



Customer Feedback Procedure

It is intended that this procedure is 'fair to all'. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

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1. Scope and Purpose

At Wiltshire College & University Centre (“the college”) we welcome the receipt of comments, both positive and constructively critical. It is essential for us to know when we get things right and when there is a need for improvement.

All courses and services at the college are reviewed regularly and your comments will help us to prepare and, when necessary, redesign or change the provision that we offer.

We want to hear from you if you feel we have done something well or, alternatively, if you think we have not.

It is our commitment to listen and to respond to the views of all stakeholders of the college and its services.

This procedure is designed to provide guidance to any student/apprentice, visitor or other parties such as parents or employers who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the college or have positive suggestions/comments.

In dealing with complaints, our aim is to respond efficiently and impartially and to reach a fair and satisfactory outcome for all concerned. We also aim to keep you informed of our progress in dealing with complaints.

Where a complaint is fully or partially upheld, the college will take action to ensure other stakeholders do not share the same experience. The college will receive upheld/partially upheld feedback positively and use this as a method for improvement to our systems and processes. If a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be advised accordingly.

1.1 Different Processes for Further Education and Higher Education

Both processes have informal and formal stages.

All stages of a Further Education complaint are dealt with through the college internal processes.

Higher Education complaints have an informal stage (Stage 1) dealt with through the college, and a formal stage (Stage 2) which is either:

- Dealt with through the partner HEI if it is about an academic matter.
- Dealt with through the college if it is about a service matter or, it relates to a Pearson Higher National Programme.

1.2 What this procedure does not cover

This procedure does not cover complaints about academic assessment i.e. grades and marks which are covered by the Academic Appeals Procedure.

This procedure is not used for appeals against disciplinary actions.

Staff complaints do not form part of this procedure.

1.3 Time lines for complaints to be initiated

Complaints **must be registered within 3 months** of the event.

The one exception is when a complaint is made that **relates to certification** (eg, incorrect details on certificates or no certificates received etc). In this instance the **complaint needs to be made as soon as possible** and then investigated. Please note that depending on the awarding organisation, the issue of initial certificates may take until **the October Half Term**. The timeline of the issuing of replacement certificates is dependent on the awarding body and is outside of the control of the college.

The college will not normally investigate any complaints made more than three months after the incident.. Any complaints received outside of the 3 month period will be reviewed by the Customer Feedback Team and determine appropriate next steps.

2. Accountability

Everyone has a responsibility to give full and active support for this procedure by ensuring that the procedure is known, understood and implemented across all areas of delivery.

2.1 Principal & CEO

- Maintaining an overview of complaints and their satisfactory resolution.

2.2 Customer Feedback Team (Executive Director of Growth & Engagement)

- Monitoring the operation of the procedure.
- Providing analysis of formal complaints.
- Bringing significant issues or trends to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Providing staff training and support.
- Briefing and where necessary involving the Senior Leadership Team in investigations.
- Allocating suitable managers to investigate complaints in discussion with Senior Managers/Directors.
- Recording complaints on a database and issuing acknowledgement requests.

2.3 Investigating Managers

- Managing the investigation and resolution of formal complaints within their areas of responsibility.
- Completing, acquiring and retaining related documentation and submitting these as required by this procedure.

- Keeping the Customer Feedback Team updated in all aspects of the investigation.
- Complying with the timescale for completion.

2.3 Staff

- Taking action, on receipt of complaints in accordance with this procedure, and seeking advice and guidance from the Executive Assistant and Director of Marketing, Admissions and Communication.
- Acknowledge that a complaint has been made and outline to the complainant the complaints process and next steps.
- Ensuring that this procedure is available to all college users.

2.4 Students

Responsibility is a two-way process and if you are a student and you are making a complaint about your course, apprenticeship or about the college, you also have responsibilities. We will expect you to have complied with the college Code of Conduct relating to attendance, behaviour and commitment (meeting deadlines etc.)

3. Data Protection

- It is expected that all students will assume responsibility for communication with the college and for drawing attention to any problems or concerns.
- Where a complaint is received from a student who is under the age of 18, parents, guardians or other relevant individuals may contact the college on behalf of the student, however, the college may require permission from the student to share data with the party submitting the complaint.
- Where a complaint is received from a student aged 18 or over, the college will share the information with a parent / guardian or relevant third party only with the express written consent of the student and only on receipt of such consent. Exceptions will only be made in the vital interests of the individual or if it is deemed that the student is unable to make sound decisions regarding their data.
- For information on rights and responsibilities within the Data Protection Act, please refer to the college's Data Protection Policy.
- Where a student is unhappy about the processing of their personal data they can contact the Data Protection Officer for advice.

4. Process and Procedures

4.1 Overview

- All complaints must be submitted via the online form.
- All complaints submitted will be considered fairly.
- Anyone who invokes the procedure in good faith will not be discriminated by having done so.
- Every effort will be made to resolve issues in a friendly and informal way.
- Throughout the process the person complaining may have a friend to accompany them at all meetings.

- Complainants may be offered support in order to make their complaint. This support can be provided by the Students Union, member of the Student Services / Additional Learning Support Team, or indeed any member of staff.
- When a student complainant is found to be malicious, this could lead to disciplinary action.
- These are internal college procedures – at no stage is legal representation for any party allowed. Further rights to appeal will be made clear at each stage.
- For all complaints the privacy and confidentiality of the complainant will be respected unless disclosure is necessary to progress a complaint. In this case the complainant will be notified in advance.
- If a complaint is made about the performance of a staff member the Customer Feedback Team and/or relevant Investigating Manager MUST inform the Human Resources team as the Staff Disciplinary Process may be initiated.
- If a complaint is referred to HR and leads to disciplinary action, no feedback will be provided to the complainant, and the complaints procedure will not be actioned. If a complaint involved a member of the Customer Feedback Team, an alternative member of staff will be assigned to perform the role of the Customer Feedback Team.
- We hope that any difficulty can be resolved in a friendly and informal way.

4.2 How you can comment, compliment or complain

- Speak to a Student Rep/Student Union. Student representatives have regular access to senior staff members. The Student Voice (through student representatives) is carefully considered, reviewed and listened to within the college.
- Provide feedback via student questionnaires, focus groups etc.
- Talk to the Student Engagement Officer or Student Services.
- Submit your complaint via the below form. Please include as much information and evidence as possible to ensure your complaint is investigated thoroughly.

Please click the below link:

[Wiltshire College & University Centre Feedback Form 2026-27](#)

To contact the team please email.

CustomerFeedback@wiltshire.ac.uk

4.3 How are Complaints dealt with?

Complaints are dealt with in two ways:-

1. **Informal** – by submitting your comment, concern or complaint and having a discussion with a relevant member of staff, arranged by the Customer Feedback Team.
2. **Formal** – by submitting your complaint via the online form. You must also include in your complaint details of what outcome you would like following the investigation.

4.4 Outcomes of the Investigation

On completion of the investigation, the complaint will be classified in one of three ways:-

- **Upheld** – the complaint was fully justified and will result in corrective action being taken,
e.g. an amendment of services/procedures, staff training, improved communications
- **Partially upheld** – certain aspects of the complaint were considered justified and will result in follow-up action
- **Not upheld** – the complaint was not justified

4.5 The 3 stages of the Complaint Process (See Complaint Process Flow Chart at Appendix A)

The following procedure has been agreed:

4.5.1 Stage One (Informal Complaint) – Discussion with Head of Faculty/Deputy Head of Faculty or Manager.

It is expected that most informal complaints can be resolved at an early stage by discussing the matter with an appropriate member of staff, usually the Deputy Head of Faculty. If there is a need to provide support or guidance for this discussion; this should be provided by the Customer Feedback Team. They will respond as soon as possible with advice and guidance as to how to proceed from this point. It is expected that these informal complaints will be responded to promptly and should normally take place within 5 working days.

