

How Are We Performing?

(Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions)

PURPOSE

To ensure that due consideration is given to all feedback received about any aspect of the college's performance around its core purpose of providing education and training, that a constructive approach is applied and maintained, and that, wherever possible, there is a positive resolution to any complaint and dissemination of compliments and suggestions.

SCOPE

Written and/or verbal complaints, compliments and suggestions from students, employers, members of staff, parents, visitors, local residents, related organisations or any other stakeholder relating to all aspects of college business (but specifically excluding issues relating to employment as this is dealt with elsewhere).

HOW ARE WE PERFORMING? - COMPLAINTS

PROCEDURE

Any customer wishing to make a complaint should complete the "How Are We Performing?" form ([QS/090](#)) available from college receptions, the college intranet, or by sending a letter or e-mail of complaint.

The completed form, complaint letter or e-mail should be given/forwarded to the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator who will register, appropriately number and acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days. The complaint will be forwarded to the relevant college senior manager eg College Chief Executive & Principal, Chief Operating Officer, Vice Principal, Chief Officer, Assistant Principal, Executive Director, or Curriculum Manager who hold a complaints register for their area of responsibility who will investigate the complaint. In the case of a complaint against the College Chief Executive & Principal, Clerk to the Corporation or a governor other than the Chair of the Corporation, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chair of the Corporation who holds a complaints register for his/her area of responsibility and who will be responsible for investigating the complaint. In the case of a

complaint against the Chair of the Corporation, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chair of the Audit Committee who holds a complaints register for his/her area of responsibility and who will be responsible for investigating the complaint. A full complaints register will be maintained by the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator for monitoring and review purposes.

If difficulty is encountered in determining management responsibility, the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator will process the complaint in conjunction with the Vice Principal Curriculum and Standards.

Any complaints addressed directly to the College Chief Executive & Principal will be acknowledged by the College Chief Executive & Principal's Office, copied to the relevant senior manager or governor and logged with the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator in the same way.

Each complaint will be investigated fairly and the college will endeavour to respond fully to the complainant's satisfaction within 10 working days. If a full response is not possible within this timescale the complainant will be advised of the situation by the senior manager or governor investigating the complaint.

Once the complaint is investigated and resolved¹, a letter identifying actions to be taken by the college (if any) will be sent to the complainant with a copy to the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator. If appropriate the senior manager or governor who has investigated the complaint will instigate an action plan to minimise, or remove, the risk of the situation recurring in the future.

Should the complainant's issue relate to the facilitation of a qualification accredited by an awarding organisation, then once the college has completed its internal complaints investigation, if the complainant is still not satisfied, then he/she may contact the appropriate awarding organisation. Details of how to contact the awarding organisation are available from the Examinations office. Subsequently, if the complainant wishes to take their issue further than the Awarding Organisation they will be supplied with the contact details for the appropriate regulatory authorities.

All complaints received in the college will be graded 1 – 3 by the Standards and Performance Co-ordinator with 3 being the most serious.

¹ Should the outcome not be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may refer to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and/or to the Independent Adjudicator (for higher education), the relevant awarding body or the Secretary of State for Education.

1. Blue – Minor/Insignificant Complaints

Will generally be complaints related to administration, cleanliness, customer service, advertising, course information, internal/external communication, resources, refectory, timetabling, student accommodation, car park and environment.

This will be where a complaint is a result of a minor failing or failure, but has no tangible/long lasting effect on the student/college or both.

The overall risk to college business will be insignificant or minor, having little risk to the college business as a whole.

Following investigation of the complaint a letter will be sent to the complainant thanking him/her for bringing their concerns to the attention of the college. The letter will address any issues raised, apologise for any failings on our part and will inform the complainant that their concerns have been forwarded to the relevant manager or governor for any relevant action.

2. Amber – Moderate Complaints

Will generally be complaints related to enrolment, quality of teaching/learning, course content, staffing, finance, personnel matters, course delivery/mode of attendance and additional support or where by complaints identified in category 1 are not fully addressed.

This will be where a complaint is a result of a moderate failing or failure resulting in some effect on the student/college or both.

The overall risk to college business will be a moderate effect on the student/college or both.

Following investigation of the complaint a letter will be sent to the complainant thanking him/her for bringing their concerns to the attention of the college. The letter will address any issues raised, apologise for any failings on our part and will inform the complainant that their concerns have been addressed. Where necessary this will be followed up by an action plan produced by the individual manager or governor with responsibility and deadline dates which will be copied to the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator.

3. Red – Major Complaints

Will generally be complaints related to bullying and harassment, allegation of corruption, dereliction of duty, discrimination on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age, child protection, invigilation/examinations or loss of accreditation, assessments/assignments/certification, awarding body, equal opportunities and health and safety or complaints in category 2 which are not fully addressed.

This will be where a complaint is a result of a major failing or failure resulting in a very serious or severe effect on the student/college or both.

