

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
<p>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 may 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We aim to respond quickly and positively and to reach an outcome that is satisfactory and fair for all concerned.</p> <p>The key personnel in the college involved in the handling of complaints are:</p> <p>Alexis Smith Assistant Principal Student Voice and Foundation Learning Email: alexis.smith@bcot.ac.uk Telephone: 01256 306471</p> <p>Jayne Crowley PA to the Principal Email: jayne.crowley@bcot.ac.uk Telephone: 01256 306202</p> <p>Lorraine Heath Principal Email: lorraine.heath@bcot.ac.uk</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

Date Reviewed: April 26	Date Impact Assessed: Sept 18; minor changes Sept 2022, Nov 24, minor changes July 25; minor change April 26	Date Review Due: Nov 27
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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 purpose of this policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction regarding the service provided by the college or the impact of its operations. This encompasses concerns about student behaviour both on and in the vicinity of the campus, as well as the actions of staff members conducting college business.

It's important to note that the college sometimes receives feedback or comments that don't fall under the definition of a formal complaint. While all feedback is valued and addressed appropriately, it may not be handled through this specific complaint procedure.

Similarly, if a student raises an issue unrelated to the services the college provides, the college will consider the matter and offer assistance if appropriate. However, such issues will not be processed as formal complaints under this policy.

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

Protected Disclosures

The College will make every effort to keep the Discloser's identity confidential unless the Discloser otherwise consents in writing or unless there are grounds to believe that the Discloser has acted maliciously. In the absence of such consent or grounds, the Designated Assessor will not reveal the identity of the Discloser except:

- where the Designated Assessor is under a legal obligation to do so;
- where the information is already in the public domain;
- on a strictly confidential basis to the Designated Assessor's administrative assistant;
- on a strictly confidential basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice;
- where it is essential that the Discloser provide evidence at a Disciplinary Hearing.

The College will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern in good faith, whether or not it proves well-founded.

Scope

Date Reviewed: April 26	Date Impact Assessed: Sept 18; minor changes Sept 2022, Nov 24, minor changes July 25; minor change April 26	Date Review Due: Nov 27
-------------------------	--	-------------------------

This document outlines the process for students (including apprentices), visitors, parents, and employers who wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the college's services or facilities.

This procedure does not cover complaints related to assessment, grading, or marking of student work. Those concerns are addressed under our separate policy and procedure (Stu2c Assessment and Grading of Achievement).

Additionally, the colleges has dedicated policies for Equality and Diversity, Bullying and Harassment, and the Safeguarding of Learners. Any feedback or complaints falling into these categories will be handled according to the specific procedures outlined in those respective policies.

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

Responsibilities

The Executive Management Team (EMT) is responsible for overseeing complaints, analysing trends and monitoring actions taken. The Assistant Principal has direct oversight of all student related complaints and must be informed of every such complaint received.

Any non-specific complaints by telephone should be directed to the Principal's PA. For in person complaints, the Principal's PA, duty manager or the relevant member of EMT should be informed immediately.

The Principal's PA logs all complaints. The DPCP&I will then report on these complaints to the EMT and the Curriculum and Quality Committee of the Corporation as appropriate. This report will highlight lessons learned and any 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)

In the first instance:

- **Talk to a tutor first.** We encourage you to first speak with your RAP tutor, Training Consultant, or any tutor involved in your learning. They'll do their best to resolve the issue informally.
- **Go directly to leadership.** If you don't feel comfortable speaking with a tutor, you can approach the Assistant Principal or the Principal directly. They operate an open-door policy and are ready to discuss your concerns and guide you on the next steps.
- **Use the Course Rep system.** You can also raise issues through the Course Rep system, which can be escalated to the Student Parliament if needed.

