group

Compliments and Complaints Policy & Procedures 2018/19

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Written by	DCI	DCI	CM	AA	LDH	BC	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP
Authorised by	REJ	LB	AA	SMT	BC	LB	LB	LB	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP	LP
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 As a result of various activities the College is involved with, students, customers, clients, parents, guardians, business and organisations send compliments about the service provided. These are deemed as an expression of satisfaction and are logged formally and reported annually.
- 1.2 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 and organisations with which the College works, complaints do, from time to time, arise.
- 1.3 In this context complaints are deemed to involve an expression of dissatisfaction, grievance or fault finding about the College.
- 1.4 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:
 1. 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 these cases complainants should be referred to the appropriate body.
 2. Employment issues which are covered by staff Grievance Procedures.
 3. Any matter that is the subject of legal action.
 4. Any complaint which is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation.

3. Resolving a Complaint – Students

- 3.1 Students must endeavor to resolve a complaint informally before commencing with the Formal Complaints Procedure. This initial informal stage should normally involve a discussion directly with the relevant member(s) of staff or with the Course Tutor/Programme Leader, Team Leader or Head of Faculty/HE Manager.
- 3.2 The student complainant should attempt to resolve the matter informally as soon as possible and no later than fifteen working days after the event or problem has occurred.

- 3.3 Where no informal resolution can be achieved within fifteen working days of the initial complaint being raised, the student complainant may choose to progress their complaint by using the Formal Complaints Procedure.

4. The Procedures

There are three main areas of the Complaints Policy and Procedures; informal complaints, formal complaints and appeals:

4.1 Informal Complaints

4.1.1 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 Log.

4.1.2 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.

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

4.1.4 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.

4.2 Formal Complaints

4.2.1 Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and addressed to the Complaints Administrator or by email and sent to Compliments&Complaints@hadlow.ac.uk or Compliments&Complaints@Westkent.ac.uk or Compliments&Complaints@Ashford.ac.uk

4.2.2 Any other member of staff receiving a formal letter of complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the Complaints Administrator, using the email address, 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.

4.2.3 A written acknowledgement will be sent by the Complaints Administrator within three working days and the details logged on the Complaints Log for checking and reporting purposes. All correspondence will be filed securely.

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

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

4.2.6 Complaints will be investigated fairly and quickly by the Head of Faculty or Support Manager and a copy will be sent to the relevant Senior Manager, 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.

4.2.7 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 response with evidence is sent to the Complaints Administrator within the prescribed timescale where appropriate.

4.2.8 The Group Vice Principal Quality, Standards and Performance will respond in writing within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, detailing the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation is going to take more than fifteen working days, the Complaints Administrator will send a further holding letter.

Where complaints are received within fifteen working days of a holiday period, or during a holiday period, it is expected that the complaint response will take longer than fifteen working days due to the absence of appropriate staff to investigate. This will be confirmed in writing.

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

4.3 Appeals

4.3.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied or aggrieved or in disagreement with the decision made or reasons given, they may appeal against the decision. A complainant has ten working days in which to submit an appeal. The reason for the appeal should be clearly stated in writing and sent to The Appeal Panel via the Complaints Administrator at the address below.

4.3.2 A written acknowledgement will be sent by the Complaints Administrator within three working days.

4.3.3 The Appeal Panel will consist of at least two members of the 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 Appeal Panel will respond within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the appeal. If the review of the complaint is going to take more than fifteen working days, the Complaints Administrator will send a further holding letter. The decision at the end of this stage is final and will be communicated in writing.

4.3.4 If the College cannot settle the complaint to the satisfaction of the person involved, then a complaint may be referred to:

- The Skills Funding Agency if the complaint relates to Further Education: complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk
Complaints team
Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
- Ofsted if the complaint relates to any service in relation Further Education: [Ofsted](#)
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator if the complaint relates to Higher Education: [Office of the Independent Adjudicator - OIA Homepage](#)
- Or direct to the appropriate Secretary of State. If the complaint is justified, the Secretary of State can insist that things are put right.

4.3.5 The Group Vice Principal Quality, Standards and Performance will produce a report for the Senior Management Team 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 appropriate/relevant College's Quality Improvement Action Plan. This report will also inform the College's appropriate/relevant Report.

Addresses for correspondence:

Compliments&Complaints@hadlow.ac.uk or

Complaints Administrator

Hadlow College
Tonbridge Road
Hadlow
Kent TN11 0AL

The Appeal Panel

Hadlow College
Tonbridge Road
Hadlow
Kent TN11 0AL

5. Data Protection

- 5.1.1. When the College receives a complaint from a person a file is created containing the details of the complaint. This normally contains the identity of the complainant and any other individuals involved in the complaint.
- 5.1.2. The College will only use the personal information collected to process the complaint and to check on the level of service we provide. The College does compile an annual report showing information like the number of complaints we receive, but not in a form which identifies anyone.
- 5.1.3. The College will usually have to disclose the complainant's identity to whoever the complaint is about.
- 5.1.4. The College will keep personal information contained in complaint files. This means that information relating to a complaint will be retained for five years from closure. It will be retained in a secure environment and access to it will be restricted according to the 'need to know' principle.
- 5.1.5. Similarly, where enquiries are submitted to the College we will only use the information supplied to us to deal with the enquiry and any subsequent issues and to check on the level of service we provide.

Appendix 1

Action Plan as a result of complaint

[Insert Name of Faculty/Support Area] Complaints Action Plan (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	SMT person responsible