



CUSTOMER CARE AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Version: Version 1

Aim / Scope: The College aims to provide outstanding customer care. This policy details the College approach to dealing with all feedback (positive and negative) raising issues which have affected the experience of learning.

This policy sets out how the College will manage the process of dealing with compliments, comments and complaints, in order to ensure continuous improvements for current and future stakeholders.

Policy Owner: Director of Quality Improvement

Author / Lead	Carolyn Harvey
Impact Assessment status	C – Full Impact Assessment completed
Approved by CET on	1 October 2009
Effective date	12 January 2010
Target audience *	Learners, parents, employers, members of the public and other stakeholders
How communicated to users / location	To be published on www, Intranet and Message of the Day. Posters and feedback forms at all sites. Highlighted during Induction and Freshers week. QID to meet HoDs and PMs at their campus to increase awareness. Marketing to student body. Simplified summary also produced for easier access.
Review internal (years)	1
Date of next review	September 2010

* Employees are not part of the target audience for this policy. This policy covers external feedback and review of the College. Staff feedback is managed through H.R. and departmental policies and procedures.

Overall objectives

To establish a clear framework for processing all feedback

To ensure all feedback is dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner

To encourage feedback through numerous methods and from a wide range of service users

To provide the most impartial consideration of concerns and complaints possible

To resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both the college and complainant wherever possible

To learn from all feedback and make recommendations for future improvements

This policy is intended as a guide to resolving conflict and sharing best practice. The procedures outlined in this document **do not** deal with issues arising from academic matters. Appeals against assessments and disputes around marking or grading are covered in the policy and procedures of assessment.

Purpose of the policy

To establish a clear framework to support staff in handling all feedback

To establish a consistent approach to feedback and subsequent action across the College

To direct all formal feedback through the Quality Improvement Directorate

The primary reasons for the centralisation of feedback through the Directorate are:

- 1) The maintenance of accurate records to enable clear analysis of matters affecting people within the College. The collation of data allows the College to look for trends, which increases awareness and helps improve services.

- 2) To offer the most impartial perspective possible, allowing a fair and objective consideration of all issues.

Responsibility for the resolution of complaints is not removed from any department. The Quality Improvement Directorate will pass **all** issues to the relevant department for investigation initially, to exhaust the correct channels. The Quality Improvement Directorate will only investigate further if departmental resolution is deemed unsatisfactory by either the complainant or the College.

Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Anyone may feedback to any staff member at any time about any aspect of the College's activity.

Comments about the college can be submitted in a variety of ways:

Post to: Carolyn Harvey, Room C4.05, Park Lane House, Park Lane, Leeds, LS3 1AA

Email to: carolyn.harvey@leedscitycollege.ac.uk

Telephone: 0113 216 2564

or

Complete a pink feedback form (available at all reception points) and ask staff to forward it to the Quality Improvement Directorate.

Please note staff members will be happy to help anybody complete a feedback form if asked.

All feedback, particularly that pertaining to a complaint, will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially as far as possible.

A level of common sense is expected to reduce the bureaucracy to which complaints are subject. The College encourages an informal resolution of all matters if possible.

Complainants are requested to follow a process of escalation and approach staff members from the relevant department initially to request help or advice. Student services and reception staff may also be able to help in the first instance.

If a swift resolution to the complaint can be offered without the need for a formal process, staff should deal with the feedback at source. Only if further investigation is required or if the response at source is deemed unsatisfactory should the issue be raised formally with the Quality Improvement Directorate.

All formal feedback is to be forwarded immediately to the Quality Improvement Directorate to be logged and acted upon if necessary.

1. Receiving and acknowledging feedback

- 1.1 When feedback is raised within the department to which it pertains, the department should issue the appropriate response.
- 1.2 All feedback is to be acknowledged within **five working days** of receipt.
- 1.3 Compliments should be forwarded to the Marketing Team and the appropriate service manager to share best practice and celebrate success.

2. The complaints procedure

- 2.1 A complaint can either be made directly to the relevant department or to the Quality Improvement Directorate.
 - 2.1.1 When a complaint is submitted to another department, the Quality Improvement Directorate should be informed.
 - 2.1.2 The details are then entered into the Customer Care Database.
 - 2.1.3 The department must keep the Quality Improvement Directorate updated with all progress made.
- 2.2 All complaints are to be acknowledged within **five working days** of receipt.
- 2.3 The complaint must then be investigated at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.4 In the interest of impartiality, all departments should liaise and work closely with the Quality Improvement Directorate when necessary and look to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties wherever possible.
- 2.5 The manager will investigate the situation and wherever necessary obtain statements of those involved.
- 2.6 If a complaint warrants a more objective/independent investigation, it should be forwarded immediately to the Quality Improvement Directorate who will request it be assigned to an appropriate senior manager.
- 2.7 In all cases the investigator(s) must try to establish what actually took place and where the responsibility lies. The Quality Improvement Directorate must be kept informed of all findings.
- 2.8 The Quality Assurance Manager is available to help and guide managers investigating complaints and assist in drafting a formal response.
- 2.9 The response should be issued within **ten working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 2.10 Where it is not possible to resolve the issue within ten working days the complainant must be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

- 2.11 Final response letters **must** outline the outcome of the investigation and the subsequent actions to be taken by the College, where applicable.
- 2.11.1 In the case of a more serious complaint, the response will then be passed to senior management for any further action necessary.

3. Appeals

- 3.1 If a matter is not resolved by the investigation or if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome, they may appeal to Principal.
- 3.2 Appeals must be made within **fifteen days** of the College response.
- 3.3 The Principal will then assign a reviewer to the case. The reviewer in this instance must be a member of the senior management team who has had no involvement in the complaint at any stage.
- 3.4 At either stage of appeal the complainants request for review will be acknowledged within **five working days**.
- 3.5 The reviewer will consider all aspects of the complaint and how it has been handled by the college.
- 3.6 The findings of the review will be communicated to the complainant within **fifteen working days**. If the review is complex and likely to exceed this timescale the complainant must be kept informed of progress.
- 3.7 If the complaint is not substantiated and the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek help outside the College. Some suggested external bodies are:
- Executive Director, Learning and Skills Council (West Yorkshire)
 - Mercury House, 4 Manchester Road, Bradford, BD5 0QL
 - Secretary of State for Education and Skills
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Councillors, MPs and MEPs
 - National Union of Students

4. Monitoring and recording complaints

- 4.1 It is an essential part of a complaints management system that all complaints are recorded and monitored. Even if they are resolved easily and quickly there may be opportunity to learn from the situation and improve working practice, processes or procedures as a result.

- 4.2 The Quality Improvement Directorate must be informed of all complaints so that the issue can be logged in the central database. This information is used to inform reports issued to management and governors.
- 4.3 Copies of all documents pertaining to complaints need to be sent to the Quality Improvement Directorate.
- 4.4 Reports on customer care will include age, gender, ethnicity, disability, department or directorate concerned, the nature of the issue and the outcome.
- 4.5 The following committees will receive regular reports of all feedback:
Academic Board
Equality and Diversity
Curriculum Heads of Department
Education Standards Committee
College Executive Team
Student Union

Flowchart

