



Complaints Policy

Status: Version 4 Approved By: College Management Team

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Complaints Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to make clear the policy of JFC College regarding formal complaints made to the College. It is the policy of the College that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, swiftly and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

2 Scopes

This policy applies to formal complaints made by learners of JFC College, the general public and external agencies when attempts to resolve issues or concerns informally have been unsuccessful.

Complaints made to JFC College are within the scope of this policy and its related procedure except where the complaint is in respect of a networked programme or a JFC service centrally provided and maintained. Where this is the case the complainant will be referred to the JFC Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

This policy is not intended for complaints about academic decisions. These issues are dealt with through the academic learner appeals procedure.

This policy does not apply to complaints made by members of staff which relate to his or her employment. These are dealt with in accordance with the appropriate HR procedure.

Definitions

Complaint: A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation.

Key Principles

Every opportunity is taken to resolve complaints at the first point of contact if at all possible. This informal or frontline resolution may take the form of a quick apology or explanation for a service failure and can be the most effective way to reduce a complainant's dissatisfaction.

If a problem remains unresolved or is considered too serious to be dealt with informally, a written complaint should be addressed to the Administrator. A Complaint Form is also available in the college.

In requesting that complaints be made in writing, the College does not intend to present a barrier to the complainant and where a complaint in writing cannot be provided, alternative methods will be accepted.

If a complaint is made on behalf of an individual by a third party such as a friend, parent or guardian, the written consent of the individual in question is required before any further correspondence with the third party is entered into.

Complaints are acknowledged within 3 working days. In this acknowledgement, the complainant is informed of the name of the member of staff who will investigate the complaint.

Investigations into complaints are conducted in a confidential, objective and thorough manner and may involve further contact with the complainant for clarification or further detail.

Investigations are completed as swiftly as possible with a full response sent to the complainant within 30 working days.

In the event of an unavoidable delay in response the complainant is kept informed of progress on a regular basis until the process has been completed.

Appeals

Complainants dissatisfied with the handling and/or outcome of a formal complaint may appeal in writing to the Director of Studies. The appeal should be made within 15 working days from receipt of the response.

The appeal is acknowledged within 5 working days. In this acknowledgement, the appellant is informed of the name of the senior member of staff who will review the details of the complaint, the nature of the investigation and the outcome.

A written response stating whether or not the appeal has been upheld is sent within 21 working days. This response will contain the statement that the college complaints procedure is complete together with details of any external agencies or bodies to whom the complainant may make further complaint. These details are appended to this policy.

As a learner, if you are dissatisfied with the findings/outcomes, you have the right to direct your complaint to the relevant Awarding Organisation in writing.

Furthermore, if you are still not satisfied with the final decision made by the relevant Awarding Organisation, you can escalate your complaint to the Qualification Regulator. They will make the final decision on your complaint.

Review of Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually by the College Management Team. The purpose of the review is to identify areas for improvement in our service.

Records of complaints, outcomes and investigations are retained in line with the College's records management policy.

Unacceptable behaviour by complainants

In a small number of cases, a complainant's behaviour may be deemed to be unacceptable and complainants who are angry or demanding may result in unreasonable demands on time and resources or unacceptable behaviour towards staff.

Examples of behaviour that may be considered unacceptable include: persistent refusal to accept a decision made in relation to a complaint; persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what can or cannot be done about the complaint, and continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information.

If a complainant's behaviour adversely affects staff's ability to do their work and provide a service to others, contact with the complainant may be restricted. Where possible, this will be done in a way that allows a complaint to progress.

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff may result in the ending of all direct contact with the complainant. Where appropriate, incidents will be reported to the police.

Responsibilities

The senior member of staff with overall responsibility for this policy is the Director Studies.

All staff members are responsible for the implementation of this policy and its related procedure.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and follow all relevant policies and procedures.

Quality approval check of the final policy is the responsibility of the Director Studies.

Other Independent External Body

If a learner believes that they are still not satisfied with the outcome of college's complaint procedure relating to a complaint against academic or administrative department, they can further contact the below:

Education and Skill Funding Agency
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 0207 904 0750
complaintsteam@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk