

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure (Public)

Date approved:	29 August 2023
Approved by:	AMT
Responsible Manager (s):	Director of Quality and Standards
Executive Lead:	Vice Principal, Quality and Curriculum

Applicable to employees:	Yes
Applicable to students and apprentices:	Yes
Accessible to students and apprentices:	Yes
Accessible to general public: (including clients)	Yes

Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:		Date:
• AMT	Yes	29 August 2023
• CCMT	Yes	August 2023
• Students	Yes	August 2023
• Employee representatives (<i>Employee related procedures only</i>)		NA

Policy review frequency, **annually**

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1. Scope and purpose of the procedure

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

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, apprentices and other users of our services are encouraged to raise concerns or give feedback as early as possible to support a successful early resolution.

1.3 Providing feedback

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback can be made to B&FC and there are number of options available to all our students, apprentices and service users to provide feedback to B&FC, supplementing other feedback mechanisms incorporated into normal teaching practice such as progress meetings, progress review meetings, PQAM/QAMs:

- Surveys
- Student, Apprentice 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

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, with safeguards in place to ensure more complicated complaints such as multi-issue, group/collective, and complaints raised on someone else's behalf, are dealt with appropriately (refer to policy)
- 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.

There may be instances where a complaint is believed to be vexatious, malicious or habitual, is deemed unreasonable or untrue, having been put forward to abuse the complaints procedure, or an attempt to defame the name or character of another person. In cases where a complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious, B&FC reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint and may consider disciplinary action. Colleagues should seek appropriate guidance on proceeding with any dissatisfaction that falls within this category.

2.1 Stage 1

2.1.1. Students and Apprentices

Students, apprentices and other service users are encouraged to resolve issues informally before they become a complaint. Students and apprentices 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

2.1.2. 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

2.1.3. 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.

2.1.4. Former students and apprentices

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

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

3. Other information

3.1 Further Education and Apprenticeships

For Further Education courses and Apprenticeships 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

3.2 Higher Education

If the student/apprentice, after seeking resolution at Stage 3 is still not satisfied, they have 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

Or via email: j.dickinson@lancaster.ac.uk (John Dickinson, Senior Governance Officer, Lancaster University)

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).

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

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

3.4 Issuing of Completion of Procedures Letters (Higher Education only)¹

3.4.1. 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.

3.4.2. 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.

3.4.3. 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.

3.4.4. 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>

4. Linked Policies and Statements

- Safeguarding Policy (Student and Apprentice)
- Data Protection Policy
- Further Education FE and Apprenticeship Appeals against Assessment Decisions Policy
- Positive Student and Apprentice Behaviour Policy

- Appropriateness of Study Policy (Student and Apprentice)
- Equality Diversity and Inclusivity Statement
- B&FC Higher Education Taught Award regulations www.blackpool.ac.uk/he-regulations
- [Refund Policy](#)
- [Tuition Fee Payment Policy](#)
- [Further Education, Traineeship and Apprenticeships Admissions Policy](#)
- [Higher Education Admissions Policy](#)
- [Higher Education Compensation Policy](#)
- Student Debt Policy and Procedure
- Higher Education Home Student Terms and Conditions
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy

5. Linked Procedures

- Safeguarding Procedure (Student and Apprentice) including On-line
- Positive Student and Apprentice Behaviour Procedure
- Student Misconduct Procedure
- Further Education, Traineeship and Apprenticeships Admissions Procedure
- Further Education (FE) and Apprenticeship Appeals against Assessment Decisions Procedure
- Appropriateness of Study Procedure (Student and Apprentice)
- Admissions Appeals Procedure
- Higher Education Admissions Procedure

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment for the 4 strands of Equality, Safeguarding, Health and safety and Sustainability				
Initial Form to be completed with Risk Assessments or as part of a proposal or change to a policy, plan or new way of working				
Title of Activity: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure Name and title of proposer: K. Coughlan				<input type="checkbox"/> New or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision (tick as appropriate)
Equality and Diversity. Are there students, apprentices, other customers, community/stakeholders, and/or colleague concerns that the proposed policy, project or change may be discriminatory or have an adverse impact on people with protected characteristics?				
A	Students/Apps/Customer	Yes / No	If so, how many individuals / which groups of are likely to be affected?	N/A
B	Community/stakeholders	Yes/ No		
C	Colleague	Yes / No		
Equality group	Positive impact High Low None	Negative impact High Low None	Reason / comments for positive impact why it could benefit any /all of the equality groups	Reason /comments for negative impact /what could disadvantage any/ all of the equality groups
Sex	None	None	N/A	N/A
Gender reassignment (Male/female/Non-binary/Transgender)	None	None	N/A	N/A

Age	None	None	N/A	N/A
Race or ethnicity	None	None	N/A	N/A
(Disability) Learning difference	None	None	N/A	N/A
(Disability) Physical and/or sensory	None	None	N/A	N/A
(Disability) Mental health need	None	None	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	None	None	N/A	N/A
Religion and Belief	None	None	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	None	None	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	None	None	N/A	N/A
Carers/care experienced	None	None	N/A	N/A
Socio Economic deprivation indicators	None	Low	N/A	Socio economic, equality, diversity and inclusion issues could be identified via this policy/procedure.
What changes or actions do you recommend to improve the service, project, policy, or change to eradicate or minimise the negative impacts identified? Who will be responsible for monitoring these actions?				
Have students, apprentices/other customers, communities and/or colleagues been consulted in the review / proposed change?				
A	Students/Apps/Customers	Yes / No		
B	Community	Yes / No		
C	Colleague	Yes / No		
	If yes, who and how many have you involved and how have they been involved?	Review of the policy and procedure has been carried out in consultation with college management team, including curriculum heads, and the Student Union.		
Safeguarding: Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a Student/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No None foreseen but potential Safeguarding risks could be identified via this policy/procedure
Health and Safety: Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks What are the benefits?				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Potential health and safety risks could be identified via this policy/procedure
Sustainability: Are there expected benefits or impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered?				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Evidence: What evidence do you have for your conclusions and expectations for these conclusions? How will this impact be monitored for all these considerations?				See above Via the complaints monitoring process
Is this policy of a high/medium or low risk?:				<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low