

Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures

Effective From: November 2016
 Review Schedule: Every 2 years
 Latest Review: Approved by Board of Governors on 19 December 2018



Purpose and Definitions

- 1.1 The Complaints Policy is intended to bring matters of concern to the attention of the College, and facilitate the timely investigation and addressing of these concerns. The process provides welcome feedback to help the College improve.
- 1.2 It is our intent to strive for excellence. The College therefore operates fair, consistent and efficient procedures for dealing with complaints
- 1.3 Any person using the services of The National College Creative Industries who is unhappy with the service that we aim to provide, can make a complaint. This might include students, parents/carers of under 19s, employers, clients and the general public.
- 1.4 **A complaint** requires the college to act on and respond to the complainant’s situation and the request for redress.
- 1.5 **Feedback** may be positive or 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
Informal or local complaint	Verbal / Phone /Emails / some online forms <i>Typically: first requests/everyday situations</i>	Member of staff receiving the complaint deals with it promptly and politely. Outcome logged locally to support quality improvement.
Formal, written complaint	Written letters OR the College Feedback form (Appendix 1) OR online form OR email, addressed to a manager or the Principal. Written complaints made by students against staff. <i>Typically: persistent problems/ very poor service level / high levels of dissatisfaction</i>	Complaint logged and investigation carried out. The Principal will appoint an investigating manager in the case of a complaint against staff to ensure independence.

- 1.6 We aim to resolve all difficulties in a prompt, friendly and professional manner and, where possible, to the complainant’s satisfaction, in accordance with these procedures.
- 1.7 Where possible, we aim to deal with complaints under the Stage 1 informal procedure
- 1.8 All complaints submitted in good faith will be considered fairly.

- 1.9 Anyone who invokes the procedure will not be disadvantaged by having done so.
- 1.10 Throughout the process, the person complaining may have a friend to accompany them at all meetings.
- 1.11 Malicious complaints could lead to disciplinary action.
- 1.12 Anonymous complaints cannot be investigated
- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 These are internal College procedures – at no stage is legal representation for any party permitted
- 1.15 Responses to complaints will be constructive.
- 1.16 Where complaints cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, full responses will be given justifying the college decision and the appeal process made available.
- 1.17 A record will be kept of all written complaints
- 1.18 Complaints can also be communicated by telephone and email.
- 1.19 Where complainants are unable to complete the form, assistance will be provided.
- 1.20 Managers will use the feedback gained through complaint to inform quality improvement.
- 1.21 Separate procedures exist for the following:
 - Student Discipline – covered by the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
 - Staff Complaints – covered by the Grievance Procedure.
 - Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Complaints – covered by the Academic Appeals Procedure of the relevant awarding body.
 - Contractors' Complaints – will be dealt with as appropriate under the terms of the contract.
 - Allegations of Discrimination – covered by the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - Allegations of Malpractice – covered by the Whistleblowing Procedure.

Complaints Procedure

2.1 All formal complaints will be forwarded to the Principal's Office. In the case where the complaint is regarding the Principal, the complaint is made to the Head of Governance, who will pass it on to the Chair of Governors

2.2 Staged process

2.2.1 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 or apprentices this will be their Teacher or Assessor. The member of staff will respond with advice and guidance as to how to proceed from this point:

- a. To deal with the issue immediately, or
- b. To agree a meeting (within 5 working days) to discuss the complaint. This allows time for the complainant to prepare and to bring a friend with them if they wish.

2.2.2 Stage Two (Formal)

If the person is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One they, or their representative, should:

- a. Complete the College Feedback form (appendix1) OR
- b. Write to the Principal or, if the complaint is against the Principal, write to the Chair of Governors via the Head of Governance.

Forms can be handed in to reception or posted to the college at the following address:

National College Creative Industries
The Backstage Centre
Vellacott Close
Purfleet
Essex
RM19 1RJ

Receipt of the email/letter will be normally acknowledged in writing **within 5 working days** accompanied by a copy of the complaints procedure.

The email/letter will be copied to the Principal who will appoint an investigating manager who will conduct a full investigation.

Within **15 working days** of receiving a complaint, the College will provide the complainant with the outcome of the investigation in an email or signed letter of reply. The Principal will be copied in.

Where a complaint is not upheld, reasons will be given as to why this is so. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, a statement outlining the remedial action and timescale for implementation will be provided in writing to the complainant.

2.2.3 Stage Three - Appeal

If the person is not satisfied with the process followed to investigate their complaint, they have the right to request an appeal within 5 working days of receiving the letter in stage 2.

Appeals will be considered by a member of the Senior Management Team senior to the Investigating Manager. In the case that the Principal conducted the Stage 2 investigation, the appeal will be heard by the Chair of Governors.

The complainant may bring a friend to an appeal meeting, although this cannot include any legal representative, and any written evidence thought to be useful.

Recording and reporting

3.1 A record must be kept of all complaints.

3

- 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

3.2 All **serious complaints** should be reported to the Principal immediately together with a short summary of the action being taken, including referral for consideration under a separate College policy as outlined in 1.21. 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

4

Investigation (formal complaints)

4.1 A thorough investigation is carried out, focussed on the issues raised by the complainant.

4.1.1 The investigating manager, 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.

4.2 Framework for investigating complaints

4.2.1 The nominated investigating manager will:

Receive a copy of the complaint.

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.

Identify the people to be involved, set up meetings and ask questions to clarify what happened.

Identify any documents that would help the investigation e.g. timetables, lesson observation reports, CCTV or data records and carry out a review.

Identify any visits required to aid judgements e.g. checking a room, observation of a teacher.

4.3 Reporting Findings

- 4.3.1 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.

4.4 Taking Action

- 4.4.1 The Principal will:

- inform those involved in the investigation of the outcome.

- agree any remedy

- write to the complainant with the outcomes and informing them of the appeals procedures.

- monitor completion of the action plan to ensure issues identified are resolved.

Complaints Closure

- 5.1 The College will deem a complaint closed if a request for a review under Stage 3 is not received within 10 working days from the date of the letter detailing the outcome of the Stage 2 complaint.

Equality and Diversity

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

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:

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

Please continue overleaf if necessary

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

Please continue overleaf if necessary

Signature: