

Complaints Procedure

Aims and Objectives

The College will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly, honestly and consistently. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding. We endeavour to:

- Make the procedure easily accessible and publicised
- Make the procedure simple to use and understand
- Carry out an impartial investigation
- Allow for swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- Address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary

This procedure applies to issues concerning the curriculum and service areas, but **NOT** appeals against exclusions which will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure, a copy of which can be obtained from the College.

There is a separate procedure for complaints relating to Higher Education.

Overall responsibility for this procedure sits with the Corporate Centre. College Principals are responsible for day to day management and operation of the procedure and for bringing the complaint to a resolution. Page 5 of this procedure contains a flow chart highlighting the usual process to be followed by the College.

1) Informal Stage

It is recognised that concerns relating to the College may be raised by students, the general public, external agencies and staff. These concerns can hopefully be dealt with immediately by the appropriate member of staff concerned. The College aims to resolve informal concerns quickly and to reach a satisfactory resolution. To ensure that the College is able to deal quickly with any concerns, informal complaints must be raised within one month of the issue's occurrence.

2) How to Make a Formal Complaint

STAGE 1

If you feel that a concern has not been resolved appropriately through informal discussion with the appropriate staff member or it is of serious concern and you wish to have the matter formally investigated, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the relevant College Principal. Contact details are as follows:

Owner of Policy: Head of Student and Community Affairs

Approving Body: Full Governing Body

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: Feb 2017

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Site	Contact	Contact details
Broadstairs College	Paul Manning College Principal	Ramsgate Road Broadstairs CT10 1PN E: paul.manning@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01843 605040
Canterbury College	Lucy McLeod College Principal	New Dover Road Canterbury CT1 3AJ E: lucy.mcleod@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01227 812051
Dover Technical College	Nick Holbrook-Sutcliffe College Principal	Maison Dieu Road Dover CT16 1DH E: nick.holbrook-sutcliffe@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01304 244333
Folkestone College	Victoria Copp-Crawley College Principal	Shorncliffe Road Folkestone CT20 2TZ E: victoria.copp-crawley@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01303 858300
Sheppey College	Alan Salter College Principal	Bridge Road Sheerness ME12 1HL E: alan.salter@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01795582501
Community and Employability programmes	Jonathan Smith Director of WorkHigher	East Kent College Area 21, Innovation House Discovery Park Sandwich CT13 9ND E: jonathan.smith2@eastkent.ac.uk T: 01843 605040

The College will of course endeavour to assist with any special requests for additional assistance with this procedure as long as they are made aware at the outset. Formal complaints must normally be made within two months of the issue's occurrence to enable the College to take appropriate action where required.

The written complaint should be returned, marked confidential, to the respective College for the attention of the College Principal, indicating at which stage you are making the complaint.

It would be helpful if the following information could be included in the complaint to enable us to deal with the complaint as efficiently as possible:

- Your Name
- Your Address
- Postcode
- Daytime telephone number
- Evening telephone number
- Email address for correspondence
- Details of the complaint
- What action if any, you have already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who you spoke to and what their response was)
- What action you feel might resolve the problem at this stage

The College Principal will contact any parties involved in the complaint and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 14 calendar days after receiving it. You will also be provided with a copy of the College's Complaints Procedure.

The complaint will be investigated and a response sent to you within 21 calendar days. If it is not possible to conclude the investigation within this time frame the College will keep you advised of progress and a revised date for a resolution.

If the nature of the complaint is of a serious nature and could constitute gross misconduct by a member of staff, the College Principal will refer the matter to the Head of HR for investigation. Examples may include theft, inappropriate behaviour, bullying/harassment, discrimination, fraud, breach of safeguarding, breach of legislation or college procedures etc.

STAGE 2

If the concern/complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved under Stage 1, you have the option to request an appeal. This must be submitted in writing to:

Head of Student and Community Affairs
East Kent College
Ramsgate Road
Broadstairs
CT10 1PN
alison.gray@eastkent.ac.uk

Appeals must be submitted within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome letter, stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. If appropriate, the Head of Student and Community Affairs will appoint a senior manager who has not been involved in the original

complaint to investigate the matter. A response will normally be within 14 calendar days and you will be informed about the actions which will be taken to investigate your complaint.

STAGE 3

Following the action taken at Stage 2, if you still feel that the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction and having exhausted the College's procedure, you may wish to refer your complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Send your complaint in writing, by email or post to the complaints team and the Complaints Adjudicator will deal with it.

Complaints Adjudicator
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

The ESFA will not investigate complaints relating to exam results, curriculum content, employment issues, contractual disputes, cancellation or reimbursement of fees/loans, matters subject to legal action or allegations of fraud, financial irregularity or whistleblowing.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body monitors the Complaints Procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Corporate Centre logs all formal complaints received by the College and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

