

FE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY 2021/22

Applies to:

Harrogate College

Keighley College

Leeds City College

Leeds Conservatoire

White Rose Academies Trust



Policy Aim

The college complaints & compliments procedure is designed to encourage the fast and efficient resolution to issues at the first point of contact, and appropriately recognise areas of success.

CHANGE CONTROL

Version:	Version 5	
Approved by:	DELT	
Date approved:	October 2021	
Name of author:	Kirsty Lister	
Name of responsible committee:	Quality	
Related policies: (list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grievance policy and procedure ● Disciplinary policy and procedure ● Student Conduct and Disciplinary procedure ● Health and Safety policy ● Equality and Diversity policy ● Policy against Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation ● Safeguarding policy ● Fee Refund and Recovery policy ● Prevent policy ● Whistleblowing policy ● GDPR/Data Protection ● FOI process ● Subject Access Requests 	
Equality impact assessment completed	Date:	
	Assessment type <input type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/> Part <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not required	
Policy will be communicated via:	Staff intranet and via Google docs. Available upon request to external stakeholders	
Next review date:	October 2022	

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is important to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

A concern is defined as a matter for the College's attention, interest, or care, or something that may be affecting a person's welfare or happiness (directly or indirectly) ideally addressed informally in accordance with the College's complaints policy.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction that should be drawn to the College's attention for responsible action, to be investigated in accordance with the College's formal complaints procedures once appropriate informal options have been exhausted. For more detail on complaint definitions please see Appendix 1.

1.1. This procedure covers complaints from or on behalf of all college customers about any of the college's products or services. It does **not** cover:

- academic appeals
- grievance and disciplinary offences
- safeguarding concerns; including those around extremism and radicalisation (prevent duty)
- complaints lodged by staff
- complaints relating to Higher Education courses
- complaints for Luminate Education Group providers, other than those listed

As these should be pursued through the relevant policies and procedures, a complaint could invoke deployment of one or more of the associated college policies and procedures noted in the 'related policies' list above.

1.2. The effectiveness of our complaints procedure depends on us being able to collect appropriate information from the parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For this reason, we request that you raise your complaint with us as soon as is practically possible, so that we can investigate your concerns fully. It is the decision of the college to consider rejecting historic complaints if it is deemed that a significant amount of time has lapsed since enrolment/incident has occurred, or the issues raised have previously been investigated and responded to in full. This will also take into consideration any changes to legislation regarding the time allocated for document storage and the impact potential lack of evidence would have on an investigation.

1.3. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with under this procedure. It is at the discretion of the member of staff receiving an anonymous complaint to determine how the matter is handled.

1.4. Complaints received during college closure or holidays may result in delays to investigations however updates will be provided if applicable.

1.5. If you are complaining on behalf of a student (that is over 16 years old) please ensure you have sought permission to share their details/experience. They will need to provide confirmation of their approval before a response can be issued.

2. POLICY AIMS

- 2.1. This college complaints policy is designed to encourage the fast and efficient resolution to issues at the first point of contact.
- 2.2. This policy outlines the steps to take if you need to raise a complaint with us. All concerns or complaints should be handled by college staff in an open, professional and courteous manner, on the basis that we will try to resolve any issues you have at the lowest level possible.
- 2.3. If you need the complaints policy in an alternative format, please contact the Quality, Teaching, Learning & Assessment team on 0113 284 6349 / 07814818732 or via email at quality@luminare.ac.uk.
- 2.4. This policy covers complaints relating to further education services provided by the following institutions: Leeds City College, Leeds Sixth Form, Keighley College and Harrogate College and including Apprenticeship provision for these organisations..

3. How to Raise a Complaint - Staged Approach

3.1. Informal

If you wish to raise a concern, in the first instance we recommend that you try to resolve it directly with the member of staff concerned or by contacting one of the following:

- The Course Tutor, Programme Manager, or Deputy Head of Department
- The nominated Student Representative for the relevant course
- The Students' Union in person or by emailing support@lccsu.org and providing a contact telephone number, so that they can put you in contact to the relevant department
- Apprentices, workplace students or employers- please contact your assessor or key college contact

Complaints can be made by email, telephone, in person or in writing. On receiving a complaint, all college staff are expected to take appropriate and immediate action, communicating directly with you to establish all the relevant facts and resolve the matter as quickly as possible. We recommend that both parties keep a written record of the complaint and actions taken, as this may be required in any further investigation should you feel there is a need to escalate your complaint.

Where possible, outcomes will include detail of actions to be taken as a result of a complaint, however this may not always be possible due to the nature of the complaint. If this is the case, you will be provided with a response explaining this.

3.2. Stage One

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally, please contact the Quality team by email at quality@luminare.ac.uk, by phone on 0113 284 6349 / 07814818732 or in writing to the following address:

FE Colleges: FAO Quality Team
QTLD Directorate
Teacher Development Centre
Park Lane Campus
Park Lane
Leeds
LS3 1AA

Please include your name, contact details, as much detail as possible regarding your complaint including any steps you have already taken to try to resolve it, and the outcome you are looking for. We will confirm receipt of your complaint with you within 2 working days (unless received during periods of college closures), and raise it with the relevant Head of Department for investigation and resolution. Please try to raise your concerns as soon after they happen as possible to ensure we are able to fully investigate (within 6 months of issues occurring).