There is no requirement for the member of staff making the response to issue a formal letter if the matter is resolved informally, unless the complainant specifically asks for this. The member of staff should complete the stage one complaint form on conclusion. The information supplied may be called upon if the matter re-emerges or escalates to become a formal complaint.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, or due to the nature of the complaint, it is not appropriate to do so, the matter may be treated as a formal complaint. This will be identified by the member of staff dealing with the Stage One (Informal complaint), they will escalate this with the Customer Feedback team to progress to a Stage Two.

4.5.2 Stage Two (Formal Complaint) – Appropriate Investigating Manager appointed by Customer Feedback Team.

Once a formal complaint via the online feedback form has been received, receipt of the formal complaint will normally be acknowledged via email within 5 working days with a copy of the complaint's procedure. Each submission will be reviewed by the Customer Feedback Team to establish the appropriate response.

The complaint will be copied to the appropriate Head of Faculty and Executive Director responsible for the area within which the complaint has arisen.

The Customer Feedback Team will appoint an Investigating Manager as appropriate. Therefore, this may be a person from a different faculty/area, and s/he will seek to normally resolve the issue within 20 working days by carrying out an investigation. NB: If the complaint/ relates to one of the people outlined in this process it will be dealt with by another person of equal or greater status assigned by their direct line manager.

The Investigating Manager will also confirm that, in their view, the complaint was upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

The Customer Feedback Team will send the complainant the outcome of the investigation. Where a complaint is not upheld reasons will be given as to why this is so. Where a complaint is upheld, a statement outlining the remedial action and timescale for implementation will be provided to the complainant.

4.5.3 Mediation

Some complex complaints (where, for example, the complainant and/or other involved parties have become entrenched in their position) may benefit from a different approach to resolving the complaint. Using mediation can help both parties to understand what is driving the complaint and may be more likely to result in a mutually satisfactory conclusion being reached. Where the college and the complainant agree to mediation, revised timescales should be agreed whilst suspending the complaint stage reached.

4.5.4 Appeal - Referral to Senior Leadership Team (Member of SLT to act as Appeals Officer)

If by this stage the complainant still believes the issue is unresolved the complaint can be referred to the Senior Leadership Team for appeal. They should appeal to the Customer Feedback Team by filling in the online form included in the Stage Two response within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage Two investigation outcome. The Appeals Officer will be appointed by the Customer Feedback Team in consultation with the member of SLT. This would normally be someone of equal or higher seniority than the initial Investigating Manager from Stage Two.

Details of further evidence/documents a person wishes to support the review of the initial decision is required to be included.

On receipt of the appeal form and any accompanying evidence/documentation, the college will respond to the complainant within 10 working days, to advise on the next step of the process. If the appeal is accepted the investigation with the relevant Appeals Officer (Senior Leader/Director/ /Deputy Principal) will be conducted within 20 working days.

The appeals stage of a Higher Education complaint is either:

- dealt with through the partner HEI if it is about an academic matter.
- dealt with through the college if it is about a service matter or relates to a Pearson Higher National Programme.

A complaint appeal may be referred to the Senior Leadership Team only where:

- The judgment of the investigating manager was affected by personal bias •
The investigation was not conducted within the guidelines set by the procedure
- The original complaint was not addressed within the response.

- You are now in possession of further evidence or extenuating circumstances which were not taken into account during original complaint

The Appeals Application Form is an application and therefore may be rejected. This would happen if the details provided on the application form do not evidence sufficiently the reasons above. In this case, the complainant will be informed that their appeal application has been rejected, and an investigation will not be conducted. The complainant will be informed of the reasons for the rejection within 10 days of receipt of the appeal application.

