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1. Purpose

At Walsall College, we are committed to providing high quality services for our College Community, by taking account of stakeholder views, and using the findings to continuously improve and develop our services.

2. Scope

This document details the Complaints Policy and Procedure. A complainant may be a student, prospective student, parent, employer, or any other interested party that indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service.

This Policy does not cover complaints and appeals for the following concerns, please refer to the specified policy in this instance:

- Safeguarding concerns
 - **Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (Child Protection)**
 - **Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (Adults at Risk of Harm)**
- Student disciplinary intervention
 - **Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline (PBMD) Policy**
- Appeals against assessment and internal/external quality assurance
 - **Assessment and IQA Policy**
- Plagiarism/maladministration
 - **Academic Misconduct Policy**
- Bursary decisions
 - **Bursary Policy**

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the Assistant Principal - Quality and Higher Education.
- 3.2 All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve complaints informally.
- 3.3 All staff have a responsibility to forward complaints to the Quality Team, should customers remain dissatisfied.

4. Policy

- 4.1 We will investigate your complaint thoroughly and objectively and it will be regularly monitored by the Quality Team.

- 4.2 We aim to resolve your complaint within ten working days – however, some complaints may take longer, especially if the issue is more difficult to resolve.
- 4.3 We will communicate an approximate timescale for a resolution, where possible.
- 4.4 Complaints should be raised within 12 months of the original issue so that evidence is available for the investigation.
- 4.5 An investigation may not be possible (or could be limited) for anonymous complaints, depending on the amount of information provided by the complainant.
- 4.6 Records relating to complaints will be retained for up to three years.
- 4.7 Complainants should be aware that our staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment, and any violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.
- 4.8 The College will ensure that students will not be treated less favourably if they make a complaint, if this is found to be the case, staff disciplinary procedures will be followed.
- 4.9 Students should be aware that malicious complaints received in any form would be dealt with in line with the Positive Behaviour Management and Disciplinary process.
- 4.10 Depending on the circumstances, where a complaint leads to disciplinary action against College staff, the College may need to keep certain aspects of the outcome confidential in accordance with data protection/GDPR regulations.

5. Procedure for Students

5.1 Stage 1 - Informal

- 5.1.1 Student concerns should initially be raised with a Lecturer, Trainer Assessor or Personal Tutor (or alternative member of staff if that is not appropriate). The member of staff must take every opportunity to resolve the complaint informally.
- 5.1.2 Students can also contact their Course Representative.
- 5.1.3 Verbal complaints to Reception, staff in public areas and requests to meet the Principal should be referred to the relevant College Manager/Duty Manager.
- 5.1.4 Conduct of another student may be referred for investigation under the Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy (PBMD).
- 5.1.5 The outcome will be communicated to you by the member of staff.
- 5.1.6 If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can proceed to **Stage 2** of this process.

5.2 Stage 2 - Formal

5.2.1 You can contact the College to make a formal complaint, by post, telephone or email, using the following contact details:

Quality Team
Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000
feedback@walsallcollege.co.uk

Textphone/Minicom (for the Deaf): dial 18001 + 01922657000

5.2.2 We will need as much detail as possible from you, for example:

- Your name (and the name of the person that you are representing, if applicable).
- Date of birth.
- Course (if applicable).
- Full details of your complaint (i.e. dates/names of people involved).
- Contact details.

5.2.3 Formal complaints are logged within two working days of receipt by the Quality Team. The Quality Team will then assign an Investigation Lead(s) to investigate the issues that you have raised.

5.2.4 The outcome will be communicated to you by the member of staff assigned to investigate your complaint.

5.2.5 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, please follow **point 7** of this policy (**Stage 3**).

6. External Complainants (i.e. Parents/Employers/Members of the Public)

6.1 Stage 1 - Informal

6.1.1 Concerns should initially be raised with a lecturer, personal tutor or relevant College manager. The member of staff must take every opportunity to resolve the complaint informally.

