

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure (Public)

Date approved: 4 October 2022
 Approved by: AMT
 Responsible manager(s): Director of Quality and Standards
 Executive lead: Vice Principal, Quality and Curriculum

Applicable to staff: **Yes**
 Applicable to students: **Yes**
 Accessible to students: **Yes**
 Accessible to general public:
 (including clients) **Yes**

Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:		Date
Management Forum	NA*	
AMT	Yes	4 Oct 2022
CCMT	Yes	5 Oct 2022
Students	Yes	
Employee representatives (HR policies only)	NA*	.
Other	NA*	

Policy review frequency, normally: annually

Section 1

The Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure

B&FC is committed to providing excellent academic and support services. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong and when this happens, we encourage students and service users to bring their concerns to our attention. We welcome all feedback from the users of our services to support B&FC to improve its student experience.

1.1 Compliments

B&FC welcomes positive feedback from all users of our services. Positive feedback is used by B&FC to share best practice and drive continuous improvement across all aspects of our service. Compliments can be submitted via talkback@blackpool.ac.uk channel or directly to the curriculum or service area.

1.2 Complaints

We are committed to investigating, resolving concerns and complaints fairly, quickly, and courteously using this procedure.

Most issues and complaints can be resolved informally and students and other users of our services are encouraged to raise concerns or give feedback as early as possible to support a successful early resolution.

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback can be made to B&FC and there are number of options available to all our students and service users to provide feedback to B&FC.

- Surveys
- Student and Employer Forums
- By emailing: talkback@blackpool.ac.uk or complaints@blackpool.ac.uk
- By completing the 'Have your Say' compliments and feedback form available at all main reception areas.
- By writing to the appropriate Head of Curriculum or Service Area

Further information is also available on the B&FC website:

www.blackpool.ac.uk/feedback and www.blackpool.ac.uk/college-policies

Section 2

The Complaint Procedure

In investigating a complaint, we will adhere to the following principles:

- in the first instance, complaints will be considered as close to the source and as informally as possible
- complaints will be dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner and in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- complaints are considered in confidence and information is disclosed only with those who need to investigate it or respond to the issues raised
- the investigation and evidence required, will be proportionate to the issues raised
- complainants will not be victimised or disadvantaged for bringing a complaint
- complaints will be monitored and reported on to understand, where possible, the root causes

- where an investigation identifies problems in our services, we will take steps to prevent any recurrence
- throughout the process, the focus will be on resolving issues not apportioning blame

Stage 1

Students

Students and other service users are encouraged to resolve issues informally before they become a complaint. Students can raise concerns or issues directly with:

- the person who, in their opinion, is responsible for the problem or with a lecturer/course leader for their programme
- with their course or programme representatives who may take those issues to staff/student liaison meetings or to the student forum meetings
- the Head of Curriculum /Service Area

Employers

Employers are encouraged to attempt to resolve issues locally. They can:

- raise issues with the skills coach, assessors or manager for the curriculum area concerned at any stage, but particularly at apprenticeship reviews
- raise issues directly with B&FC for Business
- use an Employer Forum to bring issues to the attention of managers

Others

Parents and other members of the public or any incidental user of B&FC's services should, in the first instance, raise the issue directly with the person who, in their opinion, is responsible or with the supervisor or manager of the area concerned.

Former students

Former students are expected to raise any concerns within three months following withdrawal from or completion of their course of study.

Stage 2

Where a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1 the complainant may choose to progress the complaint to Stage 2. Requests for a Stage 2 can be submitted via the following channels:

- by email or post to the appropriate Head of Curriculum/Service area
- by email to complaints@blackpool.ac.uk
- by post to the Quality and Standards Directorate, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool, FY2 0HB

In their correspondence, the complainant should clearly identify the nature of their complaint at Stage 1 and what has been done to attempt to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 with the Curriculum/Service area within 10 working days of receiving the response at Stage 1. We will send an acknowledgement within 5 working days.

As part of a Stage 2 complaint, B&FC may make a request for additional information. If this is the case, then the B&FC would expect to receive the requested information from the complainant within 10 working days from the date of our request.

We aim to provide the complainant with a formal response within 10 working days. If we are unable to do this, the complainant will be kept informed of our progress.

Stage 3

Where a complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily at Stage 2 the complainant may choose to progress their complaint to Stage 3, which is the final stage of B&FC's complaints procedure. This should be made in writing within 10 working days of when the Stage 2 response was received. Again, the complainant should explain why the outcome of the Stage 2 process is not satisfactory and what they would like us to do next. Correspondence for Stage 3 should be addressed to the Vice Principal, Quality and Curriculum, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0HB, or by emailing vpsupport@blackpool.ac.uk

We will send the complainant an acknowledgement within 5 working days and we aim to provide a response to their Stage 3 complaint within 20 working days.

Where a request for a Stage 3 review is received outside of the timescale specified above. The complainant is required to provide a compelling reason, supported by independent evidence which demonstrates why they were unable to submit a request for a Stage 3 review within the timescale specified following the conclusion of Stage 2. Late requests for a Stage 3 review will be considered on an individual basis and acceptance will be at the discretion of the appropriate Vice Principal. The complainant will be advised of the outcome within 5 working days.

This ends the B&FC Complaints procedure

Other information

Further Education

For Further Education courses if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 3 process, they have the opportunity to escalate their complaint (where procedures allow) to the appropriate awarding body or the Education and Skills Funding Agency. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure

Higher Education

If the student after seeking resolution at Stage 3 is still not satisfied, the student has the right to request a final review by our partner universities or higher education awarding body. It is normally a requirement of B&FC partner universities and awarding bodies that a complaint has completed Stage 1, 2 and 3 of the B&FC Compliments, Complaints and Feedback procedure.

Please note that partner universities or higher education awarding bodies will normally only accept requests for escalation if the complaint relates to an aspect of service which the partner university or awarding body has whole or partial responsibility.

1. For degrees awarded by Lancaster University, if the complainant after seeking resolution at Stage 3, is still not satisfied, the complainant has the right to request a review by Lancaster University which should be submitted to:

The Senior Governance Officer
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YW

2. For degrees awarded by Blackpool and The Fylde College, if the complainant after seeking resolution at Stage 3, is still not satisfied, the complainant has the right to request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (Higher Education only)

If the student after seeking resolution with B&FC or partner University is still not satisfied, the student has the right to request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) www.oiahe.org.uk

Issuing of Completion of Procedures Letters¹

Where a complaint is not upheld

If a complaint has not been upheld. B&FC will automatically issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the complainant within 28 days of the conclusion of the Stage 3 process where B&FC issues its final decision.

Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld

If a complaint is upheld or partially upheld. B&FC at the conclusion of the Stage 3 review will advise the complainant that they can request a Completion of Procedures letter and should do so within 30 days of receiving B&FC's response at Stage 3.

Where a request for a Completion of Procedures letter is received which is outside of B&FC time limits

If the complainant makes a request for a Completion of Procedures letter to be issued after the deadline has passed. B&FC will issue a Completion of Procedures letter which will clearly state the date the final decision was reached and provide an explanation as to why the complaint is out of time with reference to the relevant regulations.

Where a Completion of Procedures letter should not be issued

If a complainant makes a request for a Completion of Procedures letter to be issued, but has not engaged with or completed B&FC's Compliments, Complaints and Feedback procedure. B&FC will respond promptly to the complainant, clearly setting out the next steps the complainant can take to progress the complaint and specify any deadlines which may apply.

¹ <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>