5. Rights of Appeal – Further Advice

If having **first exhausted the College's complaints procedure** you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact a number of agencies depending on the complaint:

- **The Awarding Organisation (eg, OCR, Pearson-Edexcel, City & Guilds etc)** directly (contact details are on the awarding organisation websites)



- **Ofqual** (Regulatory Body for Awarding Organisations) Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 8BA



- **The Clerk to the Corporation** (for attention of College Governors), Wiltshire College & University Centre, Chippenham, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 3QD



- **OIAHE – Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**, www.oiahe.org.uk The OIA Scheme Rules exclude complaints about admissions and academic judgment, complaints that are not brought within a given timeframe, and complaints about issues that do not materially affect the student as a student. The rules can be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/decisions-and-publications/leaflets.aspx>

The OIAHE must receive your signed OIA Complaint Form **within twelve months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter which you need to obtain from the college; otherwise, they may consider your complaint to be out of time.



Department
for Education

- o **The Department for Education**, <https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducation-apprenticeship> For complaints to DfE about FE Colleges and Apprenticeships providers.

6. Time Periods

The time periods as set out in this procedure are for guidance and under some circumstances may be subject to extension. Where any such extensions are made, the complainant will be notified.

NOTE: For all stages above the college will set out clear and reasonable timescales relating to how long students will be given to respond to any requests for further information that may be required in order to process the complaint.

7. Serial and Vexatious Complainants

A serial and/or vexatious complainant is someone who acts in an unreasonable manner, is unreasonably persistent in the manner in which they raise their complaint. The college has a duty of care for its employees; when dealing with a serial and/or vexatious complainant we reserve the right to refuse to investigate a complaint and may, if appropriate, refer the matter to the college's solicitors.

8. Concluding Actions

On completion of the investigation, the Investigating Manager will: -

- Ensure the Customer Feedback Team is in possession of all necessary information to record and log the process and outcome.
- Inform any members of staff who have been involved in the complaint of the outcome and any follow-up action. This will involve referral to Human Resources Department if the complaint is staff related.
- Make sure the complainant has been fully briefed about the outcome.
- Ensure if the complaint is about equality and diversity, safeguarding or disability that the appropriate managers have been informed.
- For all formal complaints an acknowledgement request will be sent by The Customer Feedback Team following complaint closure to ascertain complainant levels of satisfaction.

9. Associated Documents

- Academic Appeals Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedures
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Capability & Disciplinary Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- College Customer Charter
- OIA's Good Practice Framework for handling complaints

10. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The Customer Feedback Team will analyse statistical information relating to comments, compliments and complaints initiated under this procedure for trend information to ensure we identify areas of strength and areas for development and take appropriate action.

Reports will be published on a regular basis to the Senior Leadership Team on the outcomes of comments, compliments and complaints and our actions in response.

Where possible the Customer Feedback Team will also highlight case studies and examples to show how complaints have helped improve services.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

Wiltshire College & University Centre strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all students, local people and the workforce. As an employer and a provider of education, the college aims to ensure that none are placed at a disadvantage as a result of its policies and procedures. It is intended that this policy and procedure is fair to all. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

12. Data Retention Statement

Wiltshire College & University Centre is committed to ensure the data it collects, and holds is in line with the ICO's guidance and meets data protection law. Where appropriate a Data Protection Impact Assessment will be undertaken as and when policies are updated to ensure risks to the individual and college are considered and managed.

For further information please refer to Wiltshire College & University Centre's Data Protection Policy.

13. Policy Review and Ownership

This policy and procedure is owned by the Customer Feedback Team It will be reviewed periodically in light of developments in employment legislation, good employment practice or audit; and to ensure it continues to be relevant and supports operational effectiveness.

14. Amendments Log

Version	Date of Issue	Amendment summary	Author(s)
V1.4	21/02/2025	Review – Changes made to job titles, implementing online form for submission and amendments to process and some timescales.	David West & Tiffany Maxwell
V1.5	18/03/2026	Reviewed – Changes made to job titles and Stage 2 and 3 response times. Updated flow chart	David West & Tiffany Maxwell

Appendix A

