

## Complaints Policy

### 1. Complaints: Definition and Intent

Any person using the services of The National College Creative Industries who is unhappy with the service that we aim to provide, can complain to the Principal. In the case where the complaint is regarding the Principal, the complaint is made to the Clerk of Governors. This could include an issue that a student, parent, employer or anyone else using the College wants to raise that needs to be investigated and resolved.

It is our intent to strive for excellence. The College therefore

- operates fair and efficient procedures for dealing with complaints
- recognises that complaints offer a pool of information on what processes need to be improved and how to improve them.

**A complaint** requires the college to act on and respond to the complainant's situation and the request for redress.

**Feedback** may be negative; it differs from a complaint in that the person does not require a response. Feedback is given to the manager to act on as part of quality improvement. Such feedback is not formally logged.

Complaint type	Notes	Action
<b>Informal or local complaint</b>	<p>Verbal / Phone /Emails / some online forms</p> <p><i>Typically: first requests/everyday situations</i></p>	Member of staff receiving the complaint deals with it promptly and politely. Outcome logged locally to support quality improvement.
<b>Formal, written complaint</b>	<p>Written letters OR the College Feedback form (Appendix 1) OR online form OR email, addressed to a manager or the Principal.</p> <p>Written complaints made by students against staff.</p> <p><i>Typically: persistent problems/ very poor service level / high levels of dissatisfaction</i></p>	<p>Complaint logged and investigation carried out.</p> <p>Where the complaint is about staff, an independent investigation must be carried out.</p>

We aim to resolve all difficulties in a friendly and informal way.

### 2. Performance standards

1. All staff will endeavour to resolve all complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant and the College.
2. A first principle is to ensure that early intervention and response by **all staff** will address customer dissatisfaction.

3. Complaints that staff cannot personally and promptly resolve, will be referred to an appropriate manager or the person responsible for quality management.
4. All complaints against staff will be forwarded to the Principal's Office
5. Complaints will be responded to promptly and within the stated timescale/s.
6. Responses to complaints will be constructive.
7. Where complaints cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, full responses will be given justifying the college decision and the appeal process fully explained.
8. All written complaints will be recorded.
9. Complaints can also be communicated by telephone and email.
10. Where complainants are unable to complete the form, transcribers will be provided.
11. Managers will use the feedback gained through complaint to inform quality improvement.

### **3. Formal Complaints Procedure**

#### **3.1 Using the procedure**

- This procedure can be used by
  - anyone using the services of The National College Creative Industries
  - any student who has a complaint relating to another student, member of staff or the College facilities.
- Where possible, complaints should be dealt with to the customer's complete satisfaction at stage 1
- All complaints submitted in good faith will be considered fairly.
- Anyone who invokes the procedure will not be disadvantaged by having done so.
- Every effort will be made to resolve issues in a friendly and informal way.
- Throughout the process, the person complaining may have a friend to accompany them at all meetings.
- Malicious complaints could lead to disciplinary action.
- These are internal College procedures – at no stage is legal representation for any party allowed.
- For all complaints the privacy and confidentiality of the complainant will be respected.
- If disclosure is necessary to progress a complaint, the complainant will be notified in advance.

#### **3.2 Staged process**

##### **Stage One (Informal)**

Any person with a complaint is invited to discuss the matter first with an appropriate member of staff. In the case of students this will be their Teacher or Assessor. They will respond with advice and guidance as to how to proceed from this point.

- a) To deal with the issue **immediately** OR
- b) Agree a meeting (**within 3 days**) to discuss the complaint; this allows time for the complainant to think about what they want to say and to take a friend with them.

## Stage Two (Formal)

If the person is not satisfied with the outcome or does not wish to discuss the matter first they, or their representative, should

- Complete the College Feedback form (appendix1) OR
- Write a letter to the Principal
- Email [info@creativeindustries.ac.uk](mailto:info@creativeindustries.ac.uk)

Forms can be handed in to reception or posted to the college.

