

Feedback Policy

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FEEDBACK POLICY (COMPLIMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS)

Policy statement

Nescot understands that feedback is a valuable tool. We believe that learning from feedback is a powerful way of helping us to safeguard, improve and increase trust and open communication amongst the people who use our services.

We therefore welcome and encourage feedback. Your feedback helps us to make improvements to our services. This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

We welcome 3 types of feedback

- Compliments
- Suggestions
- Complaints

Compliments/Suggestions

If you wish to comment on the service you have received or suggest how it can be improved, please let us know by emailing quality@nescot.ac.uk

The Stages of the Complaints Procedure

At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clear detail as possible, including any supporting documents/correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

- *Informal Stage:* *Informal Complaint (verbal)*
- *Stage 1:* *Formal Written Complaint*
- *Stage 2:* *Review of Formal Complaint*

We aim to investigate and resolve all complaints in a fair and reasonable manner. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your formal complaint you have the right to request a review on the grounds set out below:

Complaint Procedure

Stages	Action
Informal Stage: Informal/Local Issue	<p>It is anticipated that most complaints can be resolved informally and close to their point of origin (face to face or on the telephone).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a student, by talking with a teacher/tutor/assessor or manager.• As a parent, guardian, visitor, employer or prospective student by asking to talk to an appropriate member of staff. <p>Any concern will be listened to and taken seriously. Every effort will be made to assist in addressing the issue(s) raised.</p> <p>No formal record will be kept at this stage, but we aim to resolve your complaint within 10 working days.</p>

<p>Stage 1: Formal Written Complaint</p>	<p>Where your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction at the informal stage, you can make a formal complaint which must be made in writing/via email (please see the 'Contact Us' page within this policy).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your complaint letter or email should include clear detailed reasons for your complaint, an indication of the resolution or outcome you seek, and copies of any documents upon which you wish to rely. • Complaints will be logged by the Quality Team before being acknowledged. • In the first instance, the Quality Team will appoint an independent investigator who carries out the investigation, discusses and reviews with Quality Head and a response will be issued from the Head of Quality. • The Quality Department will document all records appertaining to a formal complaint <p>We intend to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of a complaint within 5 working days • Full response to the complaint within 20 working days
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<p>Stage 2: Review of Formal Complaint</p>	<p>If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your formal complaint you have the right to request an appeal.</p> <p>You must detail on your appeal one or more of the following grounds listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation. • You believe the outcome of the complaint was manifestly unreasonable and/or any resulting action was disproportionate. • The complaints procedure was not followed. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A written request to begin Stage 2 of the procedure must be made to the Quality Team within 5 working days of the date of the Stage 1 response. 2. A member of the College Leadership Team (CLT), (independent to the investigation so far), will be nominated to formally review your complaint to date. 3. Consultation on findings and the proposed response from the review will be made with another member of CLT prior to responding 4. A written response will be made, detailing the findings of this investigation, will be sent to you, along with a decision on whether your complaint has been upheld within 20 working days of the date of your written appeal. <p>This decision is final and marks the end of our internal complaints process. There is no further right of appeal within the process.</p>
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A record of any actions/correspondence/supporting evidence and outcomes of Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be provided to the Quality Team, to update the Complaints/Feedback central documentation.

For Higher Education complaints and appeals please see the separate policy held on our website. Alternatively email quality@nescot.ac.uk

Extending time limits

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex, where delay may cause potential harm or, if a complaint is received during a holiday period, it may be necessary to extend or expediate the time limits. If this is the case, we will endeavour to keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay and inform you of the new deadline.

External Agencies

Following the conclusion of a Review, you may be able to take the matter further with one of the following external agencies:

- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), from FE complaints
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE), if you are on a Higher Education course, with your college partner University
- If you are an adult on a Greater London Authority (GLA) funded course, a complaint can be made to the GLA

Our policy covers feedback received from:

- Learners
- Applicants
- Parents/Carers/Guardians
- Employers or other users of College services and facilities
- Members of the public
- Staff (for those issues not already covered through HR procedures)

Our policy does not:

- Normally cover anonymous complaints – this will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- Normally cover ex-students unless the complaint is received by the College within 3 months of the end date of the course.
- Cover Staff complaints, which are more appropriately dealt with through HR procedures
- Cover appeals and complaints about academic assessment which are covered by appropriate Assessment Policies
- Deal with applicant admission appeals covered by the Admissions Policy
- Manage Safeguarding concerns which are, dealt with through Safeguarding Procedures
- Cover exclusions and student disciplinary complaints covered by the Student Disciplinary Policy
- Normally cover complaints made outside the time limit of 3 months since contradiction of when issue originally occurred.
- Complaints or claims that have been dealt with by proceedings outside of the College, such as an external court or tribunal
- Complaints or claims that are, or have already been settled by agreement between the Complainant and the College
- Complaints where evidence of recordings or conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded

Our standards for handling complaints

We treat all complaints seriously provided that they are not made abusively or offensively and comply with the guidance above. You will be treated with courtesy, fairness and with your safeguarding and wellbeing uppermost at all times. We would expect too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings the College.

We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your: sex or marital status; this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed) sexual orientation colour or race; this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality, disability, religious or political beliefs, trade union affiliation, or other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance to legislative confidentiality guidance, however in some cases related to Safeguarding, it may be necessary to refer a complaint to external child protection agencies in accordance with our Safeguarding procedures and the Designated Safeguarding Lead may also be notified.

In some circumstances, the nature of the complaint may require the College to approach the investigation more formally, referring to the College Disciplinary Process and other relevant policies to guide the investigation and any actions where appropriate.

In all other respects, the College will maintain confidentiality regarding complaints and request that students, apprentices and employers do the same.

Unreasonable behaviour

All complaints will be processed in accordance with this policy. However, if unreasonable complainant behaviour and/or unreasonable and persistent complainants are experienced, we reserve the right to end the process and reject the complaint.

The College has the right not to accept complaints or communications (e.g., where a complaint is judged by the College to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious).

The College may reject any complaint or feedback without full consideration if it is considered frivolous or vexatious. Examples of what the College considers to be frivolous or vexatious include:

- Complaints which are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive
- Insistence on pursuing unmeritorious complaints
- Seeking unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes
- Insistence on pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

If the College considers your complaint falls into this category, you will be advised that your complaint will not be considered further. You will be given the opportunity to appeal against this decision by submitting written reasons to the Quality Team within 5 working days of the date on receipt of the email/communication.

Recording and monitoring feedback

We will log the feedback we receive so that we can monitor good practice and problems, this also helps us to take a closer look at what we are doing well and how we can further improve our own service delivery. Our Quality Department will analyse the complaint information and feedback to identify complaint patterns and issues. The Leadership Team will receive reports on this analysis to enable it to monitor this information.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically and will be available via the College website.