



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Myerscough College and University Centre is committed to providing a high quality service and its policy is to welcome and to try to satisfy complaints and observations from all who use the College and to use the outcomes to continue to improve the services that it offers.

The aim of the Complaints Policy is to ensure that students and prospective students, parents, employers and other customers and stakeholders are aware of how to make a complaint, which is defined as a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of a service or facility.

Anyone who wishes to express dissatisfaction is offered the opportunity to raise issues openly with full assurance that they will be dealt with courteously, fairly, objectively and in a timely manner. To be certain of consideration, the complaint must be lodged within three months.

A separate policy exists for students wishing to raise concerns against assessment decisions.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure is not applicable to members of staff, who should raise any issues through the College's internal HR policies and procedures. Complaints received from former Myerscough employees will be responded to confirming that the issues raised are being dealt with in accordance with internal policies and procedures; no further responses will be provided. The College's Whistleblowing Policy should be used by staff where malpractice is suspected.

Myerscough College and University Centre will not consider complaints that are received anonymously.

Procedure

1. Making a Complaint

Stage 1 – Early Resolution (Informal)

Issues that appear straightforward and potentially easily resolved may be directed to any relevant member of staff in order to seek an early resolution.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

Where a complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily through the informal route or in cases of more serious issues, these may be lodged as formal complaints by contacting:

Director of Corporate Services
Myerscough College
St Michaels Road
Bilsborrow
Preston
PR3 0RY
complaints@myerscough.ac.uk
Tel: 01995 642222

Where a complaint of a serious nature comes in via another member of staff or another route these complaints should be forwarded to the Director of Corporate Services to be dealt with on a formal basis.

Any concerns relating to young people and adults with additional needs who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, e.g. by neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse or any aspect of bullying, harassment or coercion will be directed to the Director of Student Support and Welfare, or a nominee, as a safeguarding issue.

Financial issues will be referred to the Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services.

Where a complaint is made by a parent or guardian on behalf of a student over 18 years of age, the College must receive permission in writing from the student to share their personal details with their parent / guardian.

Acknowledge, Record and Monitor

All formal complaints will be recorded, acknowledged within five working days and monitored until conclusion within Corporate Services. A central log of complaints and appeals against complaints outcomes is maintained and monitored by the Director of Corporate Services and reported to the Quality Monitoring Group. A full list of complaints is reported annually to the College Corporation. Higher Education (HE) complaints are also reported annually to the awarding University.

Investigate

The Director of Corporate Services will assign a Manager or representative to investigate the formal complaint. The Investigating Manager will update the complainant with the findings of their investigation. During this stage, you may be contacted for further information or may be invited to meet with the Investigating Manager.

Where the complainant is invited to attend a meeting, a member of staff may accompany by a friend or relative or in the case of a student them, but the accompanying person will not normally take an active part in the meeting. Legal representation is not permitted without the College's knowledge or consent.

Outcome

Following the investigation, the Investigating Manager will respond to the complainant within twenty working days, unless otherwise advised.

If you are a HE student and are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation into the complaint, you may access Stage 3 of the UCLan Complaints Procedure. At the conclusion of this procedure, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter by UCLan, which will allow you to then refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), should you wish to proceed further and/or are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint.

Mediation

If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily through the normal procedure, mediation may be arranged. Mediation is voluntary and will only take place with the agreement of both parties. The Director of Corporate Services will be responsible for arranging mediation. The mediator will be neutral to the dispute.

Stage 3 - Appeal

The complainant has the right to appeal against the outcome of the complaint (see also notes regarding higher education appeals below). This should be lodged with the Director of Corporate Services within five working days of receipt of correspondence stating the outcome of the investigation into the formal complaint. The grounds of appeal and any actions sought must be clearly stated at the time of making the appeal. The Vice Principal, Deputy Principal, or their nominee, will review the formal investigation and consider whether:

- New evidence or circumstances have become known, which could not have reasonably been made known at the time of the complaint;
- The investigation was not conducted fairly or according to procedure and this may have affected the outcome;
- The decision and outcome of the complaint were unreasonable.

