



COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES
Approved by: Executive Committee
Date approved: 05 September 2023
Strategy/Policy Responsibility: Director of Quality
Review date: August 2024

Introduction

At Croydon College we aim to provide outstanding educational experiences and excellent standards of service to all of our customers: students, apprentices, employers, partners and the wider community. To help us achieve this aim we appreciate feedback whether that be a compliment or a complaint.

To register your feedback please contact:

Croydon campus	Coulsdon campus
Compliments - compliments@croydon.ac.uk	Compliments - compliments@coulsdon.ac.uk
Complaints - complaints@croydon.ac.uk	Complaints – complaints@coulsdon.ac.uk

Please make your feedback as specific as possible, providing;

- Your personal information: name, course / organisation / relationship with the College and your contact details
- The details of your feedback with any supporting evidence
- The action or outcome you would like

Your feedback will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

Complaints are managed by the Executive Support Team who maintain the highest levels of confidentiality and discretion.

A complaints report is compiled annually for review by the Learning & Quality Committee of each campus.

Is this the correct policy to use?

Concern	Policy to use
Assessment processes or decisions	Exam and Assessment Policies
Disciplinary and Exclusions	Positive Behaviour & Performance Policy
Applications and internal progression	Admissions and Progression Policies
Complaints from staff	Human Resources Policies

If you use the incorrect policy you will be directed to the correct one in the first instance.

Who can use this policy?

All stakeholders of the College: students, apprentices, employers, partners and any other members of the community served by the College.

We will not normally accept a complaint:

- That relates to an issue that is over 6 weeks old
- That the College regards as being frivolous, vexatious or malicious, or is presented in an abusive manner, or where there is overly persistent complainant behaviour
- From 3rd parties such as legal representatives or from anonymous sources
- From parents or carers of students who are 18+ unless the student has an Educational & Health Care Plan
- Of a minor nature which should be dealt with directly with the curriculum or service area
- On matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure
- From a student or their parent / sponsor where fees have not been paid in full or an instalment plan has not been complied with.

Before you use the Policy:

It is expected that all complainants initially attempt to resolve their complaint informally, dealing with the specific curriculum or service area. Only when this informal stage has been exhausted can the formal complaints procedure be used. Complainants who have not used this informal stage and submit a complaint to the complaints email address will have their complaint referred back to the informal stage.

Formal complaints

Please check that you are using the correct policy and have previously attempted to resolve your complaint informally. Also please check that your complaint is within 6 weeks of the issue arising.

You can normally expect:

1. **Complaint acknowledgement.** Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt with an outline of the timescales for what will happen next.
2. **Complaint investigation.** An investigation of your complaint will be undertaken by a College manager and the College aims to complete this within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint. The investigator may speak with relevant individuals and / or look at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. You may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student Union Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (e.g. English as a second language, or additional learning needs) you may bring a second person with you.

If your complaint relates to a member of staff, the staff member will be informed of your complaint and will be part of the investigation which may involve the Human Resources department.

3. **Complaint response.** The College aims to provide a written response to you at the earliest opportunity and within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. This will either:
 - dismiss the complaint as unfounded giving a brief explanation, or**
 - uphold or partially uphold the complaint, outlining the next steps to resolve the issue**

Responsibility of the College	Responsibility of the Complainant
<input type="checkbox"/> To acknowledge all formal complaints and aim to respond within the stated period of time	<input type="checkbox"/> To bring their complaint to the College's attention within 6 weeks of the reason for the complaint occurring
<input type="checkbox"/> To deal reasonably and sensitively with all complaints	<input type="checkbox"/> To use the policy and procedure properly, explaining the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
<input type="checkbox"/> To take action where appropriate, to change procedure to implement staff training to prevent reoccurrence of the complaint	<input type="checkbox"/> To allow the College reasonable time to deal with the matter
<input type="checkbox"/> To welcome issues being brought to its attention to enable it to improve	<input type="checkbox"/> To understand that some matters may be beyond the College's control

Review of Formal complaints

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your formal complaint you have the right to request a Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- New material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation
- You believe the outcome of the complaint was manifestly unreasonable and / or any resulting action was disproportionate
- The complaints procedure was not followed

If you wish to request a review you need to reply to your complaints outcome email within 10 working days of receipt. You must clearly explain the reasons for your request for a review, including the grounds upon which it is based, and enclose copies of all the documents you wish to rely upon. You can normally expect:

1. **Review request acknowledgement:** Your Review request will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt with an outline of the timescales for what will happen next.
2. **Review request consideration:** The relevant Vice Principal at the Croydon campus or the Principal at the Coulsdon campus will consider your request for a review and determine whether it meets one or more of the grounds stated above.
 - If it is determined that your request for a Review does not meet one or more of the grounds for Review, the complaint outcome will not be reviewed. A College Completion of Procedures notification will be sent to you within 10 working days of the receipt of the Review request.
 - If it is determined that your complaint outcome is to be Reviewed you will be notified what the Review will involve, including timescales for these, within 10 working days of the receipt of the Review request.
3. **Review investigation:** This may include speaking with relevant individuals and / or looking at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. Again you may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the StudentUnion Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (eg English as a second language, a learning difficulty and / or disability) you may bring a second person with you.
4. **Review Outcome:** the outcome of the Review will either be to:
 - uphold the complaint outcome and / or any associated action, or**
 - substitute an alternative outcome and / or action.**

You will be informed of the outcome of the Review normally within 5 working days of it being determined. The outcome is final, will be contained in the College Completion of Procedures notification and your complaint will not be considered further by the College.

Referral to External Agencies

Matters relating to Further Education and Training can be referred to the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

Matters relating to Higher Education can be referred to the awarding University. Following a University Completion of Procedures notice, referral can be made to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.