Date Reviewed: April 26

Date Impact Assessed: Sept 18; minor changes Sept 2022, Nov 24, minor changes July 25; minor change April 26

Date Review Due: Nov 27

If this does not resolve your concern, then you can submit a complaint in writing to the Principal's PA (complaints@bcot.ac.uk)

- **Submit a written complaint.** If you prefer to make a written complaint, you can do so by letter, email, or by using the college's "Tell us how we're doing" form. This form is available at reception and is also attached to this policy. You can drop it in the box near reception or send it directly to the relevant person.

Parents, guardians and employers

Prior to making a formal complaint, we recommend a telephone conversation with either the course tutors, the Training Consultant, Faculty Head or the Assistant Principal. Often, issues can be resolved quickly through a direct discussion.

If you need to take your complaint further, please submit it in writing. You can do this by letter, email, to the Principal's PA (complaints@bcot.ac.uk)

Members of the public

If you are a member of the public and have concerns or are dissatisfied with the service we've provided, you can:

- Speak directly with the person responsible: the quickest way to resolve an issue is often by raising your concern directly with the individual you believe is responsible for the service.
- Contact the Faculty Head: If you prefer, or if the issue isn't resolved, you can raise your concern with the Faculty Head for the relevant department or area.

If not resolved, follow the formal complaints procedure.

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

Step 2 – handling a complaint

We are committed to resolving complaints fairly and efficiently. Our process involves informal resolution, a formal investigation stage, and a final review stage if needed.

Informal early resolution

Our aim is to resolve your concern quickly without needing a formal process.

- The college will aim for an early resolution directly with the complainant
- We typically aim to resolve most complaints informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

Formal stage

If an early resolution isn't possible then the complainant should submit their complaint in writing to complaints@bcot.ac.uk

Date Reviewed: April 26	Date Impact Assessed: Sept 18; minor changes Sept 2022, Nov 24, minor changes July 25; minor change April 26	Date Review Due: Nov 27
-------------------------	--	-------------------------

- **Investigation:** The complaint will be investigated by a designated member of staff (thereafter referred to as the investigating officer) who has appropriate authority and is not connected to the issue.
- **Engagement:** The complainant may request a meeting with the investigating officer, and the investigating officer may also request a meeting with the complainant.
- **Representation:** The complainant may request to be represented during this process, subject to agreement with the college.
- **Alternative Resolution:** Mediation and conciliation will be considered if deemed helpful in resolving the issue.
- **Outcome:** The investigating officer will provide a written response confirming the outcome of the formal review, stating whether the complaint is upheld, and detailing any actions to be taken. The Principal's PA will issue this response.
- **Timeline:** We aim to complete this formal stage as quickly as possible. The timeframe will depend on the complexity of the case and the availability of key individuals. This 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 are resolved at the informal or formal stages. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, and have followed the correct procedure and cooperated fully with the investigation, you may request a review within 10 working days of receiving the outcome from the investigating officer.

The review will be conducted by the Principal and will focus on:

- Reviewing the procedures followed during the formal stage.
- Considering the reasonableness of the formal outcome.
- Assessing any new material evidence that 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.

External Review (Department for Education)

If your complaint cannot be resolved through our internal procedures, you have the option to submit a complaint to the Department for Education (DfE).

The DfE will not normally investigate a complaint until our internal complaint's procedure has been exhausted. You can make a complaint using the customer help portal

<https://customerhelpportal.education.gov.uk/>

The DfE will reply to let you know what will happen next.

Complaints for Higher Education Courses

Date Reviewed: April 26	Date Impact Assessed: Sept 18; minor changes Sept 2022, Nov 24, minor changes July 25; minor change April 26	Date Review Due: Nov 27
-------------------------	--	-------------------------

If the complaint relates to Higher Education provision, in addition to the procedures outlined above, the following steps may apply:

- the college may involve the awarding body or validating institution if the matter cannot be resolved within the college.
- should you remain unsatisfied after exhausting all internal and awarding body avenues, you can request a Completion of Procedures letter. This letter will enable you to refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Use the link below for more information.

<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.

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Tell us how we are doing

BASINGSTOKE
COLLEGE of
TECHNOLOGY

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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