

# Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure

Myerscough College and University Centre is committed to providing a high quality experience to all its students, as well as all who use our services. We recognise however that there may be times when you feel the need to raise concerns or even make a complaint about some aspect of your experience with us. As well as resolving your complaint, our aim is to implement lessons learned from complaints to improve the experience of learners and stakeholders.

We also welcome your compliments and suggestions. We use compliments to help us identify what our students, partners and other service users value and highlight as good practice so that we can build on our success and strive to provide exceptional levels of service.

Our aim is to encourage a culture of openness:

- Making the process as straightforward as possible
- Carrying out a fair and thorough investigation
- Keeping the complainant informed throughout
- Using the information to improve our services and provide staff training if required

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.

Separate policies and internal processes exist for students wishing to raise concerns against assessment and other academic 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.

## Procedure

In line with the Good Practice Framework of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the Complaints Policy and Procedure is made up of three different stages:

1. Early resolution focusing on the individuals / department concerned.
2. A formal stage involving a written complaint and subsequent investigation at senior management level, culminating in a formal, written response to disseminate the outcome of the process.
3. A review stage to be invoked if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their formal complaint.

### 1. Compliments

All compliments, where possible, will be acknowledged and the customer thanked for their feedback. Compliments should be shared with the member(s) of staff and their Line Managers. Sometimes, the College will use compliments during publications and the customer will be advised how their compliment and feedback will be used.

### 2. 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.

It is strongly advised that all parties involved in a Stage 1 complaint should make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue informally as soon as is practicable after the concern come to light. To this end, the complainant should first approach the staff member most immediately concerned with the issue.

The most likely method of resolution would be a face to face meeting however, it may be appropriate for details of the outcome to be provided in written form.

At Stage 1, a complaint should be made as soon as practicable and no more than 10 working days after the issue arises. The member of staff involved must attempt to resolve the issue through a meeting or telephone conversation with the complainant no more than 10 working days after the issue is raised with them.

The College would hope that most complaints would be dealt with at this stage in a manner satisfactory to all the individuals concerned.

#### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Route

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

Director of Corporate Services  
Myerscough College  
St Michaels Road  
Bilsborrow  
Preston  
PR3 0RY  
[complaints@myerscough.ac.uk](mailto: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.

Stage 2 complaints must be made no more than 10 working days after a failed attempt at early resolution, or within 30 calendar days of the origin of the concern if there has been no attempt at early resolution.

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.

An Appeal review will not revisit the original complaint or become involved in any additional investigation unless substantial new evidence has been provided.

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.

### **AIM Candidates**

AIM candidates have the right to complain to AIM, the awarding body, if they remain dissatisfied after following the College's procedures. This must only be done once the college's own procedures have been completed. Records of any complaints must be retained for 3 academic years.

### **External Agencies**

Where a 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.

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 this Policy and Procedure. The College's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will take precedence over the Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure.

### **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.

Myerscough College and University Centre 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.

### **Third Party Complaints**

We recognise that students may be reluctant or unable to make a complaint themselves, and we can accept complaints on your behalf from a friend, relative or other third party, providing written consent is given for a complaint to be made on their behalf.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

The College aims to deal with all complaints in strict confidence and it is an individual's right to complain if they are dissatisfied with the standard of service received. Anonymous complaints will be considered where there are grounds for an investigation to be undertaken, but if the College is not provided with the complainant's contact details we will not be able to request additional information or provide feedback on the outcome.

## 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:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Student Admissions Policy and Procedure
- Appealing against Assessment Decisions Policy and Procedure
- Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- Extenuating Circumstances for Higher Education Students Policy and Procedure
- The Myerscough Student Charter
- Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Resolution Policy and Procedure for Staff
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