We aim to conclude the Appeal process normally within twenty working days and will contact you with the outcome. This decision constitutes the final stage of the College Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Higher Education Appeals:

- Higher Education students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint regarding a service provided by the College which is a specific concern about the quality of the student's learning opportunities, may request a review under Stage 3 of the [UCLan Complaints Policy and Procedure](#). Students must do this within 15 working days of the College's final response and enclose a copy of that response to show that you have exhausted the College's internal procedures. On completion of the appeal, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter directly to the student advising of their entitlement of request for review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
- Higher Education students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint regarding a service provided by the College which is not a specific concern about the quality of the student's learning opportunities, should pursue their appeal internally at the College as detailed under 'Stage 3 – Appeal' above. On completion of the appeal, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter directly to the student advising of their entitlement of request for review by the OIA.

The College will keep the awarding provider (UCLan) informed about the nature and number of complaints it receives about both academic and service related matters.

SQA Candidates:

SQA candidates have the right to complain to SQA, the awarding body, if they remain dissatisfied after following the College's procedures.

Candidates on regulated qualifications (SVQ's) have the right to escalate their complaint to SQA Accreditation, the qualification regulator, if they feel that both Myerscough College and SQA, the awarding body, have not dealt with their complaint appropriately.

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, further avenues of communication are available through the relevant external agencies:

Further Education:

Education and Skills Funding Agency
Office for Standards in Education

Higher Education:

University of Central Lancashire (as detailed above)
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (as detailed above)
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

Confidentiality and Support

All complaints will be treated as confidential to safeguard interests and information limited to those involved in the complaints process. If in exceptional cases and for justifiable reasons the complainant wishes to remain anonymous throughout the process, this may be considered. However if disclosures are made it may be necessary to share information and this must be explained to the complainant. The College will not normally investigate anonymous or malicious complaints.

Complainants who feel that they need help and/or support to make a complaint may wish to talk to the College Student Union Liaison Officer or a member of the Student Support and Welfare team.

Safeguarding, Bullying and Harassment

Where a complaint relates to issues linked to perceived safeguarding, bullying and/or harassment, the College will consider these policies alongside the Complaints Policy and Procedure. The College's Safeguarding, Child Protection, Prevent and Missing from Education Policy and Procedure will take precedence over the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

The Myerscode Code

The Myerscough Code sets out the standards expected of all who make use of the College's facilities at any of its Centres. This policy supports the standards of behaviour set out in the Myerscough Code and in the College Values. Anyone who feels it appropriate to express dissatisfaction is offered the opportunity to raise issues openly with full assurance that they will be dealt with courteously, fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

We aim to treat members of our community courteously at all times and expect our community members to treat our staff and students in a similarly respectful way. We take seriously any threatening, abusive or violent behaviour against any of our staff, students or community. If a student, parent / guardian or visitor is violent or abusive, they will be asked to stop. If they persist, we may exercise our right to take action to have them removed, immediately if necessary, from our community. These types of behaviours will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any staff or students exhibiting these behaviours will be dealt with via our College disciplinary procedures. Any incident of threatening, abusive or violent behaviour may additionally be reported to the local Police Service.

Vexatious Complaints

Myerscough College and University Centre is committed to dealing with all complainants fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service, but it is not expected that staff should have to tolerate behaviour, which is considered to be unacceptable, for example, any communication which is:

- abusive, offensive, defamatory or distressing;
- aggressive, threatening, coercive, malicious or intimidating;
- unreasonably persistent or demanding.

The College reserves the right to end the complaint handling process and will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.

