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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/apprentice, 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 Quality Assurance Policy**
- Plagiarism/maladministration
 - **Academic Misconduct Policy**
- Bursary decisions
 - **Bursary Policy**
- Recruitment outcomes
 - **Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy**

3. Responsibility

3.1 Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the Assistant Principal – Quality and Higher Education.

3.2 Operational responsibility for this procedure lies with the Quality Assurance Manager.

3.2 All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve complaints informally.

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3.3 All staff have a responsibility to forward complaints to the Quality Assurance Team, should customers remain dissatisfied.

4. Policy

4.1 Complaints must be raised **within 12 months of the original issue**, so that evidence is available for the investigation.

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

4.3 We aim to resolve your complaint within 15 working days – however, some complaints may take longer, especially if the issue is more difficult to resolve.

4.4 We will communicate an approximate timescale for a resolution, where possible.

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 five years.

4.7 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 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.

4.10 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.

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.

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- 5.1.3 If you are acting on behalf of someone else, we will need their permission **before** we can disclose any information to you.
- 5.1.4 Verbal complaints to Reception, staff in public areas and requests to meet the Principal/Governors should be referred to the relevant College Manager/Duty Manager.
- 5.1.5 Conduct of another student may be referred for investigation under the Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy (PBMD).
- 5.1.6 The outcome will be communicated to you by the member of staff.
- 5.1.7 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 Assurance Team

Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000
feedback@walsallcollege.ac.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 If you are acting on behalf of someone else, we will need their permission **before** we can disclose any information to you.
- 5.2.4 Formal complaints are logged within five working days of receipt by the Quality Assurance Team. The Quality Assurance Team will then assign an Investigation Lead(s) to investigate the issues that you have raised.
- 5.2.5 The outcome will be communicated to you by the member of staff assigned to investigate your complaint.
- 5.2.6 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, please follow **point 7** of this policy (**Stage 3**).

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6. Procedure for 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, Trainer Assessor, 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 with 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 8ES
01922 657090

Hawbush Campus

Beeches Road
Bloxwich
WS3 1AG
01922 688810

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

Textphone/Minicom (for the Deaf):

dial 18001 + 01922657000

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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. Complaints Appeal Process (Stage 3) - 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 Assurance Team

Wisemore Campus
Littleton Street West
Walsall
WS2 8ES
01922 657000
Email: feedback@walsallcollege.ac.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 15 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 of an appropriate timescale for a resolution.

7.5 The outcome of this appeals concludes the internal complaints and appeals process.

8. Complaints Appeal Process (Stage 4) – External

Education and Skills Funding Agency

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 using the contact details below:

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Complaints Team

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

You can also complete their [online enquiry form](#)

https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

- 8.2 You can access their Procedure for dealing with complaints about Providers of Education and Training by using this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

- 8.3 The ESFA will acknowledge your complaint and will let you know what will happen next.
- 8.4 Please note, the ESFA states that they cannot help with issues that are more than **12 months old**, except for exceptional cases related to some Advanced Learner Loans.
- 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).

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9. University of Worcester (UoW) students

- 9.1 If your complaint relates to a Higher Education (HE) course with the University of Worcester **and Stages 1 and 2 have been fully exhausted**, students may appeal directly to University of Worcester, by contacting the **Complaints and Appeals Officer** by email at: complaintsandappeals@worc.ac.uk

Should students remain dissatisfied with the outcome, they should follow **point 8.5** of this policy to appeal to the OIA.

10. Complaints Flow Chart

The flowchart below shows a visual representation of the complaints process described in this document.

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