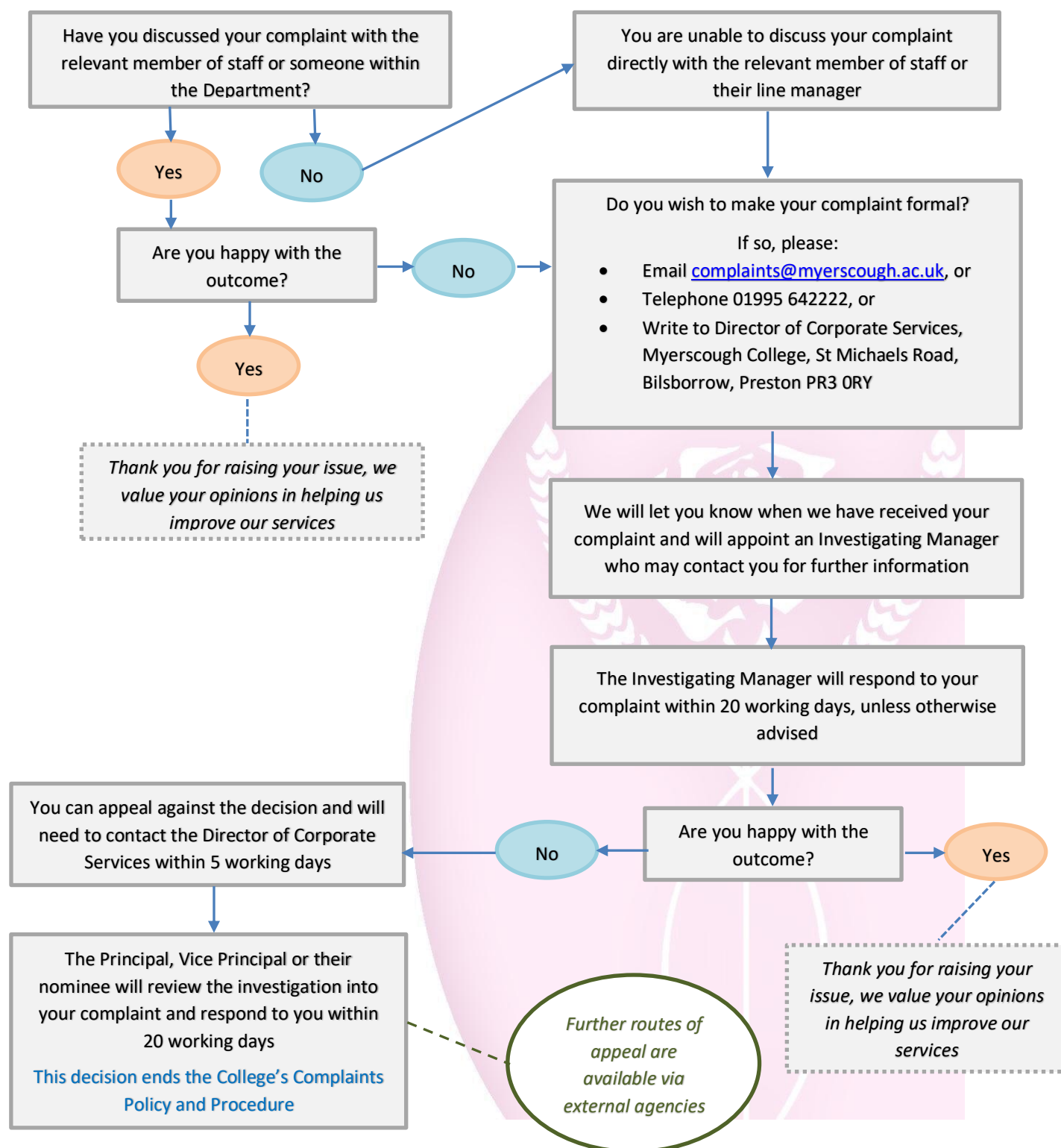
## Appendices

Appendix 1 – How to Make a Complaint



## How to Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made in person, by telephone, email or letter or via the Contact Us page on the College's website. Students are encouraged to resolve any issue 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 – V2 |
| Approval:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Senior Leadership Team                                | Approval Date:                           | February 2023                        |
| Review Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | February 2026                                         |                                          |                                      |
| Publication:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Staff Intranet<br>Student Intranet<br>College Website |                                          |                                      |
| Quality Assurance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| This Policy and Procedure maps to the following external quality assurance frameworks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| Framework                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                       | Framework Section Reference(s)           |                                      |
| Education Inspection Framework                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| MATRIX                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| QAA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                       | QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education |                                      |
| QIA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| ESFA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| Key Changes to Document                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                       |                                          |                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy re-named Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure</li><li>• Policy Statement updated</li><li>• OIA Good Practice Framework referenced</li><li>• Compliments section added</li><li>• Issues outside of scope of policy listed</li><li>• Stage 1, Early Resolution stage strengthened</li></ul> |                                                       |                                          |                                      |

#### **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.