

# TELFORD COLLEGE

## COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

<b>Ref No</b>	0056	<b>Version</b>	V9
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<b>Where Approved</b>	SLT QES Committee Corporation	<b>Covers</b>	Staff/Students

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## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1.0 Telford College is committed to providing high-quality education, ensuring the satisfaction of all stakeholders. We welcome all feedback, as the views and experiences of services users are a valuable source of information to review and improve existing practices and process.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1.1 This policy applies all services offered by the College, on campus and employer or community venues including with partners, work-based learning and assessment environments and work placements, in relation to;
- All students enrolled on a Telford College course.
- 2.1.2 Stakeholders and members of the public. The policy does not apply to:
- Safeguarding concerns – see Safeguarding Policy
  - Student behaviour and disciplinary procedures – see Positive Behaviour Policy
  - Concerns around staff conduct – see Safeguarding Concerns About Staff (Low Level) Policy
  - Complaints regarding educational matters relating to a Keele University programme – see Keele University Programme Handbook
    - Appeals against assessment and grading decisions – see Appeals Against an Assessment
    - Cases of plagiarism – see Academic Misconduct Policy
    - Concerns raised by members of staff – see Staff Grievance Procedure and/or Whistleblowing Procedure
    - Complaints around GDPR - dealt with by the College Data Protection Officer.

For the purpose of this policy the term “student” is used to mean any student enrolled on Telford College provision. Where the student is under 18, or classified as a vulnerable student, then their parent, guardian or carer may make a representation on their behalf, with the agreement of the student.

## **3 Compliments and general feedback**

- 3.1.1 The College welcomes all feedback about its services, positive, negative or indifferent. These can be shared directly with the member of staff, department, or sent directly to [quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk).
- 3.1.2 The Quality Team will log the feedback received and circulate to relevant staff and departments. These will support internal annual review processes and the sharing of good practice.

## **4 Responsibility**

- 4.1.1 All complaints will be;
- Treated seriously
  - Dealt with promptly and courteously
  - Investigated objectively
  - Confidentiality maintained (where possible)

- 4.1.2 All College staff have a responsibility for receiving a complaint and trying to resolve the complaint informally.
- 4.1.3 The Quality Co-ordinator has responsibility for tracking and recording any formal complaints.
- 4.1.4 Members of the curriculum management team have responsibility for investigating and resolving formal complaints.
- 4.1.5 The Vice Principal Support and Performance has responsibility for monitoring and reporting the outcomes of formal complaints.
- 4.1.6 A member of the Senior Leadership team (SLT) is responsible for resolving complaints which have reached the appeals stage.
- 4.1.7 The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy is operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Principal, the Clerk, other senior post holders or members of the governing body.

## **5 Policy**

- 5.1.1 Complaints should be made within 3 months of the original issue so that evidence is available for the investigation.
- 5.1.2 Every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally, including those made in writing.
- 5.1.3 Timescales for a resolution will be communicated at each stage, where possible.
- 5.1.4 Students will not be treated less favourably if they make a complaint.

### **5.2 Stage 1 – Informal**

- 5.2.1 Students should utilise the opportunities provided in College to provide their feedback. This includes, class representative meetings, student surveys etc.
- 5.2.2 Student concerns should initially be raised with a member of staff. This may be a teacher, progress coach, personal tutor or learner manager.
- 5.2.3 The member of staff must take every opportunity to resolve the complaint informally.
- 5.2.4 Staff dealing with informal complaints should keep records of conversations and actions. These will be requested should a complaint escalate to a formal stage.
- 5.2.5 Once the complaint has been resolved, a brief summary should be shared with the Quality Team at [quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk) for an overview to be collated.
- 5.2.6 If the complainant is acting on behalf of someone, we will need to ascertain their permission before disclosing information to the complainant.
- 5.2.7 Verbal complaints made to reception and staff in public areas will be referred to the Head on Duty or relevant manager to be dealt with informally.
- 5.2.8 If the complaint remains unresolved it will be raised to a stage 2 (formal complaint).
- 5.2.9 If you are not satisfied with the outcome from the informal stage, you can request

the complaint is escalated to stage 2. This request will need to be made in writing.

- 5.2.10 If the complaint is linked to Keele University programmes, the Keele Early Resolution Officer will be notified and the appropriate process followed depending on the nature of the complaint. Further details can be found in the Keele Programme Handbook.

