

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure

Date approved: 09/10/2025
Approved by: Executive
Responsible Manager (s): Director of Quality and Standards
Executive Lead: Executive Principal

Applicable to employees: **No**
Applicable to students and apprentices: **Yes**
Accessible to students and apprentices: **Yes**
Accessible to general public:
(including clients) **Yes**

Consultation

Consultation undertaken with: Date:20/08/2025
Admissions; HE Directorate; Student Services; HE Academic Achievement Manager;
Operations Managers; Curriculum Managers; SU Sabbatical Officer

- Students and apprentices 30/09/2025
- Employee representatives (*HR related policies only*) N/A
- Other N/A
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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 through various methods available to all our students, apprentices and service, 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 course or programme representatives who may take those issues to colleague/student/apprentice liaison meetings, Assistant Principal / Head of Curriculum (Maritime) or Head of 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 soon as is feasible and as informally as possible
- complaints will be dealt with in a fair, transparent, timely manner and in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement
- 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
- complainants will not be victimised or disadvantaged for bringing a complaint
- complaints will be monitored to understand, where possible, the root causes
- where an investigation identifies the potential for 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.

Occasionally, a complaint may be considered vexatious, malicious, habitual, unreasonable, or unsubstantiated. Such complaints may be interpreted as an attempt to misuse the complaints procedure or to damage the reputation or character of another individual. In cases where a complaint falls into this category, B&FC reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint and may consider punitive action.

Complainants should seek appropriate guidance on proceeding with any dissatisfaction that falls within this category.

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

Throughout the complaints process B&FC may make requests for additional information. This may include further detail of the concerns raised or a completed **Permission to Disclose** form to facilitate the investigation. If this is the case, then B&FC would expect to receive the requested information from the complainant within ten working days from the date of our request. B&FC reserves the right to close the complaint where a response to a request for additional information is not received within this period.

2.1 Stage 1

B&FC operates a staged complaint procedure, with the first (informal) step being at Stage 1. Responses to Stage 1 complaints should be made and soon as it is practicable to do so, normally within ten working days. If we are unable to do this, the complainant will be informed.

2.1.1. Students and Apprentices

Students and apprentices can raise concerns or issues directly with:

- the individual whom they believe is responsible for the issue, or alternatively, a lecturer, course leader, or a member of the curriculum or service area leadership team for their programme (for instance, Programme Leader, Curriculum Leader, Curriculum Manager, or Operations Manager).
- with their course or programme representatives who may take those issues to colleague/student/apprentice liaison meetings or to the student/apprentice forum meetings
- the Assistant Principal / Head of Curriculum (Maritime) or Head of 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 B&FC managers

2.1.3. Others

Parents, members of the public or service users should, in the first instance, raise the issue directly with the person who, in their opinion, is responsible for the issue 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 cannot be 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 Assistant Principal or Head of 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 and what has been done to attempt to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 with the Curriculum/Service area within ten working days of receiving the response at Stage 1. We will normally send an acknowledgement within five working days.

We aim to provide the complainant with a formal Stage 2 response within ten working days. If we are unable to do this, the complainant will be 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. At Stage 3 a complaint must be submitted in writing within ten working days following receipt of the Stage 2 response. . Again, the complainant should explain why the outcome of the Stage 2 process is not satisfactory and what they would like to happen next. Correspondence for Stage 3 should be addressed to the Chief Operating Officer or a Vice Principal, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0HB, or may be emailed to complaints@blackpool.ac.uk

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

If a Stage 3 review request is submitted after twenty working days, the complainant must provide a strong justification with independent evidence explaining why they could not meet the deadline. Late requests for a Stage 3 review will be considered on an individual basis and acceptance will be at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer or Vice Principal reviewing the complaint. The complainant will be advised of the outcome within five 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 review, they have the opportunity to escalate their complaint (where procedures allow) to the appropriate awarding body or the Department for Education (formerly Education and Skills Funding Agency). [Complain about a further education college or apprenticeship - GOV.UK](#)

3.2 Higher Education

If the complainant(s), after seeking resolution at Stage 3 remains unsatisfied, they have the right to request a final review the relevant awarding body. It is normally a requirement that a complaint has completed all stages of B&FC's procedure before being considered by the awarding body.