Receipt of the email/letter will be normally acknowledged in writing **within 4 working days** accompanied by a copy of the complaints procedure.

The email/letter will be copied to the Principal. Who will normally seek to resolve the issue **within 10 working days** by carrying out an investigation.

The outcome will be recorded on the College Feedback Form and the College will write to the complainant to outline the outcome of the investigation. Where a complaint is not upheld, reasons will be given as to why this is so. Where a complaint is upheld, a statement outlining the remedial action and timescale for implementation will be provided in writing to the complainant.

## Stage Three

If the person is not satisfied with the outcome noted in the letter they should appeal against the decision within 5 days of receiving the letter in stage 2. An appointment will be made to see the Principal to discuss the issue(s) further. The complainant may bring a friend and any written evidence thought to be useful.

## 4. Recording and reporting

A record must be kept of all complaints. (see table on next page for a summary)

- a. informal and immediately resolved complaints are recorded locally by the member of staff that resolves the complaint.
- b. written complaints (form, letter, email or online form) and subsequent investigation are recorded and monitored by the Principal's Office

All **serious complaints** should be reported to the Principal immediately together with a short summary of the action being taken. Serious complaints are those that relate to:

- Allegations of abuse by staff
- Academic malpractice
- Activity that may constitute a breach of the professional code of conduct
- An issue of illegality

## 5. Investigation (formal complaints)

- 5.1 A thorough investigation is carried out, focussed on the issues raised by the complainant. The college reserves the right to dismiss anonymous complaints. Malicious complaints will be investigated and the college reserves the right to raise the matter with the appropriate authorities.

The investigation officer, appointed by the Principal:

- Must examine the complaint without partiality and in accordance with best practice in customer care, seeking opportunities to resolve rather than escalate the complaint
- Must record the investigation and recommendations
- Respect confidentiality
- Identify actions to be taken which could include disciplinary procedures.

## 5.2 Framework for investigating complaints

The nominated investigator will:

1. Receive notice to investigate, a copy of the complaint.
2. Review the dates and inform the Principal of any possible delay in carrying out the investigation; in such a case, notice will be given to the complainant.
3. Identify the people to be involved, set up meetings and ask questions to clarify what happened.
4. Identify any documents that would help the investigation e.g. timetables, lesson observation reports, and carry out a review.
5. Identify any visits required to aid judgements e.g. checking a room, observation of a teacher.

### Reporting Findings

The completed report must be sent to the Principal by the date specified. The report should state clearly if the complaint is wholly upheld, partly upheld or not upheld and state the reason for the judgment clearly.

### Taking Action

The Principal will:

- 1) inform the relevant tutor/assessor of the outcome.
- 2) agree any significant compensation.
- 3) write to the complainant with the outcomes and informing them of the appeals procedures.
- 4) monitor completion of the action plan to ensure issues identified are resolved.

## 6. Quality Improvement

The college acknowledges that most service failures are due to inadequate systems and processes that do not support high quality delivery.

However, at times, things go wrong. The college recognises that customer complaints are a useful source of intelligence to inform quality improvement. All managers seek to ensure that:

- a) There are systems in place to put things right quickly
- b) Staff learn from mistakes, and seek to identify and address, the root cause of the complaint

## 7. Equality and Diversity

This policy is consistent with and complementary to all other College policies and in particular to the Equal Opportunities, Race Equality, Disability and Health & Safety policies. Effective reporting of user feedback will enable the college to make improvements where the need is identified.

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**Appendix 1**

**College Feedback Form**

National College Creative Industries is committed to providing high quality services for our students, staff, stakeholders and the community in general. We welcome this feedback 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:**

**Postcode:**

**Telephone No:**

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

**Please continue overleaf if necessary**

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

**Please continue overleaf if necessary**

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

**Please continue overleaf if necessary**

**Signature:**