We aim to deal with all complaints as quickly as possible, and if delays occur we will keep you updated in the interim. On average, Stage 1 complaints are dealt with within 10 working days.

In line with the college's commitment to restorative practices based on respect, inclusion, collaboration and social responsibility, with your permission a restorative intervention can be arranged. The meeting will include the member of staff involved in the complaint and a suitable senior member of staff. This could be a line manager, Deputy Head, Head of Department or Director, depending on the nature of your concerns. The purpose of a restorative intervention is to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to meet and openly discuss the issues raised and agree a resolution.

3.3. Instances of 'Immediate Escalation' to Stage two

We will consider immediate escalation of your complaint to stage two if it directly relates to:

- Equality & Diversity (Equality Act 2010)
- Health & Safety (Health & safety at Work Act 1974 or any college Risk Management/Health & Safety policy)
- Lack of response at the previous stage
- The Quality Team reserve the right to immediately escalate to stage two dependent on the nature of a complaint

3.4. Stage Two

If your complaint cannot be resolved at stage one, you have the option to escalate it to stage two of our complaints procedure. This can be done by contacting the Quality team using the details provided in section 3.2 within 10 weeks of a response at the previous stage. When doing this, please let us know the reasons you wish to escalate your complaint and the outcome you are looking for.

We will confirm receipt of your complaint with you and instigate an investigation into your concerns on behalf of the college to find a resolution within fifteen working days. Where circumstances mean it will take more than fifteen working days to complete a thorough investigation, we will let you know the reasons for the delay, when an outcome should be expected and how often you can expect updates as the investigation progresses.

On completion of the investigation, we will send you a formal response in writing.

3.5 Appeals

Where you have followed stages one and two/immediate escalation of our procedure and remain dissatisfied with the resolution offered, you have the right to appeal within thirty calendar days of the stage two response.

Please submit your appeal in writing by email to quality@luminate.ac.uk or by letter to us at the following address:

FE Colleges: FAO Quality Team
QTLD Directorate
Teacher Development Centre
Park Lane Campus
Park Lane
Leeds, LS3 1AA

Please include in your correspondence your reasons for appealing, the steps taken so far to try to resolve your complaint in line with the college's process, and the outcome you are looking for. We will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within two working days.

If there is a reason you are unable to provide a written appeal, please contact the Quality Team on 0113 284 6349 / 07814818732 and we will arrange to take your appeal via an alternative method.

A member of the college's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will review your appeal and a written response will be sent to you within twenty working days.

The response from the ELT member is final. If you remain dissatisfied with the final college response, you have the right to raise it with the relevant awarding organisation/validating body, or with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) within three months. But, you must have first exhausted all stages of the college's complaints procedure.

4.0 Compliments

As an organisation, we are focused on transforming lives by providing outstanding education, training and outcomes for our students. The aspiration is to always add value for students and society by having a positive impact, allowing all students to succeed and improve their lives.

You can submit a compliment for a member of staff, a team or a specific organisation. Compliments will be passed on to our staff, their line manager and are used to identify areas of good practice and opportunities for development.

Compliments can be submitted in writing to quality@luminare.ac.uk or via telephone on 0113 284 6349/07814818732.

Compliments are used to enable service and individual developments, and employees will be recognised appropriately.

5.0 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

As an organisation, we are committed to offering an equal service to all our customers. To assist in this, the Quality team may collect information about people who feed back to us using the complaints procedure. This information includes age, gender, disability and ethnicity and will only be used for monitoring purposes. All information will be treated confidentially.

6.0 SEND Approach

Our SEND policy describes our commitments to the Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice, and seeks to ensure that students are supported to succeed and recognise the value of learning as a key to sustainable employment and progress in their learning.

As a college, we are committed to ensuring that all students are able to raise concerns or complaints when and if they occur. Where a young person finds it difficult to understand or voice their concerns, they can appoint an advocate to speak on their behalf. An Internal Advocate can be assigned through the SEND support team. For external Advocates you should contact your local council and ask about their advocacy services.

7.0 Abuse

As a college, we aim to treat anyone making a complaint courteously and with respect at all times. In turn, we expect you to treat college staff in a similarly respectful way. Threatening, harassing, abusive or intimidating behaviour or language will not be tolerated.

Any complaint found to include threatening behaviours or comments following investigation may lead to the instigation of disciplinary procedures.

Quality Team

FE College's QTLA Directorate

Email: quality@luminare.ac.uk

Tel: 0113 284 6349/07814818732

8.0 Appendix 1 - Complaint Definitions

Type	Define	Can be from
Teaching & Learning	Complaint in relation to the structure or delivery of teaching	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under
Assessment	Complaint about the delivery of assessments	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under
Accommodation & Resources	Complaint about the physical buildings or the resources provided	Student Apprentice Public
Management & Administration	Complaint about procedural conduct and policy implementation (ie. whether a department has followed procedure)	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under Public
Student Support & Services	Complaints about tutorials, ASC, LRC, Students Union or any other non-teaching service provided to a student or application	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under Public
Equality & Diversity Related	Complaint about the cCollege following the law in relation to EDI	Student Apprentice / Employers Public
Local Community	Complaint from the public about any aspect of the college, except disability related	Public
External Partner	Complaint relating to any external partners in which the College holds a contract with. The complaint will only be dealt with if it is relating to a student and not the company in general	Student Apprentice