

Complaints & Compliments Policy

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Approval required

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Changes made

Version	Author	Date	Section	Changes summary
2	Sharon Burke	21.02.2023	1	Amendments to all section content (1.1-1.5)
			2	Amendments to sections (2.5, 2.6, 2.7 & 2.8)
			3	Title amendments throughout section 3 (3.1,3.2 & 3.4)
		09.03.2023	4	QPDM Title amendments throughout section 4
			5	QPDM Title amendments in section 5
			5	Reviewed appeal process
			7	Safeguarding policy added
				New template
				Procedure now also in flow chart format

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Craven College is committed to continuous improvement, providing a high standard of service and ensuring that any complaints received are addressed in an open and transparent manner to the satisfaction of all parties involved. The outcomes from complaints support the College's continuous improvement.
- 1.2 The College welcomes the opportunity to receive and respond to comments and/or suggestions in a prompt and courteous manner.
- 1.3 The College will ensure that all legitimate complaints received are dealt with promptly, fairly, professionally and in a non-discriminatory manner, and that appropriate action is taken. Complaints will be taken seriously and viewed positively as an opportunity to receive constructive feedback so that improvements may be made.
- 1.4 All complaints will be treated as confidential to safeguard interests, and information limited to those involved in the complaints process.
- 1.5 The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any College staff involved. Complaints made which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious, may result in disciplinary or other further action.

The following details how the objectives of this policy will be met and identifies:

1. Introduction
2. Scope
3. Responsibilities
4. Communication
5. Implementation
6. Monitoring
7. Associated Documentation

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy and associated procedure applies to all people served by the College including students, parents, customers, employers, local residents and visitors who wish to comment on or express dissatisfaction with any aspect of the College's activities, including those activities delivered on behalf of the College by a subcontractor. Former students are expected to raise any concerns within three months of completing their course of study.
- 2.2 An informal complaint is an issue which a customer wants to raise with the

College/member of College staff without resorting to the formal complaints process. The issue is usually quick and straightforward to resolve and is unlikely to require in-depth investigation.

2.3 A formal complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service received from a teaching or support department, or about actions or lack of action taken by the College or its staff.

2.4 A compliment is as valuable as a complaint in terms of improving service and provides recognition when provision of services has exceeded expectations. Compliments provide opportunities to share good practice.

2.5 However, this policy does not deal with:

- A concern about a decision made by an academic body regarding student progression, academic assessment and awards.
- Dissatisfaction about the outcome of an academic misconduct or disciplinary process.
- A concern about a decision made under other specific regulations, such as fitness to practice.
- Matters relating to the Student Loans Company, which has its own complaints procedures.

2.6 The College will not normally investigate anonymous or malicious complaints.

2.7 Complaints against the actions of the Corporation or its Members should be referred to the Clerk to the Board of Corporation.

2.8 Any incidents that may be related to safeguarding or radicalisation must be reported to the Safeguarding Team.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 If the complaint is about a course or a service offered by the College, the manager of the area concerned will be responsible for investigating the complaint. If the complaint relates to that manager, then the Quality and Professional Development Manager will be assigned to investigate the complaint.

3.2 The Chief Executive/Principal or Assistant Principal, or their nominee will deal with and hear all appeals against the outcomes of complaints.

- 3.3 If the complaint is against the Chief Executive/Principal or a member of the Senior Management team, then either the principal (if not the subject of the complaint) or a member of the Board of Corporation will hear the appeal.
- 3.4 The Director of Quality has overall responsibility for the Complaints & Compliments Policy and may nominate another person to investigate a complaint where there is a conflict of interest.

4. Communication

- 4.1 This policy will be published on the College intranet, the Student VLE and the College website. There is a dedicated e-mail address to receive Compliments and Complaints: feedback@craven-college.ac.uk which is managed by the Quality and Professional Development Manager. Compliments and Complaints are also received through other communications channels such as e-mail, telephone, letter and face-to-face.

5. Implementation

5.1 Stage 1 - Informal Complaints

- 5.1.1 In the first instance, individuals wishing to complain should discuss the problem with the staff member directly involved, or the person with responsibility for the area where the issue has occurred, at a mutually convenient time, and appropriate action should be agreed.
- 5.1.2 In academic matters the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Departmental Manager.
- 5.1.3 If the matter is not raised directly with the Departmental Manager, then they should be informed by the member/s of staff involved.
- 5.1.4 In other matters, the manager of the service area involved will normally handle the complaint.
- 5.1.5 A response should be made within a maximum of 10 working days, but preferably within a timescale to ensure the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.
- 5.1.6 The person receiving the complaint should obtain the contact details of the person making the complaint, make notes on its nature, how it was dealt with and the outcome, and pass this information to the Departmental Manager who should enter these details in the Complaints Log on the Staff Intranet, uploading all associated paperwork, letters, and emails. Any notes / paperwork should be destroyed (once uploaded electronically) or, if retained, kept securely and confidentially.