6.1.2 Verbal complaints to Reception, staff in public areas and requests to meet the Principal should be referred to the relevant College Manager/Duty Manager.

6.1.3 Conduct of another student may be referred for investigation under the Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy (PBMD).

6.1.4 You can contact Walsall College, using the following contact details:

Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000

Green Lane Campus
Long Acre Street
Walsall
WS2 8HX
01922 657000

The Hub
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8HX
01922 657090

Hawbush Campus
Beeches Road
Leamore
Walsall
01922 688808

Email (all campuses): feedback@walsallcollege.co.uk

Textphone/Minicom (for the Deaf): dial 18001 + 01922657000

6.2 Stage 2 – Formal

6.2.1 If you are unhappy with the outcome (**Stage 1**), you can contact the College to make a formal complaint, by post, telephone or email, using the following contact details:

Quality Team
Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000
Email: feedback@walsallcollege.co.uk

Textphone/Minicom (for the Deaf): dial 18001 + 01922657000

6.2.2 We will need as much detail as possible from you, for example:

- Your name (and the name of the person that you are representing, if applicable).
- Date of birth.
- Course (if applicable).
- Full details of your complaint (i.e. dates/names of people involved).
- Contact details.

6.2.3 If you are acting on behalf of someone else, we will need their permission **before** we can disclose any information to you.

7. Stage 3 - Complaints Appeal Process – Internal

7.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your formal complaint (**Stage 2**), you may appeal against the decision within ten working days of our response. If we do not receive an appeal during this period, your complaint will be closed and this will conclude the complaints process.

- 7.2 You can contact the College to appeal by post, telephone or email, using the following contact details:

Quality Team

Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000
Email: feedback@walsallcollege.co.uk

Textphone/Minicom (for the Deaf): dial 18001 + 01922657000

- 7.3 Complaint appeals are investigated by a manager independent of the original complaint. The manager will aim to resolve your complaint within ten working days – however, some appeals may take longer, especially if the issue is more difficult to resolve.
- 7.4 Where possible we will advise you an approximate timescale for a resolution.
- 7.5 The outcome of this appeal concludes the internal complaints and appeals process.

8. Stage 4 - Complaints Appeal Process - External

- 8.1 If your complaint relates to a course funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), **and Stages 1 to 3 have been fully exhausted**, you can contact the ESFA within three months of the appeal decision using the contact details below:

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

You can also email their Complaints Team at complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

- 8.2 You can access their Procedure for dealing with complaints about Providers of Education and training by using this link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641779/Procedure_for_dealing_with_complaints_about_providers_2017.pdf
- 8.3 The ESFA will acknowledge your complaint within five days, and will let you know what will happen next.
- 8.4 If you are unhappy with their response, you can write to the Complaints Adjudicator:

Complaints Adjudicator
Legal and Information Compliance
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

- 8.5 If your complaint relates to a Higher Education (HE) course and **Stages 1 to 3 have been fully exhausted**, you can contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) using the OIA Online Portal - <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/myoia.aspx>

You can also download a PDF version from the OIA website:

http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/34411/oia_digital_complaint_form_and_guidance_notes.pdf

Please return PDF versions by email to enquiries@oiahe.org.uk or by post to:

OIA
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

- 8.6 Please note, the OIA states that the form must be received within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter issued by your provider (Walsall College).
- 8.7 The OIA should send you acknowledgement that they have received your complaint within ten days.

9. London College of Contemporary Arts (LCCA) Students

- 9.1 Students must raise any concerns directly with the LCCA in accordance with their Complaints Policy and Procedure. This can be found on their website at: https://www.lcca.org.uk/media/480222/complaints-procedures_a.pdf
- 9.2 If you can evidence that the LCCA have not followed their Complaints Policy and Procedure, you can contact Walsall College (Wisemore Campus), using the contact details in **point 7.2** of this document.

10. Complaints Process Flowchart

Please refer to Appendix One on page 7 of this document.

Appendix One - Complaints Process Flowchart

