



COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY
--

Approved by: Executive Committee

Date approved: 14 January 2025

Strategy/Policy Responsibility: Director of Governance
--

Review date: September 2027

Introduction

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

The complaints process is administered by the Compliments and Complaints team on behalf of the College. A complaints report is compiled annually for review by the Learning & Quality Committee.

Who can use this Policy?

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

Students studying with partner organisations (such as the University of Roehampton) should use the partner organisation's complaints policy

Using this Policy

If you have any difficulty using this Policy e.g. because of a disability or because English is not your first language, please contact the College as soon as possible on the relevant email address listed in the section below on registering your feedback.

Registering your feedback

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

Giving a Compliment

Compliments are much appreciated. They should be sent to the relevant email address above. Your compliment will be acknowledged and forwarded to the member(s) of staff and their manager.

Making a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the College's action or lack of action or about the standard of service or facilities provided by or on behalf of the College. Complaints can be submitted by one individual or by a group of individuals.

Is this the correct policy to use?

Some issues may more appropriately be considered under alternative College policies, and not under this Policy. For example, complaints about the matters listed below are not normally dealt with under this Policy and will be considered under the Policies listed below. This list is not exhaustive and you will be advised by the Complaints Team if a complaint raised under this Policy would be better considered under another College policy.

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
Safeguarding	Child Protection Policies

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
- From anonymous sources unless there are compelling reasons to do so
- From parents or carers on behalf of students who are 18+ unless there is a legal basis for doing so
- On matters that have already been fully investigated through this Policy or another College Policy

In some circumstances, your complaint may need to be disclosed to others, including external organisations e.g. relevant safeguarding and other regulatory concerns.

Complaint Stages

There are 3 stages at which a complaint can be handled:

1. Early resolution
2. Formal Complaint
3. Review of Formal Complaint

Our aim is to deal with complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. We would hope and expect that most complaints will be resolved informally at Stage 1.

Stage 1: Early resolution

The purpose of this stage is to address swiftly, and seek to resolve satisfactorily a complaint local to the particular concerns raised (e.g. the specific curriculum or service area) and to avoid the complaint escalating into a formal complaint. The College will seek to deal with complaints raised at this stage immediately and in an informal way. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint at this stage, or the nature of the complaint makes this stage inappropriate, the complaint may be dealt with as a formal complaint under Stage 2.

You can raise a complaint at Stage 1 directly with the specific curriculum or service area e.g. Tutor, Curriculum Manager, Head of School, Student Services. This can be done in a variety of ways including in person or by telephone, email or letter. Alternatively, you can raise the complaint using the complaints email address for the specific campus as set out above and it will be forwarded to the relevant area so that they can respond.

The College may deal with complaints raised under Stage 1 in a variety of ways, including (for example) by way of face-to-face discussions with you, or by telephone or by email. Wherever possible, we will seek to deal with the complaint in consultation with you to resolve it as quickly as possible.

You will normally be provided with an outcome of the Stage 1 complaint in writing.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

You may wish, either because of the nature or complexity of the complaint or because you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, to raise a complaint under Stage 2.

The College may, at its discretion, deal with a complaint under Stage 2 without having exhausted Stage 1.

For Stage 2, you should use the complaints email address for the relevant campus as detailed at the start of this Policy.

The information provided should be as specific as possible, including;

- Your personal information: name, course / organisation / relationship with the College and contact details;
- The details of the complaint with any supporting evidence;
- Details of the action you have already taken to resolve the complaint;
- The action or outcome you would like to see.

Your complaint will be acknowledged by the Compliments and Complaints team by email normally within three College working days of receipt. An initial evaluation will be undertaken to determine whether it falls within the Complaints Policy or should be dealt with under an alternative process, and that the complaint can be accepted by the College e.g. it falls within the normal time limits. If the complaint is not accepted by the College, written reasons will be provided to you.

1. Complaint investigation.

Provided the complaint is accepted, an investigation into the complaint will usually be undertaken by a College manager who has not previously been involved in the complaint. The investigation will normally be completed within 15 College working days of receipt of the complaint.

The manager 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 one takes place but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student 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.

2. Complaint response.

At the end of the investigation, the manager will provide you with a written response at the earliest opportunity and normally within 20 College working days of receipt of the complaint. The written response will inform you of the outcome of your complaint which will either:

- Uphold the complaint
- Partially uphold the complaint
- Dismiss the complaint

Reasons for the outcome will be provided along with any action the College may consider is appropriate in relation to an upheld or partially upheld complaint.

If the process is likely to take longer than the time set out in this Policy, you will be notified setting out the reasons for any delay.

Stage 3: Review of Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your 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 Stage 2 complaint was manifestly unreasonable and / or any resulting action was disproportionate;
- This Complaints Policy was not followed.

If you wish to request a review you need to reply to your Stage 2 complaint 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 by email normally within five College working days of receipt with an outline of the timescales for what will happen next.

2. Review request consideration

The relevant member of the Executive Team at the Croydon campus or the Head of Sixth Form at the Coulsdon campus (or their nominee) 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 College 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 College working days of the receipt of the Review request.

3. Review process

This will depend on the reasons for the Review and will be at the discretion of the relevant member of the Executive Team at the Croydon campus or the Head of Sixth Form at the Coulsdon campus (or their nominee). It may include speaking to you and other relevant individuals such as staff members (including the manager who dealt with Stage 2), students and/or other parties (including, where appropriate, external third parties such as placement providers) involved in the issues under review; calling for any new evidence; and considering the Stage 2 documents.

You may not bring legal representation with you to any Stage 3 meeting, if one takes place, but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student 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.

4. Review Outcome: the outcome of the Review will either be to:

- uphold the Stage 2 complaint outcome and / or any associated action in whole or in part, or
- substitute an alternative outcome and / or action in whole or in part, or
- refer the matter back to Stage 2 for reconsideration, or
- refer the matter to an alternative College process for consideration.

You will be informed of the outcome of the Review in writing with reasons normally within 5 College 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.

At this point the College's complaints and compliments policy will have been exhausted.

Referral to External Agencies

Once this policy has been exhausted, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may contact the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (until 31 March 2025) if you wish to take this matter further [Complaints procedure - Education and Skills Funding Agency - GOV.UK](#). From 1 April 2025, the ESFA's functions will be incorporated into the Department For Education.

For Higher Education you can contact the awarding University. Following a University Completion of Procedures notice, referral can be made to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [Can you complain to us? - OIAHE](#)

Summary of Responsibilities for Complaints:

Responsibility of the College	Responsibility of the Complainant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To acknowledge your concern and ensure it is dealt with under the appropriate policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring their complaint to the College's attention within 6 weeks of the reason for the complaint occurring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deal reasonably and sensitively with all complaints which are being investigated under this policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the policy properly, explaining the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take action where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow the College reasonable time to deal with the complaint
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To welcome concerns brought to its attention to enable improvement where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To co-operate fully with the College and to act reasonably during the course of the complaint