The overall risk to college business will be critical where punitive measures could be imposed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency/OFSTED, Higher Education Funding Council for England/Office for Students, Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), Health and Safety Executive or other relevant body. For example, if no action were taken the complaint could risk injury or death and where the college could receive headline news, national press coverage, TV or radio.

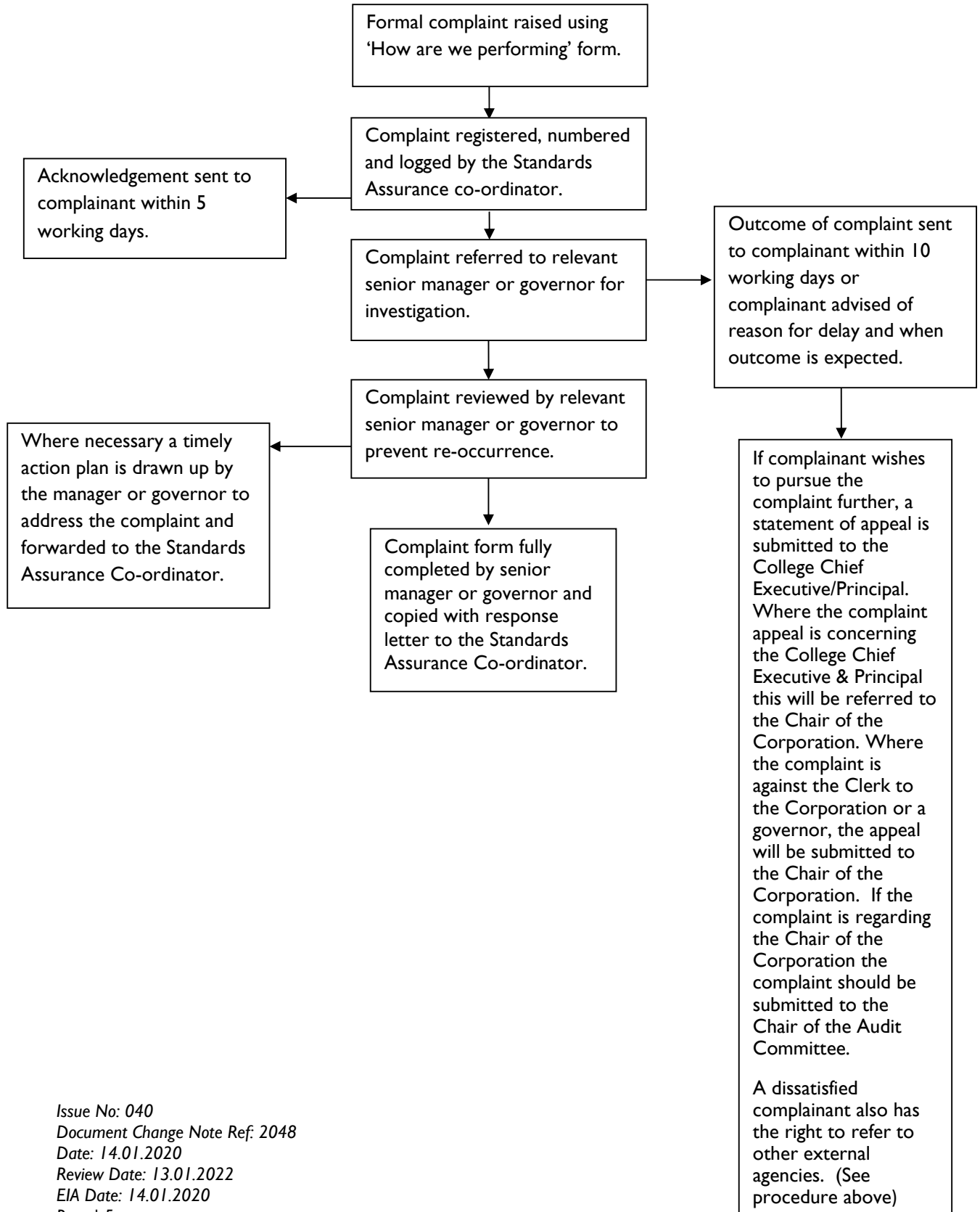
This complaint will warrant a full investigation of the complaint with statements from relevant managers/governors/staff/students/visitors etc. A letter of response keeping the complainant informed will be sent at regular intervals and once the complaint is concluded a final letter of response will be sent outlining the action taken. Where necessary a full action plan with deadline dates and identified responsibility will be drawn up by the relevant senior manager or governor and a copy will be sent to the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator who will monitor that the corrective actions have been implemented and risk of a repeat complaint/incident is minimal.

MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

Managers will receive an e-mail each term from the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator identifying any outstanding complaints. Each term the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator will produce an analysis of all feedback received which will be reported to the Senior Leadership Group on a termly basis and to the Corporation.

The complaints process flowchart overleaf shows how the complaints system operates within Dudley College of Technology.

HOW ARE WE PERFORMING? – COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART



Dissatisfaction with the action taken in respect of a complaint.

If the complainant wishes to take a complaint further because he/she is dissatisfied with the action taken, or response made, the following can be considered.