5.1.7 If there is no satisfactory outcome or agreed action a formal complaint can be made.

5.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaints

5.2.1 Formal complaints may be made if the complainant feels that an informal complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with, if the issue is of a serious nature or if the complainant wishes to progress straight to the formal complaint stage.

5.2.2 Formal complaints may be made verbally (face to face or telephone conversation), in writing by letter or through feedback@craven-college.ac.uk. In the case of verbal complaints, the member of staff receiving the complaint should record the details using the standard College Complaints Form which is available in the central Quality teams area. Complaints in writing may be handed to any member of College staff.

5.2.3 Formal complaints received by members of staff should be forwarded promptly to the Quality and Professional Development Manager for attention and further investigation.

5.2.4 An acknowledgement will be made within 3 working days of the complaint being received by the College with, where possible, a clear indication of when the complainant can expect to hear from the College again.

5.2.5 The Quality and Professional Development Manager will investigate the matter with relevant members of staff and students, either directly or through a nominated person and inform them of the complaint and further outcome as appropriate. In exceptional cases, the investigation may be carried out by a member of the senior leadership team.

5.2.6 A reply will be made in writing within 10 working days from the acknowledgement of the complaints process. If the matter is particularly serious or complicated it may take longer to resolve the issue, but information on progress will be provided to the complainant, keeping any university partner informed as relevant.

5.2.7 The Quality and Professional Development Manager will enter the details of the complaint in the Student Voice Action Tracker and associated paperwork will be held in the Student Voice central file. Any notes / paperwork should be destroyed (once uploaded electronically) or, if retained, kept securely and confidentially.

5.3 Stage 3 – Appeal stage

5.3.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the outcome of the investigation, they may appeal outlining which of the statement below are grounds for the appeal and their preferred outcome:

- That there is new evidence which was not available at stage 1 and 2 of the complaint
- That the complaint outcome is manifestly unreasonable and a different outcome could have been reached if the complaint was investigated differently
- That there was an error on the investigation which disadvantaged them

5.3.2 The appeal must be sent within 10 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the initial complaint.

5.3.3 The Director of Quality will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 3 working days of receipt and confirm if the appeal is eligible. An appeal will check that the process has been followed correctly and examine the evidence and outcome. No new complaints can be introduced at this stage.

5.3.4 The Director of Quality will confirm the outcome of the appeal in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the acknowledgement of the appeals form.

5.3.5 If the complainant continues to be dissatisfied following the outcome of the appeal, they may appeal once more through the College's internal processes and ask for a Formal Stage Appeal Panel to be convened. This level of appeal will be heard by a member of staff at Vice-Principal/Principal level. The grounds for appeal must be outlined clearly as in section 5.3.1

5.4 Taking a complaint further

5.4.1 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the College's response following the appeals process, they may refer their complaint to external agency/ies. This does not apply where a complaint is the subject of legal proceedings or relates to the quality of service provided by external organisations such as an examination board. Only after all College procedures have been exhausted should the complaint be referred by the complainant to the Funding Body or relevant Government Agency.

5.4.2 If a complaint against the College remains unresolved, the complainant may refer the complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The College is able to provide further information about this process. Complaints should be sent in writing to the ESFA, Complaints Team, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT or by email to: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

5.4.3 Higher Education: If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the student they may apply for a review of their case to the relevant partner university. If, after consideration of the case by the partner university the complainant continues to be dissatisfied, they can make a formal complaint to the Office of

the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). For more information go to: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

5.5 Complaints against the Principal, Board of Governors (or members of) or the Director of Governance.

5.5.1 Complaints should be addressed to the Director of Governance.

5.5.2 For complaints against the Board of Governors, a member of the Board or the Director of Governance, please refer to the Complaints against the Board of Governors Policy which is published on the Staff Intranet, the Student VLE and the College website.

5.6 Confidentiality

5.6.1 If the complainant wishes specific information within a complaint to be kept confidential, this should be made clear to the person to whom the complaint is addressed. Complainants should understand that in some circumstances it may be difficult for requests for confidentiality to be respected, for example where the complaint relates to a possible criminal offence or potential gross misconduct. Additionally, in some circumstances a request for confidentiality might make it difficult for the College to investigate or resolve a complaint.

