

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy number:	LS127	Policy Lead:	Deputy Principal
Approved by:	SLT Board	Date Approved:	March 2024
Review Frequency:	Every 3 years	Next Review Due:	January 2027
EIA Meeting Date (if EIA required):	December 2019	External Website Appropriate:	Yes
SharePoint Location:	Policies and Procedures.		

Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Newbury College is committed to delivering high-quality services to all students, clients, and community members. This policy outlines the College's approach to handling complaints, ensuring they are dealt with fairly, promptly, and objectively. The policy aims to use feedback to improve services and maintain a positive and responsive environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and structured approach to handling complaints from students and members of the public, ensuring they are resolved effectively and efficiently.

Scope

The policy applies to complaints related to academic services, support services, staff behaviour, and any misleading information about the College's services. Whistleblowing, student discipline and academic assessment appeals are covered by separate policies.

2. Definitions

Complainant: The person making the complaint.

Respondent: The person or department against whom the complaint is made.

ED&I: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

3. Responsibilities

Deputy Principal: Overall responsibility for the Complaints Procedure.

Complaints Officer: Person appointed by the Deputy Principal to handle individual complaints.

Principal: Deals with complaints involving senior management.

4. Procedures

4.1 Complaints will be addressed fairly, quickly, constructively, and impartially.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution: Immediate resolution through discussion.

Stage 2: Formal Procedure: Written complaint, investigation, and outcome within 20 working days.

Stage 3: Appeals Procedure: Appeal to Deputy Principal for review.

Stage 4: Conduct of Appeal: Further escalation if required to the Principal.

4.2 The College ensures confidentiality, no retaliation for complaints, and that complaints do not negatively impact the complainant.

4.3 Heads of Departments act as investigating officers and work closely with the Deputy Principal who guides them on the policy and gives them direction on how the policy should be implemented and the timeframes for each case.

4.4 All complaints will be treated equitably, respecting the College's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

- 4.5 Higher Education students affiliated with other universities or organisations but studying at Newbury College or University Centre Newbury (UCN) can use their institution's complaints process if our initial stage fails to resolve the issue.
- 4.6 Complaints about courses or services are initially handled by the relevant area's manager, except when the complaint involves that manager.
- 4.7 The Deputy Principal is responsible for overseeing the Complaints Procedure and may delegate investigation duties to avoid conflicts of interest.
- 4.8 Complaints against the Principal or Senior Management Team are handled by an appropriate member of the Audit Committee, Safeguarding Governor, Governor overseeing ED&I, or Staff Governor, unless they are the subject of the complaint.
- 4.9 Appeals against complaint outcomes are overseen by the Deputy Principal or another senior manager if the Deputy Principal is involved in the complaint. Where there is a complaint that needs to be escalated to an appointed Governor this will be coordinated by the Principal in consultation with the Chair of Governors.
- 4.10 Outcomes will be communicated to both the complainant and relevant staff.
- 4.11 Malicious complaints may lead to disciplinary actions.
- 4.12 The Curriculum and Quality Committee have oversight of this policy.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through regular reviews of the Register of Complaints to ensure alignment with current practices and regulations, identify outstanding complaints and ensure that the procedure follows the set time limits.

A record of each complaint will be held for 3 years for audit purposes.

6. References

- [The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#)

7. Supporting Documents

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Grievance Policy and Procedure for Staff
- Whistle Blowing Policy (Public Interest Disclosure)

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation.

Reviewed: January 2024

Next review date due: January 2027

Appendix A: Complaints Procedure

How to submit a complaint

To submit a complaint at Newbury College or University Centre Newbury, the following steps should be followed:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution of Complaints

Initial complaints should be discussed directly with the staff member involved or their line manager. A response is expected within 10 working days.

Stage 2: Formal Procedure

If the complaint is not resolved informally, a formal complaint can be submitted. A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Deputy Principal or online at newbury-college.ac.uk/contact-us within 5 working days of the initial response.

The Complaints Officer will investigate and produce a summary report within 10 working days of the complaint assessment. Feedback to the complainant should be communicated within 20 working days.

Stage 3: Appeal Procedure

Dissatisfaction with Stage 2 can be appealed in writing to the Deputy Principal within 5 working days of receiving the outcome. The final decision will be communicated within 20 working days of the appeal receipt.

The appeal must be made in writing to the colleges Executive Assistant who will liaise with the Deputy Principal in coordinating the appeal review process.

Grounds for appeal are based on any dissatisfaction with the way the investigation or complaint was handled this includes meeting the outlined timelines.

Stage 4: Conduct of Appeal

If the appeal process conduct is questioned, the Principal will review the procedure's execution. If the Principal finds the process was not followed as per the College procedure, then a new complaints officer will be assigned and stage 2 will be re-started.

If the complaint remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, further external options can be explored. This includes contacting relevant external agencies or regulatory bodies for further investigation and resolution.

Education and Skills Funding Agency or Complaints Team
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Students on partner programmes e.g. CMI or BCS, who remain dissatisfied with the internal outcome of their complaint will be referred to the partner complaints procedure.

Higher Education students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter that will inform them of their entitlement to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and will inform them of the deadline 12 months from the date of the decision by which any complaint must be submitted. See oiahe.org.uk/students for details.