

Procedure Title	Loughborough College Complaints Procedure
Date Approved	October 2018
Approved by	Executive
Date of Impact Assessment	October 2018
Next Review Date	October 2019
Executive lead	Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience
Applicable to:	Learners, Staff and other Stakeholders
Accessible to:	Learners, Staff and other Stakeholders

1. Purpose of the Procedure

1.1 The college has a staged complaints procedure which aims to resolve concerns swiftly and fairly

1.2 The purpose of the procedure is to investigate complaints in a way that:

- encourages informal resolution of issues and concerns if possible
- is fair and equitable
- treats complaints with appropriate seriousness

2. Scope & Responsibility

2.1 This procedure covers complaints relating to:

- any college policy, procedure or process
- academic and support services or facilities
- the conduct or actions of a college member of staff
- misleading or inaccurate information regarding academic programmes, fees, services or facilities

2.2 This procedure is not used for:

- complaints about academic judgements, examination decisions, academic appeals or assessment outcomes
- appeals against disciplinary actions
- any kind of bullying as defined in the college Anti - Bullying policy
- whistle blowing

2.3 This procedure should not be used by members of staff, who should use the college's Grievance policy and Procedures. Further details and advice on this can be obtained from Human Resources

2.4 It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that the procedure is adhered to within the stages and timelines

3. Definitions

3.1 The college uses the following definitions specific to this procedure:

- a complaint is the expression of a specific concern
- 'days' refers to Monday - Friday term time
- timescales specified will be adhered to wherever possible but may be extended during academic holiday periods. On these occasions the complainant will be notified

4. Procedure

- 4.1** Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the events or actions (or lack of actions) that have prompted the complaint. The college will not normally consider complaints that are made more than one calendar month after the incident or event complained about. In exceptional circumstances, a complaint may be considered outside this timeline
- 4.2** A complainant may be invited for a meeting as part of any investigation relating to the complaint and may be accompanied by a parent/carer, employer or other representative. Details of any support needs will need to be declared prior to any meeting
- 4.3** The college will make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, to ensure that the complaints procedure is fair, equitable and accessible to all
- 4.4** Where it is inappropriate or not possible for a learner or other stakeholder to make a complaint, this may be done on their behalf by another person, who has a legitimate interest in the complaint and has the complainant's knowledge and written consent. That interest must be made clear to the college
- 4.5** Records will kept in line with the College Records Management Policy

5. Stage 1 (Informal)

- 5.1** Every attempt should be made to resolve any complaint on an informal basis in the first instance. Learners should discuss the issue with an appropriate member of staff who may be connected with the complaint. If this is not possible, it may be discussed with any of the following:
 - Progress tutor or Academic coach
 - Programme Area Leader/Curriculum Manager
 - Head of Department
 - Learner Services
 - LSU
- 5.2** Any potential concern by an employer or other stakeholder should be raised in the first instance with the relevant manager for the area or service concerned
- 5.3** All members of staff dealing with any informal complaint must endeavour to resolve the issue within 10 working days. If longer time is needed, this should be communicated to the complainant and the agreed outcome logged on the ILP or in other relevant documents, in order that a record is maintained

6 Stage 2 (Formal)

- 6.1** A complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 if it has not been possible to resolve the issue informally
- 6.2** Stage 2 complaints must be made in writing to somethingtosay@loucoll.ac.uk, identifying, where possible;
 - The nature of the complaint
 - If appropriate, the individual against whom the complaint is being made
 - Independent evidence supporting the case
 - An indication of the action sought from the college
- 6.3** The complaint will be logged and acknowledged within five working days

- 6.4 An appropriate manager will be appointed by the Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience to investigate the complaint. The complainant will be informed of the progress of the investigation at key points throughout the process.
- 6.5 The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement, unless previously stated otherwise. If more time is needed to investigate the complaint, the complainant will be informed and given a revised deadline. The outcome from the investigation and proposed response will be sent to the Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience, for approval before responding to the complainant. All correspondence relating to a formal complaint at Stage Two must be logged and stored centrally
- 6.6 The response must include one of the following decisions:
- Dismissal of the complaint as unfounded
 - Determination that the complaint is trivial and that no further action be taken
 - Proposal of a resolution to the complaint, which is being upheld, in part or fully

7 Stage Three (Appeals)

- 7.1 A complainant may appeal the outcome of Stage 2 within 10 days. The appeal should clearly state the reasons for the appeal, which may be that:
- There is a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the complaint investigation
 - There is new evidence to support the complaint that can be substantiated, including extenuating circumstances, which were not known at the time, and may have affected the outcome had it been known and there is valid reason for not making it known at the time
- 7.2 An appeal should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer by emailing somethingtosay@loucoll.ac.uk. A response will be issued within 10 working days, where possible.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive Officer will appoint an independent person to review the complaint, and once the investigation has been completed, a report and its findings will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.
- 7.4 The Chief Executive Officer will make a decision as to the final outcome of the appeal and recommendations (if any). This will be communicated in writing to any parties involved. This is the final stage of the college's Complaints procedure and should be considered as a letter of completion.

8 External Appeal

- 8.1 If a complaint remains unresolved after appeal, the college can provide the appropriate external contact, including awarding body or funding body details, in order for an external appeal to be made. Contact should be made to somethingtosay@loucoll.ac.uk for relevant details. In general, it is expected that all stages of the college Complaints procedure will have been exhausted before this is done.
- 8.2 Complaints received by an external funding body or arbitration service e.g. Skills Funding Agency or Department for Work and Pensions, will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

9 Contact information

- 9.1 Learners can take advice and support from the LSU either prior to making a complaint or during the complaints process at:

Student Union Office

LoughboroughStudents'Union
UnionBuilding
AshbyRoad
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3TT

T: +44 (0)1509 635000

E: Union@lufbra.net

10 Linked policies

- Anti-Bullying policy
- Academic Appeals policy
- Whistle Blowing policy

11 Location and access to the procedure

The procedure is located on the:

- College Website (www.loucoll.ac.uk)
- Learn Zone site for learners (<https://learnzone.loucoll.ac.uk/>)