1. The complainant should write to the College Chief Executive & Principal, clearly stating reasons for the continued dissatisfaction, except where the complaint is against the College Chief Executive & Principal then the appeal should be made to the Chair of the Corporation.
2. Where the complaint is against the Clerk to the Corporation or a governor other than the Chair of the Corporation or the Chair of the Audit Committee, the complainant should write to the Chair of the Audit Committee, clearly stating reasons for the continued dissatisfaction.
3. Should a complaint still be unresolved by the college, then the complainant can refer to:
 - a) In respect of *further education* provision within 12 months (except in exceptional circumstances when relating to some Advanced Learner Loans) of getting a decision from us:

Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT or by e-mail to complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

The ESFA will appoint an officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise to investigate the complaint. If they agree to investigate they will e-mail a summary of the complaint to you and may ask you to agree to the summary. Where this happens, you will have 5 days to respond. Within 10 working days of agreeing the summary, they will send the information that you have provided along with the summary of the complaint to us. They will ask us to share with them the following:

- Details and copies of the relevant procedure
- Confirmation that the procedure has been exhausted
- A response of the summary of the complaint, together with relevant documents
- Confirmation that they can share the information provided from us with the complainant.

For complaints about the prevention of extremism and radicalisation in post 16 organisations please email: counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

The ESFA will aim to finalise the findings within 25 days of the complaint summary being agreed and they will notify you of the outcome and findings, and that will conclude the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the way the ESFA have handled your complaint you can complete a complaint form to issue a formal complaint about the ESFA using the link in the paragraph below.

For a copy of the agency's procedure on investigating complaints about providers, please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>

b) In respect of *higher education* provision:

If you have a complaint relating to the integrity of academic standards and the quality of the academic experience that is not resolved internally then you should access the OIA website using the following link:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/>

When making a complaint to the OIA the complainant must complete the OIA complaint form online within 12 months of the dated Completion of the Procedures letter provided by the college. The complainant will need to submit a copy of this letter which should have been provided to the complainant within 28 days of the college responding with the outcome to the complaint when submitting the complaint to the OIA.

The Quality Assurance Agency will only handle complaints if it is a systematic issue against providers. The aim of an investigation by the QAA under the Concerns Scheme is to safeguard and improve the overall quality of UK higher education by addressing weaknesses within a particular higher education provider. Those seeking redress or compensation should contact the Office for the Independent Adjudicator as indicated above. For details of the agency's procedure on raising concerns about providers, please refer to <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>

In respect of courses accredited by Pearson please refer to:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/students.html>

Complaints regarding accommodation managed by the college.

If parents of students under the age of 18, who are residing in accommodation managed by the college, wish to make a further complaint with regard to student welfare they can do so by contacting Ofsted at the address below:

The Complaints or Concerns Manager
Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2ND

Telephone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

COMPLIMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

Compliments or suggestions can be made on the official “How Are We Performing?” form [QS/090](#), which is available at receptions and on the college intranet, by ticking the form as appropriate. All forms should be submitted to the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator.

Compliments will be logged for reference, with copies circulated to relevant staff and managers affected by their content. We encourage the identification and acknowledgment of compliments and suggestions in the review and evaluation process, in supporting and sharing best practice.

All compliments will be graded in relation to good practice with regard to standards and performance in the college. The grading of the compliments will be in line with good practice, numbered 1 – 3 with 3 being the highest accolade. The grading of compliments will be as follows:

1. Bronze ★

Where an internal or external compliment is made regarding an individual member of staff or department with relation to their knowledge of the subject/topic or individual attention given to the customer.

The compliment is acknowledged and logged by the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator and forwarded to the relevant manager. A copy of the compliment will be kept on Covalent and on file within the department for review purposes.

2. Silver ★★

Issue No: 040

Document Change Note Ref: 2048

Date: 14.01.2020

Review Date: 13.01.2022

EIA Date: 14.01.2020

Page | 8

Where an internal or external compliment is made regarding an individual member of staff or department with relation to their knowledge of the subject/topic or individual attention given to the customer is very good. This could be someone or a department who provides very good customer service by responding quickly and effectively to a situation with regard to equality and diversity or staff service.

The compliment is acknowledged and logged by the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator and forwarded to the relevant manager. A copy of the compliment will be kept on Covalent and on file within the department for review purposes.

3. Gold ***

Where an internal or external compliment is made regarding an individual member of staff or department with relation to their knowledge of the subject/topic or individual attention given is exceptional to the customer. This could be someone or a department who offers exceptional customer service which is beyond their normal duties with regard to teaching and learning, health and safety (safe learner concept), additional support and supporting vulnerable students.

The compliment is acknowledged and logged by the Standards Assurance Co-ordinator and forwarded to the relevant manager. A copy of the compliment will be kept on Covalent and on file within the department for review purposes.

Every department has a duty to consider and review all suggestions received from internal and external customers. They should debate on the practicalities, costs and benefits of implementing suggestions. Suggestions implemented and acted upon must be reviewed annually to measure impact and benefit to college business.