Monitoring of Complaints

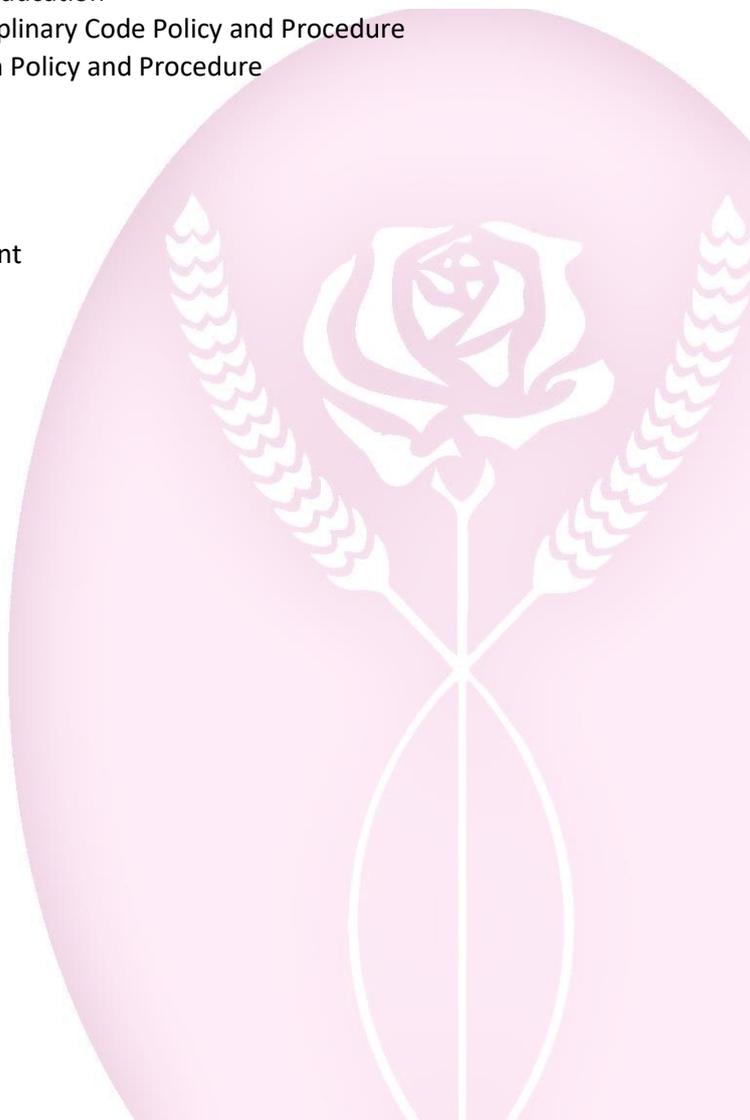
Complaints are actively monitored by the Director of Corporate Services to ensure all are investigated in accordance with the policy. Outcomes are recorded and reported to the Senior Leadership Team, who monitor trends, with action taken as required. An annual Complaints Monitoring Report is submitted to the Board of Governors.

Documents Associated with this Policy:

- Complaints Form - available on the College website, staff and student Intranets, and various locations around the campuses including Receptions and The Core
- Student Admissions Policy and Procedure
- Appealing against Assessment Decisions Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure for Staff
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- The Myerscough Code
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Student Academic Code and Disciplinary Code Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Appendices

