

College Procedure

**Compliments and Complaints
Procedure**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compliments and Complaints Procedure

Compliments

All compliments are logged by the College and fed back to the appropriate members of staff. We will respond to all compliments.

Complaints

Most concerns can be resolved by discussing the issue with the person directly involved or an appropriate member of staff, this might be a Subject Tutor, Course Team Leader or Personal Tutor, Manager or a member of staff in Student Services. Groups of learners may raise a concern about their course with their course student representative. If the issue cannot be resolved a complaint can be made.

All complaints will be investigated by an appropriate manager from the relevant Department/Team. Complaints should be sent to Student Services in the first instance who will acknowledge the complaint and provide details of the Investigating Manager. All complaints are logged and an annual report is produced which is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and the College Corporation.

Appeal against the outcome of a complaint

If a complaint is not resolved through the formal investigation an appeal can be lodged with the Student Services.

Please refer to the full Compliments and Complaints Procedure for further information

Introduction

The College is committed to providing excellent customer satisfaction and welcomes compliments, suggestions and complaints and will deal with them in a friendly, fair and efficient way. The College will respond to all complaints promptly and within the published deadlines.

Implementation

This procedure will be published on the College Website and communicated to all staff.

General Roles and Responsibilities

- All College staff have a responsibility for receiving compliments, suggestions and complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure.
- The Heads of Department/Team are responsible for resolving complaints on behalf of South Essex College. They may appoint a Manager to investigate and respond on their behalf but will maintain overall responsibility.
- Student Services coordinate the Compliments and Complaints Procedure and are responsible for Appeals. The team also provide support and guidance on all matters relating to this process.

Procedure

Compliments, suggestions and complaints can be made verbally by phone 01702 220452 (voicemail available), by email (qualityimprovement@southessex.ac.uk) or by formal letter. A College Feedback form or Have Your Say leaflet can also be used. These are available at reception at all College sites.

Complaints

If there is concern about an aspect of a course or any of the College's services, the staff member most directly involved or someone already known should be contacted. Where there is uncertainty over who to contact or a student does not want to approach the person most directly involved, then the Student Learning Coach, Progress Coach, Personal Tutor, Course Team Leader or Curriculum Manager as appropriate should be contacted. If other students share the concerns then the course student representative should be approached.

If the issue cannot be resolved within the Department/Team a complaint can be made. Complaints should be sent to Student Services in the first instance who will acknowledge the complaint and provide details of the Investigating Manager. An appropriate Manager from the relevant Department/Team will investigate the complaint and take appropriate action. A response would normally be received within 10 working days. If we are unable to do this we will make contact to advise the target date for completion.

All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and an initial response provided within 10 working days, further responses may be provided where appropriate.

Appealing the outcome of a complaint decision

Please note – appeals raised under this Procedure are only in relation to the outcome of a complaint and not for appeals against academic decisions which is the subject of a separate procedure: the Academic Appeals Procedure.

If a complaint is not resolved using the complaints procedure there is the right to appeal. An appeal should be lodged with Student Services within 20 working days of the unsatisfactory outcome of the formal complaint. An extension of these time limits will only be possible in exceptional circumstances.

In order to appeal:

- Write to or telephone Student Services directly on 01702 220452.
- Detail what steps have been taken to resolve the complaint and explain why the outcome is not considered satisfactory.

Appeals will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and responded to within 15 working days. Some appeals, especially if they are complex, may take longer. If it is going to take longer to respond Student Services will provide an update.

Higher Education

For students enrolled on the College's Higher Education and City and Guilds Diploma in Teaching programmes

Once the appeal against complaint outcome stage has been completed, you are entitled to ask the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#), the independent ombudsman service of last resort, to look at your complaint. All applications to the OIA must be made within twelve months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter issued by the College to the student.

The OIA considers complaints from people who remain dissatisfied at the conclusion of the College's internal complaints procedure. The OIA looks at issues such as whether the College followed its procedures, whether these procedures were reasonable, and whether the College's final decision was reasonable in all the circumstances. The OIA cannot normally look at complaints:

- where the student has not progressed through all stages of the College's complaints procedures
- where the complaint refers to matters more than three years old
- where the Completion of Procedures letter is received outside the twelve month time limit
- Where matters have been or are being considered in court.

Full details of the scheme are available at www.oiahe.org.uk.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The College will keep a log of all compliments and complaints. In order to secure ongoing improvement, the overall process will be monitored for consistency, quality of response and compliance with procedure.

Heads of Department/Team are provided with feedback on progress in relation to complaints resolution and this is discussed in Review meetings. A summary of compliments and complaints is reviewed by the College Senior Leadership Team and The Further Education Corporation Curriculum & Quality committee.

The Further Education Corporation (governing body of South Essex College) reviews and discusses the Compliments and Complaints report with members of the Senior Leadership Team on at least an annual basis. A report on the outcome of all complaints received from University of Essex students will be provided to the University of Essex Curriculum & Quality Group.

Taking your complaint further

If a complaint remains unresolved, advice can be sought from the Skills Funding Agency on how to take the complaint further. The contact details are:

Skills Funding Agency
Complaints Team
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Email: complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk

Date of Approval: to be added
Date of Review: to be added

Appendix 1
College Feedback Form

Feedback Form

The College is committed to providing high quality services for our learners, employers and the community in general. We welcome this feedback to help us to improve Quality. Please complete this form, including as much information as possible.

Please note that staff are under an obligation not to allow a complaint by a student to have any bearing on the way that the student is treated or assessed.

Name

Date

Address

Post Code

Tel. No.

Course

Please set out clearly the nature and origin of your compliment/complaint

Please continue overleaf if necessary

If a complaint, please describe the steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally. If this has not been possible, or the outcome is not satisfactory, please explain why.

Please let us know what we can do to resolve this matter.

Please continue overleaf if necessary

Signature of person making compliment/complaint

College date stamp

*Please return to the College reception or by post to:
Student Services, South Essex College of Further & Higher Education,
FREEPOST SMU 110, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5BR*

The information provided on this form will be stored and processed under the Data Protection Act 1998