

POLICY FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

PURPOSE OF THE COMPLAINTS POLICY

To support the college's mission 'To inspire and lead our community through excellence in providing learning and pathways for progression'. We deal openly, fairly and effectively with any comment or complaint about our services from learners or others, and to offer an appropriate remedy to anyone who is adversely affected by a service which fails to meet our standards.

Yeovil College is committed to improving the quality of the learning experience. We constantly seek to improve all our services. The College's and the Corporation's Teaching, Learning and Achievement Committees regularly monitor the complaints and comments received, and the effectiveness of the procedures to address them.

The procedures can be used to complain about any service which Yeovil College provides. There are separate procedures for appealing against the outcome of academic assessments and for making disclosures in the public interest (whistleblowing). The complaints procedure cannot be used for any of these purposes.

Wherever possible a complaint should be resolved at the point it arose, with the members of staff concerned. If this does not result in an acceptable outcome or the situation makes this approach unfeasible then the formal procedure should be followed. All formal complaints must be in writing.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The Principal has ultimate responsibility for complaints and will ensure that the arrangements for ensuring fair and effective management of complaints are reviewed and enhanced.

The Vice Principal, Learning & Quality is the Principal's representative on matters related to quality assurance and complaints and is responsible for implementing systems in accordance with the approved College Policy.

Heads of Centre and other senior College Managers are responsible for the day to day management of complaints within their areas.

QUALITY COMMITTEES

The College Teaching, Learning and Achievement Committee and the Corporation Learning and Achievement Committee both monitor, once a term, the complaints received and the actions taken to address them.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

All formal complaints are logged by the Head of Quality Assurance and Improvement. Complaints will normally be acknowledged within 3 working days. The complaint will then be passed to the appropriate Head of Centre or senior manager who will investigate the complaint and normally respond in writing within 15 working days. If more time is needed to investigate the complaint the Head of Centre or Senior Manager will inform the complainant of this and give a time limit for a response.

Outcomes of complaints

The response to the complainant may include one or more of the following items:

- an acknowledgement that the college takes all complaints seriously and welcomes feedback on all its services
- an explanation of how the investigation was carried out
- a description of the decision made
- an explanation of any actions undertaken as a result
- an explanation of what the complainant can do next if they do not feel their complaint has been dealt with properly.

The possible decisions include:

- no further action or recompense with an explanation of why
- a refund of part or all of the costs involved
- a credit note against future College courses
- description of actions taken eg change of room, additional sessions

APPEALS

Appeals against decisions must be in writing and sent to the Principal within 10 working days. The Principal will make a final decision and that this is the final stage of the college's Complaints Procedure.

If there is disagreement with the Principal's decision complainants may write to the local Learning and Skills Council. This should be within 3 months of the College making a decision on the complaint.

Policy Review (for HoQ&I use only)						
Author/post holder	Approved by Corporation/Committee	Date of approval	Review date	EIA Initial Screening date	Full EA Required Y/N	EIA Completed date
Stan Bishop Head of QA & I	Corporation Learning Achievement Committee	09/07/08	June 2010	23/04/08	N	n/a