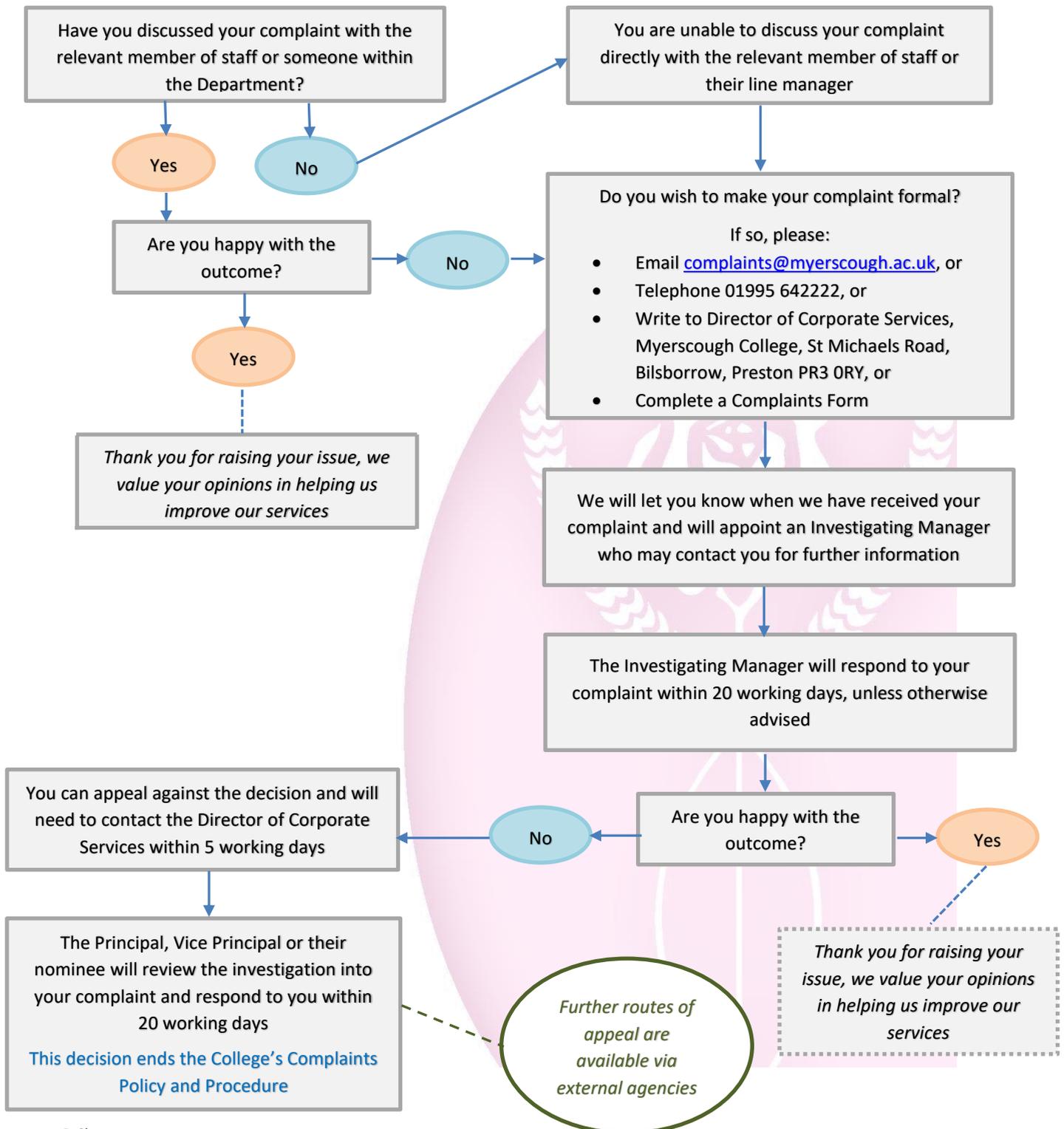
Appendix 1 – How to Make a Complaint





How to Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made verbally, by telephone, email or letter or by completing a Complaints Form available on the College website, at Reception and in 'The Core'. Students are encouraged to resolve any issues of dissatisfaction directly with their course tutor so that this may be dealt with quickly and informally.



Document History			
Author:	Director of Corporate Services	Ref and Document Version:	Complaints Policy and Procedure
Approval:	Senior Leadership Team	Approval Date:	November 2018, Updated October 2019
Review Date:	November 2021		
Publication:	Staff Intranet Student Intranet College Website		
Quality Assurance			
This Policy and Procedure maps to the following external quality assurance frameworks			
Framework		Framework Section Reference(s)	
Common Inspection Framework			
MATRIX			
QAA		QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	
QIA			
ESFA			
Key Changes to Document			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints received from former Myerscough employees will be responded to confirming that the issues raised are being dealt with in accordance with internal policies and procedures; no further responses will be provided. Myerscough College will not consider complaints that are received anonymously. The Complaints Policy is not applicable to staff who should use internal HR procedures. The Whistleblowing Policy should be used by staff where malpractice is suspected. The College will not deal with vexatious complaints and will take steps to end the complaint handling process. Monitoring of Complaints section added. Process for escalating complaints for SQA candidates 			

All Myerscough College Policies are subject to screening for Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a negative impact on grounds of: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sex or sexual orientation.

Myerscough College not only fulfils its legal position in relation to current and future equality legislation, but additionally goes beyond compliance in providing and promoting “Opportunities for all to succeed”, free from any aspect of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff have a duty of care to look after the interests of and support their colleagues. *This policy takes account of our commitment to eliminating discrimination, identifying and removing barriers and providing equal opportunities for our learners, staff and visitors to ensure that no one feels excluded or disadvantaged.*

Safeguarding, Child Protection, Prevent and Missing from Education

All staff have a responsibility to support and promote the College’s commitment to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. Additionally, all staff have a responsibility to report any safeguarding or Prevent issues to the Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding and Prevent.