Please note that awarding bodies will normally only accept requests if the complaint relates to an aspect for which they have whole or partial responsibility.

3.2.1 For awards made by Lancaster University, if the complainant after seeking resolution at Stage 3, is unsatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to request a review by the University which should be submitted to:

The Senior Governance Officer Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YW

Or via email: complaints@lancaster.ac.uk.

3.2.2 For awards made by Blackpool and The Fylde College, if the complainant after seeking resolution at Stage 3, is unsatisfied with the outcome they have the right to request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

3.3 Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (Higher Education only)

If the student/apprentice, after seeking resolution with B&FC or awarding body is unsatisfied, they have the right to request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) [How to complain to us - OIAHE](#)

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

3.4.1 Where a complaint pertains to a B&FC award

Following the completion of B&FC's Compliments, Complaints, and Feedback Procedure:

- If a complaint is upheld and the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complainant may request that a CoP letter be issued.

If a complaint is not upheld, a letter will be issued automatically within 28 days of the publication of the Stage 3 review outcome.

A complainant may request a COP letter if they have not met a deadline of the Compliments, Complaints, and Feedback Procedure, the letter will be issued stating that the complainant has not completed internal processes and is out of time.

A complainant may request a COP letter if the Stage 3 review deadline has passed. Any late request COP letter will clearly state the date the final decision was reached and provide an explanation as to why the complaint is out of time.

3.4.2 Where a complaint pertains to awarding bodies other than B&FC

Following the conclusion of B&FC's Compliments, Complaints, and Feedback Procedure, complainants have the right to enact the awarding bodies complaints processes. On completion of these processes, the awarding body will issue a CoP letter.

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

3.5 Complaints concerning Harassment and Sexual Misconduct and/or Freedom of Speech (Higher Education only)

From 1st August 2025 the Office for Students (Condition E6) came into force that outlines the approach to be taken with respect to harassment and sexual misconduct ([Student and Apprentice Harassment and Sexual Misconduct | B&FC](#) and our responsibilities under freedom of speech legislation ([Freedom of Speech - Office for Students | B&FC](#)).

Complaints concerning these matters will be investigated in accordance with the complaint procedure outlined in section 2 of this procedure and detail outlined within the B&FC relevant web pages.

Complaints concerning freedom of speech will be investigated in accordance with the complaint procedure outlined in section 2 of this procedure, and in line with B&FC's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice [Freedom of Speech - Office for Students | B&FC](#)

Where a B&FC colleague or visiting speaker, after seeking resolution with B&FC or awarding body, is still not satisfied, they have the right to raise the concern through the Office for Students Free Speech Complaints Scheme [Raising concerns about free speech - Office for Students](#). Complainants may request a review by the OIA for unresolved complaints, as outlined in section 3.3 of this procedure.

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
- Freedom of Speech Code of Practice [Freedom of Speech - Office for Students | B&FC](#)
- Appropriateness of Study Policy (Student and Apprentice)
- Equality Diversity and Inclusivity Statement
- B&FC Higher Education Academic Regulations
- Refund Policy
- Tuition Fee Payment Policy
- Further Education Admissions Policy
- Higher Education Admissions Policy
- Higher Education Compensation Policy
- Higher Education Home Student Terms and Conditions
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (Student and Apprentice)

5 Linked Procedures

- Student and Apprentice Misconduct Procedure
- Student Debt Policy and Procedure
- Further Education and Interim Apprenticeships Admissions Procedure

- Further Education (FE) and Apprenticeship Appeals against Assessment Decisions Procedure
- 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 Assistant Principals Curriculum / Head of Curriculum (Maritime), and the Student Union.
Safeguarding: Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a Student/employee/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