

Process for: Stu 2j	Complaints Policy and Procedure
Process owner:	Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Performance and Innovation
To ensure that:	There is an open and accessible process in place for feedback and complaints to be made to the college and a defined process for dealing with feedback and complaints.
Which applies to:	All students (including apprentices), parents (and guardians), employers, stakeholders, visitors and members of the public
Monitoring and evaluation:	A record of all formal complaints is kept by the Principal's PA with a report being made by the Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Performance and Innovation to the Curriculum and Quality Committee of the Corporation.

Introduction

BCoT aims to provide the highest possible standard of service to everyone we engage with – students (including apprentices), parents, employers, stakeholders, visitors and members of the public. However there will be occasions when this has not been achieved and we welcome feedback to help us improve and to address concerns or issues that have arisen.

Our intention is to make it as easy as possible for feedback, including complaints, to be made and for someone making a complaint (“the complainant”) to understand how the college will act upon the complaint.

We aim to respond quickly and positively and to reach an outcome that is satisfactory and fair for all concerned.

The key personnel in the college involved in the handling of complaints are:

Alexis Smith
Assistant Principal Student Voice and Foundation Learning
Email: alexis.smith@bcot.ac.uk
Telephone: 01256 306471

Anthony Bravo
Principal
Email: Anthony.bravo@bcot.ac.uk
Telephone: 01256 306205

Debbie Brace
PA to the Principal
Email: debra.brace@bcot.ac.uk
Telephone: 01256 306202

If you require any support or advice regarding our complaints procedure, including if you need help to make a complaint, you should contact the Assistant Principal or the PA to the Principal.

This policy aims to ensure that college safeguarding objectives are met. A complaint that triggers a safeguarding issue will be passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding

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Officer, or other senior members of staff with safeguarding responsibilities. See separate Safeguarding Policy EDS1.2.

BCoT has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.

What is a complaint?

For the purposes of this policy a complaint is a statement of dissatisfaction with the service provided by the college or the impact of its activities. This will include the behaviours of students on campus and in the vicinity of the campus and the activities of staff engaged in college business.

The college will on occasions receive feedback or comments about a matter that is not a complaint. Such feedback will be dealt with appropriately but not necessarily in accordance with this procedure.

If a student complains about an issue that is not to do with the service provided by the college, the issue will be considered and the college will assist if it appropriate to do so, but will not be dealt with it as a complaint under this procedure.

Time limit

Complaints must be made within three-months of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint. Students who have finished their course can make a complaint within three-months of their course ending.

Reparation

Complaints that are upheld or partially upheld do not typically attract any form of compensation. Refund and compensation in relation to Higher Education courses is covered by the college's Higher Education Refund and Compensation policy STU 1h

Scope

This document provides guidance to any student (including apprentices), visitor or other parties such as parents of young people and employers who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the college's services or facilities and wish to make a formal complaint.

This procedure is not intended to cover complaints about assessment, grading or marking of students work, that is covered under the separate policy and procedure Stu2c Assessment and Grading of Achievement.

Separate policies are in place that cover Equality and Diversity, Bullying and Harassment and the Safeguarding of Learners. Feedback or complaints received in these areas will be subject to the procedures outlined in these policies.

This procedure is not for use for staff complaints; if a member of staff has a complaint they should refer to the appropriate HR Policy (HR2e).

Responsibilities

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for monitoring complaints made by students within the college and will analyse trends and actions.

The Assistant Principal has oversight of all complaints involving students and should be informed of every such complaint received.

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Any non-specific complaints by telephone should be put through to the Principal's PA. If someone complains in person the Principal's PA, duty manager or the appropriate member of SMT should be informed.

All complaints are logged by the Principal's PA. The DPCP&I will provide a report on complaints, as appropriate, to the SMT and Curriculum and Quality Committee of the Corporation. The report will include lessons learned and changes made as a result of each complaint.

The confidentiality of a complainant will be respected at all times.