5.6.2 On occasion it might be difficult for someone to make a complaint, if they feel threatened or feel that it might result in some form of reprisal, for example. The College aims to deal with all complaints in strict confidence and it is the individual's right to complain if they are dissatisfied with the standard of service received. Anonymous complaints will be investigated, but if the College is not provided with the complainants contact details, we will not be able to request additional information or provide feedback on the outcome.

5.6.3 If a member of staff wishes to make a confidential disclosure that is in the public interest or relating to malpractice, please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy published on the College intranet and website. This provides information on the process to follow and outlines legal protection for employees.

5.7 Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

5.7.1 It may be that a complaint relates to the possible physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect or radicalisation of someone under the age of 18 or someone who is deemed a vulnerable adult. In such circumstances, the College has a legal obligation to report cases of suspected abuse or cases of someone being at risk of abuse. Complaints or disclosures of this nature may not remain confidential as those at risk will require protection. In all cases, without exception, any potential safeguarding issue will be reported to the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officers in the College.

5.8 Appeals against assessment decisions

5.8.1 Information on appealing against Further Education (FE) assessment decisions can be found in the College's FE Assessments Appeals Procedure which is published on the College VLE and website. HE Students may not appeal against their mark/s (academic judgement) but may appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners. See the College's HE Appeals Policy and Procedure.

5.8.2 Please note that appeals under extraordinary regulatory frameworks such as Centre or Teacher Assessed Grades will be subject to the processes, rules and regulations as set out by Ofqual, the Department for Education and Awarding Organisations. These are subject to constant change and therefore any information will be published on the College website regarding this; including a designated email address which is managed by the Quality and Professional Development Manager.

5.9 Equality statement

If requested, the College will endeavour to provide the contents of this policy in other formats and languages. If a potential complainant requires this type of support, they should contact Student Support Services in the first instance.

6. Monitoring

6.1 Monitoring of complaints and compliments takes place on a daily basis during operational hours.

6.2 Analysis and trends are monitored on a monthly and annual basis against a Key Performance Indicator of 100% resolution.

6.3 Review of the effectiveness of this policy takes place on an annual basis, prior to amendments.

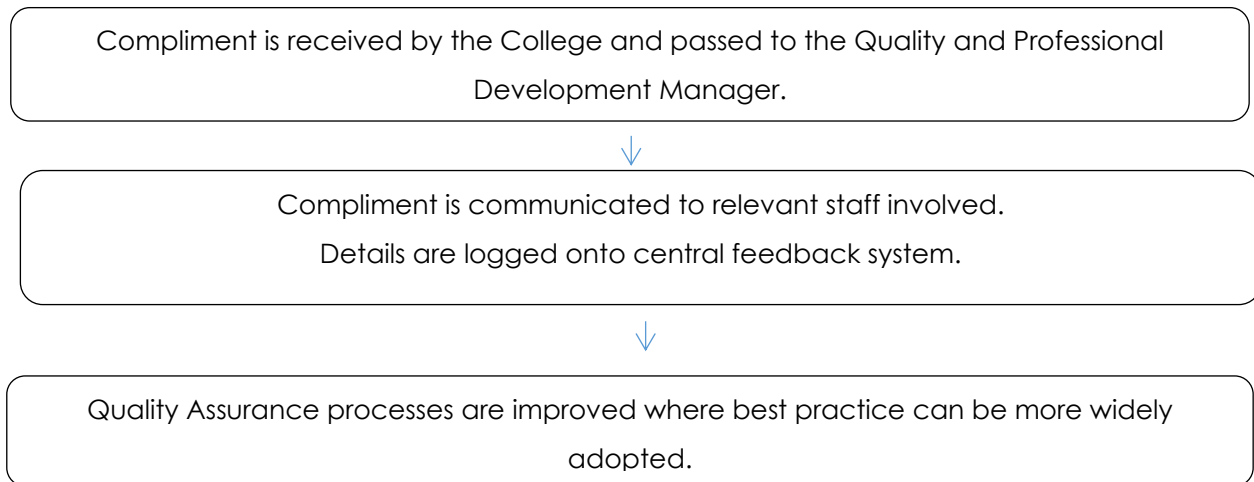
7. Associated Documentation

7.1 The following documents should be considered alongside this policy, where appropriate:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- FE Assessment Appeals Procedure
- HE Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Flowchart for dealing with compliments



Appendix 2 – Flowchart for dealing with complaints

