

## Title of Policy: Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

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Approved by	ELG
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### Policy Statement

**The aim of the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and its associated procedures is to ensure that all compliments, concerns and complaints are dealt with in a fair, equitable and timely manner by the college's staff.**

# Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

## Policy

1. The procedures for raising compliments, concerns or complaints will be made available at all College campuses and on the College's website.
2. The college will seek to resolve concerns through informal processes wherever possible.
3. Concerns and complaints will be dealt with fairly, consistently and in a timely manner.
4. Compliments and complaints will be monitored and used to improve our services.
5. Details of formal complaints will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
6. All complaints will be investigated by a named member of staff.
7. The outcome of the investigation, including any actions, will be reported to the complainant.
8. A college compliments and complaints report will be written every term and annually.

## Appendix 1: Procedures

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### Who is it for?

The College Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure is for the use of students, parents or carers complaining on behalf of students under 18 years of age, clients using our facilities, visitors, local residents, employers and members of the local community.

The college will not normally consider a complaint which is raised more than three (3) calendar months after the incident giving rise to the complaint unless there are good reasons for the delay. In the event that you feel there are good reasons for the delay, you should let the college know of those reasons as part of the complaint.

The College Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure is **not** intended for

- appeals against assessment decisions (see Assessment Appeals Policy);
- appeals against assessment malpractice (see Learner Malpractice in Assessment Policy);
- issues regarding compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (see Freedom of Information procedure);
- appeals against Refund Request decisions (see Refund Policy)

#### Informal Resolution of Concerns

If you are studying at the College and have a concern connected with your course, please speak to one of the following:

- the person directly involved
- your student representative
- your lecturer
- your personal tutor or course leader
- a manager or deputy director of the curriculum area in which you are studying.

If you are not studying at the College, or if you are studying here but the issue is not connected with your course, please speak to:

- the person directly involved
- a manager or the Head of the Department with responsibility for the service concerned.

Any member of staff will be able to point you in the right direction and every effort will be made to resolve your concern at this informal stage.

#### Formal Stage 1

If your concern has not been resolved informally you may decide to make a formal complaint.

Complaint forms are available at Reception desk and should be completed and submitted by hand or post, or on the college website [here](#) where forms are submitted electronically. You may also write directly to the Quality Administrator or e-mail to [feedback@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk).

If you are a student at the College you may wish to seek the help of the Quality Office, Learner Services or your Personal Tutor when making a formal complaint.

The form should be completed as fully as possible and it is especially important that you tell us what your desired outcome would be.

The Quality Office will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of its receipt and arrange for an investigation to be carried out.

Your complaint will be investigated by the manager responsible for the course or service about which you are complaining. If the manager is the subject of your complaint an independent investigating officer will be allocated. During this stage we may need to contact you for further information.

You will receive a written response from the investigating manager within 15 working days of the acknowledgement advising you of the outcome of the investigation. Should we think the investigation will take longer than 15 working days the investigating manager or the Quality Office will inform you. This may occur in complex cases or during holiday periods.

## Formal Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the written response you have received at Formal Stage 1 you should contact the Quality Administrator within 5 working days to request that your complaint is progressed to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. You must tell us why you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1. Simply disagreeing with the outcome will not be enough. You must provide us with either new information not available at the time of your original complaint or evidence of non-compliance to our own procedures when dealing with your complaint at Stage 1.

The Quality Administrator will acknowledge your application to Stage 2 within 3 working days and will arrange for your complaint to be reviewed by the Principal or a delegated senior manager.

You will receive a written response to a Stage 2 Complaint within 15 working days of its acknowledgement.

This will draw the procedure to a close.

Please note the college reserves the right to take action against those making fictitious, vexatious or malicious complaints.

If you are not satisfied after Stage 2 you are able to refer your complaint to either the *Education and Skills Funding Agency*, the *Office of the Independent Adjudicator* for higher education courses or other relevant organisation in order to make a complaint about the college.

Please find copies of their policies at the below web addresses or from the Quality Office and all college receptions on request:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/complaints/>