Procedure

Step 1 – Making a complaint

Students (including apprentices)

- It is hoped that students feel able, in the first instance, to make a complaint to their RAP tutor, Training Consultant or to any tutors who are involved in their learning. They will try and resolve the issue in an informal way if that is possible.
- If a student does not feel able to make a complaint to the tutor, a complaint can be made to the Assistant Principal or the Principal directly – both operate an open door policy and encourage students to come and talk to them about any concerns – they will advise the student on how to proceed.
- Students can also take up issues using the Course Rep system which can be escalated to Student Parliament if necessary.
- Written complaints can be by letter, email or using the college's "Tell us how we're doing" form which is available from reception and attached to this policy. It can be posted in the box held near reception or sent directly to the relevant person.

Parents, guardians and employers

- Prior to making a formal complaint parents, guardians and employers are encouraged to seek an informal telephone conversation with either the course tutors, the Training Consultant, the Principal or the Assistant Principal.
- If the complaint is to be pursued further then it should be made in writing and sent to either the Principal or the Assistant Principal
- Formal complaints should be made in writing. This can be by letter, email or use of the "Tell us how we're doing" form.

Members of the public

- If you are a member of the public and you are dissatisfied or have concerns about the service provided, you can:
 - Raise your concern directly with the person who, in your opinion, is responsible
 - Raise the issue with the Faculty Head for the area concerned
 - Raise the issue with the Principal

Anonymous complaints will be reviewed and assessed but, depending on their nature, may not be acted upon.

Step 2 – handling a complaint

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Informal early resolution

- The college will aim to achieve an early resolution with the complainant, without escalating the matter to a formal process.
- Indicatively the college would aim to resolve most complaints through the informal process within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Formal stage

- If an early resolution cannot be achieved then the complainant should submit their complaint in writing to either the Principal or the Assistant Principal
- The complaint will then be investigated by a member of staff with appropriate authority and not connected with the issue.
- The complainant may request a meeting with the investigating officer and the investigating officer may request a meeting with the complainant. Evidence may also be requested from the complainant.
- The complainant may request to be represented through the process, but this is subject to agreement with the college.
- Mediation and conciliation will be considered if it is thought that may help to resolve the issue.
- The investigating officer will produce a report setting out the outcome of the formal review, whether the complaint is upheld and any actions that are to be taken.
- The college will aim to complete this process with expediency but this will depend on the complexity of the case and the availability of key people to progress the investigation. The formal stage may take between 15 and 45 days to complete and the complainant will be kept informed of progress throughout this period.

The review stage (if required)

- Most complaints will be resolved by the processes outlined above.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, having followed the correct procedure and cooperated fully with the investigation, then, within 10 days of receipt of the investigating officer's report, they can request the complaint is progressed to the review stage
- The review will be conducted by the Principal and will:
 - Review the procedures followed at the formal stage
 - Consider the reasonableness of the outcome
 - Assess any new material evidence which the complainant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- The review stage will not consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.
- The Principal's decision is final and will be communicated in writing.
- Where a complaint cannot be resolved through the internal procedure the complainant has the option to submit a complaint to the ESFA. The ESFA will not normally investigate a complaint until our internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. ESFA complaints team can be contacted by email at complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk or in writing to Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT.

Complaints for Higher Education Courses

If the complaint relates to Higher Education provision, in addition to the procedures outlined above the college may involve the awarding body or validating institution where the matter cannot be resolved within the college. If after exploring all avenues the student is not satisfied, they can request a Completion of Procedures letter in order to refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. (see link below)

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<http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>

Complaints regarding the Principal or College Board of Governors

These complaints must be recorded as described above but should be sent directly to the Clerk to the Governors. Email simon.burrell@bcot.ac.uk

Publication

This policy is publicly available via the college's website.

Tell us how we are doing

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BCoT

BCoT aims to provide the highest possible standard of service. We welcome your feedback, whether you are a student, parent, guardian, employer, stakeholder, visitor or member of the public.

Your details:

Name: Student ID if you are a student:

Address (if not a student)

Postcode:

Please indicate preferred method of contact for response:

Details of complaint/compliment:

How would you like this complaint to be resolved

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Now hand this form in to Reception or post to:

Basingstoke College of Technology, Worting Road, Basingstoke, RG21 8TN

We will be in touch shortly.

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