

 Farnborough College of Technology	Complaints Policy & Procedures
Owner	Vice Principal Curriculum and Safeguarding
Approval by Corporation	
Date reviewed:	May 2018
Date for next review:	May 2021

Introduction

- The College is committed to providing high standards of education to its students and a high degree of efficiency in the administration of all related services.
- It encourages a positive environment in which contact and feedback from students is welcomed and where constructive complaints can be dealt with effectively.
- Feedback on the quality of the services provided is welcomed, whether this is a comment, compliment or complaint.
- The procedures apply to prospective students; enrolled and former students; stakeholder employers and members of the public.
- Where the student is under 18, or classified as a vulnerable student, then their parent, guardian or carer may make a representation on their behalf.
- The College will have due regard to the personal characteristics which are protected by the Equality Act 2010
- Complaints should be made as soon as possible and not later than ten days of the date of the incident.
- If the complaint is about an examination or assessment outcome then the separate academic appeals policy may apply instead.

Key Principles

All complaints will be dealt with:

- Promptly – the College response to the complaint will be made within a reasonable period of time.
- Objectively – those investigating the complaint will take into account the views of all concerned and take account of all relevant evidence.
- Confidentially – any party's reasonable entitlement to confidentiality will be respected.
- Fairly – if action is required it will be as appropriate given the nature of the issue and in accordance with the general procedures and policies of the College.

Stage 1: Informal process

It should normally be possible to resolve complaints using the Informal process. If any complaints are of a serious nature they should be brought to the attention of the Principal, preferably in writing to be dealt with under the Formal process.

The process applies to the following stakeholders:

- prospective students, wishing to raise issues or make comments about offers or services provided between acceptance and enrolment should make them firstly to the Director of Marketing and Student Services.
- enrolled students, wishing to raise issues or make comments about aspects of their course or College services should make them firstly to their Tutor or Programme Manager. Sometimes it may be more appropriate to instead raise issues with a Head of Faculty.
- stakeholder employers, wishing to raise issues or make comments about aspects of a course or College services should make them firstly to the Programme Manager of the course concerned. Sometimes it may be more appropriate to raise issues with the Business Services Director or the Deputy Principal.
- members of the public, wishing to raise issues or make comments about aspects of the College's business and services should make them directly to a member of the senior management team.

Stage 2: Formal complaints process

If complaints cannot be settled through an Informal process, or are of a serious nature they should be addressed to the Principal in writing. Written complaints may be submitted by email (pa-principal@farn-ct.ac.uk), or letter. Assistance may be available to those wishing to make a complaint. Depending on the nature of the complaint, Lecturers, Student Services and the Information Centre may offer further information.

The following procedures will apply:

- The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt.
- Whilst confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, it is not normally possible to resolve complaints without disclosing details of a complaint to relevant staff and to allow the College a fair opportunity to resolve the issue.
- The Principal (or other Senior Manager designated by the Principal) will assess the nature of the complaint before appointing an appropriate manager to investigate the matter in accordance with the key principles set out above.
- A written response to the complainant based on the investigation will normally be sent within ten working days of the matter being reported, outlining any specific actions which may be appropriate. The letter may refer to further recourse available to other named agencies.
- If the matter is likely to take longer to investigate, the complainant will be informed of this before ten days have elapsed and kept informed as the investigation proceeds.
- The outcome of the Formal process will be one of the following:
- to dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons or

- to mediate an amicable settlement or
- to uphold, or partially uphold, the complaint identifying the actions to address the issue

Stage 3: Appeal procedure

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation then he/she may appeal direct to the Principal, in writing. The appeal must be received within 10 working days of the outcome of the Formal process being communicated to the complainant.

The decision of the Principal is final, except where there is provision of appeal to an external body.

The following procedures will apply:

- This Appeal will be acknowledged within three working days.
- The Principal (or on his/her behalf, a member of the Senior Management Team) will reconsider the matter directly in accordance with the key principles set out above.
- A formal response to the Appeal will normally be issued within ten working days of the receipt of the Appeal. The letter may refer to further recourse available to other named agencies.
- The Principal may decide to:
 - uphold the original decision or
 - dismiss the complaint or
 - uphold or partially uphold the complaint

Stage 4: Taking a complaint further

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the College's response following appeal they may take their complaint to other relevant agencies. Usually, all College procedures for dealing with complaints need to have been exhausted before a complaint may be referred by the complainant to a funding body or another relevant external agency.