### **5.3 Stage 2 – Formal complaint**

- 5.3.1 Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Quality Unit or by email to [quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:quality@telfordcollege.ac.uk) .
- 5.3.2 The complaint should include full details of the complaint along with their name, the name of the person they are representing (if applicable) and contact details.
- 5.3.3 If the complainant is acting on behalf of someone, we will need to ascertain their permission before disclosing information to the complainant.
- 5.3.4 Formal complaints will be logged internally, and an acknowledgement sent to the complainant within 5 working days.
- 5.3.5 An investigating officer will be delegated by the Vice Principal Support and Performance to carry out a full review of the complaint.
- 5.3.6 The outcome of the investigation will be shared with the complainant within 20 working days of acknowledgement.
- 5.3.7 During the investigation, the complainant may be asked to attend a meeting with the investigating officer about the incident or issue. The investigating officer may also speak to, or request, statements from staff and students.
- 5.3.8 If student interviews are required, the student will be informed in writing that they may be accompanied by a parent, guardian or other representative.
- 5.3.9 If staff interviews are required, the staff member is entitled to be accompanied by a union representative or workplace colleague.
- 5.3.10 Where appropriate, written records of all such meetings will be made and kept on file.
- 5.3.11 All complainants will be informed in writing if the investigation is delayed.
- 5.3.12 If the complaint is regarding a higher education course that is franchised through a university, there may be times when a complaint is dealt with through the University complaints procedure. This will be determined by the nature of the complaint, and the complainant will be notified of this in writing.
- 5.3.13 If the complaint is in relation to a staff member;
- Details of the complaint will be forwarded to Human Resources and their line manager. HR will chair a meeting to discuss how the matter should be investigated and by whom.
  - The investigating officer will follow the guidance from HR when investigating.
  - If the allegation/s are serious and potentially breaches any of our college policies, the staff member will be invited to an investigation meeting, where they will be allowed to bring either a colleague or a trade union

representative. Notes of the meeting will be taken.

- The outcome of the investigation will be shared with Human Resources and the staff member's line manager and an appropriate response to the complaint will be considered and any potential follow up action to be taken.

#### **5.4 Stage 3 - Appeals Procedure**

- 5.4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they have the right to appeal.
- 5.4.2 The appeal should be made in writing to the Quality Unit within 10 working days of the outcome letter.
- 5.4.3 The grounds of appeal, and any actions sought, must be clearly stated at the time of the appeal.
- 5.4.4 A request for an appeal must be based on one (or more) of the following grounds:
- New evidence or circumstances have become known, which could not have reasonably been known at the time of the complaint;
  - Evidence to demonstrate that the investigation was not carried out in accordance with this Complaints Policy.
- 5.4.5 A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be appointed to oversee the appeal. They will review the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

#### **5.5 Stage 4 – External Appeals Procedure**

- 5.5.1 If the complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the appeal decision and stages 1-3 have been exhausted, they may request the complaint be reviewed by an external body.
- 5.5.2 If the complaint is related to a course funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), The ESFA can be contacted on the following website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>
- 5.5.3 If the complaint is in relation to a higher education course, The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) can be contacted by completing an OIA form from their website <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx> . It is also possible to contact them by email, post or telephone and they will send a form. Please note that OIA state the form must be received within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter issued in the outcome letter. All complaints must have exhausted stages 1-3 of this process being referred to the OIA.

### **6 Record Keeping and Monitoring**

- 6.1.1 A record of all formal complaints and their outcomes will be kept by the Quality Unit and monitored by Executive Leadership Team. Themes will be fed into the College's self-assessment and other quality improvement processes as appropriate.
- 6.1.2 All correspondence throughout the investigation to either complainant or anyone involved will be copied to the Quality Unit who will maintain a record of all

communication.

- 6.1.3 Complainants are advised that, whilst confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, it is not normally possible to resolve complaints without disclosing details of a complaint to relevant staff in order to allow the College a fair opportunity to resolve the issue.
- 6.1.4 Records will be kept in accordance with the College’s Data Retention and Record Management Policy.

## **7 Reporting Process**

- 7.1.1 An annual report is prepared for the Executive Leadership Team and Governors which is disseminated at the Corporation meetings.

## **8 Policy Review History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Reason for Review</b>
7.1	May 2020	Quality Support Manager	Annual Review
7.2	May 2021	Quality Administrator	Annual Review
7.3	April 2022	Quality Administrator	Annual Review
8	April 2023	Head of Quality	Annual Review
8.1	May 2024	Head of Quality	Annual Review
9	May 2025	VP Support & Performance	Review