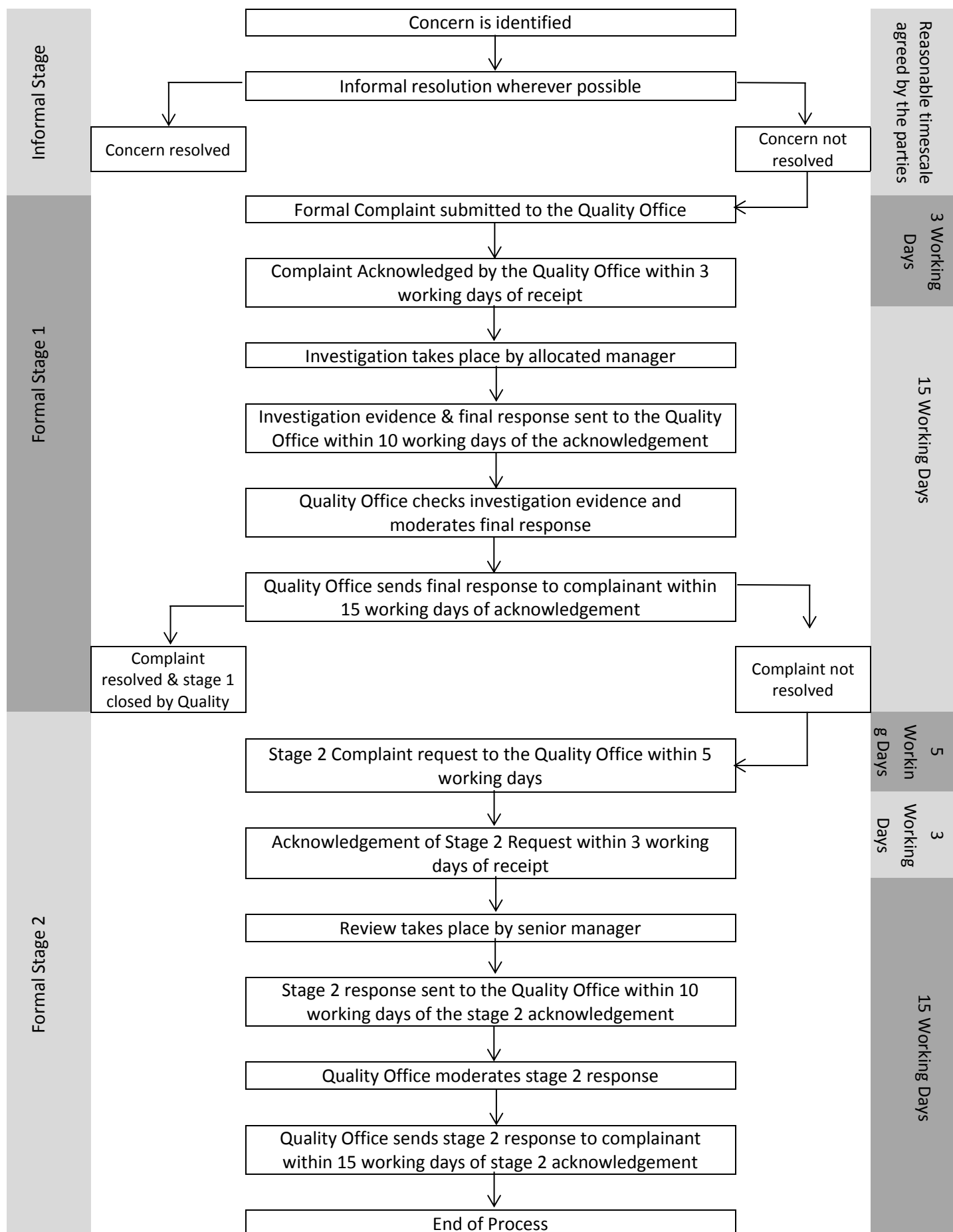
<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/rules-and-the-complaints-process.aspx>

If you require further information please contact the Quality Office.

## Compliments Procedure

We always strive to get it right and delight our students and customers. If you would like to give us a compliment please send an email, a letter or a Compliment & Complaint form to the Quality Office and we'll make sure it is recorded and sent to the right person.

## Appendix 2: Concerns and Complaints Procedure Flow Chart



## Appendix 3: Complaints Procedure Guidance for Investigating Managers

### Informal Stage - Concerns

In the course of your daily duties you may come across informal concerns expressed to you by students, visitors or other stakeholders. It is desirable that all concerns are resolved informally at this stage.

Please keep a brief record of concerns you deal with in case a formal complaint arises from it in the future.

### Formal Stage 1 – Complaints

A concern or complaint becomes formal when it is submitted to the Quality Office. The Quality Office will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days of receipt and an investigating manager will be allocated.

The general principles you should work to in a complaint investigation are those of *objectivity* and *transparency*.

*Objectivity.* It is important that you are not perceived as an advocate for either the complainant or the subject of the complaint (whether this be a person, a course or a process). Remain even handed and open minded in all your investigative activities. Your role is to establish the veracity of the complaint and where upheld make recommendations to resolve it.

*Transparency.* Documents (including the complaint itself) relating to the investigation may be shared with relevant parties subject to reasonable safeguarding of individual well-being and third party confidentiality. If in doubt about this please seek guidance from the Head of Quality. In most cases it is reasonable to assume that the complainant would not object to their original complaint being seen by the subject of the complaint, and that the subject would not object to the complainant receiving their views of the complaint.

As investigating manager you will gather relevant evidence and information relating to the complaint, including if necessary speaking to staff, students or other parties. If meeting with people in the course of an investigation you should let them know beforehand what the meeting is about.

You should complete the investigation and report your findings to the Quality Office within 10 working days from the day the complaint was acknowledged to the complainant.

If you believe the investigation will take longer than 10 working days you must inform the Quality Office when you expect the investigation and report to be completed.

Your investigation evidence and final response communication must be sent to the Quality Office for filing and moderation. This must include the below information:

- Evidence of any communications within the investigation
- If the complaint is upheld or not
  - A complaint which is upheld is when you feel the complainant is justified in making the complaint.
- Clear actions required to close the complaint
- Information regarding any changes to procedure or practice that have taken place as a result of this complaint

The Quality Office will be responsible of the formal closure of all complaints.



**Details of compliment/complaint – Continuation Sheet**

**For Office Use Only**

	Ref No.	Received	Ack, log and File	Sent to Mgr	Manager	Upheld	Closed	Reported
	<i>Date/Initials</i>	<i>Date/Initials</i>	<i>Date/Initials</i>	<i>Date/Initials</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Y/N</i>	<i>Date/Init</i>	<i>Date/Initl</i>
Stage 1								
Stage 2								