

Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

OWNED BY:	VP Student Experience and External Relations					
DATE OF LAST REVIEW	January 2023					
PLANNED NEXT REVIEW:	January 2025					
APPROVAL:	SLT					
APPLIES TO:	Staff	✓	Student	✓	Public	✓

Cirencester College welcomes customer feedback whether compliments, complaints or suggestions. They help us to continuously develop the service we provide and enable us to recognise good practice in our teams.

This policy provides our framework for compliments and complaints from students, parents/guardians or other stakeholders and outlines the way(s) in which we will respond to any feedback if necessary, and the likely timescale.

Please help us to address your issues by following this procedure. Feedback that is not in line with these procedures will not be processed.

How we deal with customer feedback.

The College takes customer feedback very seriously. All members of College staff have a responsibility to deal with customer feedback but in the case of complaints a designated person will 'own' the complaint to ensure that it is investigated and where necessary, addressed. In order for us to ensure that feedback is properly addressed we need to log relevant information to ensure that it gets to the right person and that, where necessary, it is tracked and a response made to you.

Compliments and Suggestions

The College welcomes compliments and suggestions, these can be sent via the feedback button on CCO or emailed to quality.officer@cirencester.ac.uk. The Quality Officer will record these and ensure that they are passed to the person with responsibility for the area concerned, who will, where appropriate, feed your suggestion into their development plans.

In the case of a compliment, the Quality Officer will also forward it to the line manager of the person(s) you are complimenting so that the member of staff will be given the appropriate recognition for their good service.

Asking a question, raising an issue or making a complaint:

The vast majority of issues can be resolved through communication. If there is something you are unsure or unhappy about you should try to raise it informally in the first instance:

If you are a student,

Please try to talk to the person directly. If you do not feel able to do this, please go to either your tutor, the Head of Faculty or a member of the Pastoral Team. They will discuss the issue, record it and where necessary, ensure that it is addressed. You may choose to be anonymous at this stage. However, dependent upon the severity of the issue, your anonymity may not be possible.

You may also raise issues via the smiley face/sad face feedback buttons on CCO. This is not anonymous but it goes to the Quality Officer and the Vice Principal Student Experience who can deal with your issue sensitively. There are also at least 2 student surveys a year where you can tell us about things that concern you.

If you are a parent or guardian,

If the issue(s) relate to your young person's lecturers or tutors, you may wish to contact them directly. Email is the best way to do this to ensure that they receive your message and can deal with it promptly. Where you do not receive a satisfactory response, please contact the Quality Officer (quality.officer@cirencester.ac.uk) who will ensure that it is raised with the appropriate line manager. We reserve the right to treat issues raised as formal complaints if the manager judges them to be serious or part of a pattern that disadvantages students. Please note, under GDPR, if your young person is 18 years or over, they need to give us their express permission to discuss their data and concerns with you.

If the issue is more to do with a College function and you do not know who to raise it with then please send an email to our Quality Officer who will forward it to the responsible line manager.

There is an annual parent survey which also gives you the opportunity to comment on our services.

How to make a formal complaint

Students, parents and guardians

If informal steps do not result in a satisfactory response then you will need to lodge a formal complaint. You can do this in several ways:

by telephone or visiting reception and completing a complaint form. You will need to provide full details including your email address and telephone number.

By writing to or emailing our Quality Officer.

If you are a student and find this daunting then you can go to your personal tutor or one of the pastoral leads who will assist you.

Members of the general public or an external stakeholder

You should alert us to an urgent issue by telephoning reception and providing them with full details including your email address and phone number.

In all other cases please write to or email our Quality Officer on quality@cirencester.ac.uk

In all cases

provide as many details as possible so that the matter can be investigated.

Please note we cannot accept complaints on behalf of third parties.

Please do not turn up in reception and ask to see specific staff. To protect our students and staff all visitors to the College must have a prior appointment in order to be admitted.

Please note that we will only investigate external complaints that are in writing (including email). Only telephone or 'in-person' complaints relating to serious issues (e.g. safeguarding concerns) will be referred through to other

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staff. Should a complaint follow internal disciplinary procedures, please be aware that you will not be notified of the outcome of the disciplinary, just that an internal process has been followed.

Please note that we will not respond to complaints which are outside our jurisdiction or are civil matters. For example parking on roadsides.

Please note that where complainants are rude to our front line staff we will halt the process at that point.

Please do not copy in other staff to complaints. This will lead to delays. The official College response will be issued via the Quality Officer or in particular circumstances by a Vice Principal.

Process for dealing with a complaint

Once a formal complaint has been made, the Quality Officer will log it and pass it to the relevant manager for investigation and, where necessary, resolution. You should receive an acknowledgement of any formal complaint within 5 working days. The Quality Officer will continue to monitor the progress of the complaint to ensure that it is properly addressed and that you receive a final response in a timely way.

A number of outcomes to formal complaints are possible

- a. The relevant line manager investigates and finds that there is no issue or it is one that can be easily addressed. They will email you to let you know.
- b. The relevant line manager investigates and finds that the issue is complex. They may contact you to arrange a phone conversation or a meeting to discuss and, if possible, reach a resolution.
- c. The relevant line manager investigates and finds that the issue is serious. They will escalate the issue to a senior manager for resolution.

In each of the above cases, you should normally expect to hear back from the College within 10 working days of acknowledgement during term-time so that you know what is happening. Timeframes for resolving issues may be longer, particularly if they include College holiday periods or where staff or students who are involved are absent. We aim to complete most investigations within 20 working days. In the case of b or c (above), the Quality Officer will contact you at the end of the process to check that the issue has been resolved for you. External complainants will be notified of outcomes at the end of any investigation and review period.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can appeal the decision on one or more of the 3 grounds below. To do so you will need to put your reasons in writing making it clear whether your appeal is about:

- Process - if you feel we have not followed the process outlined in this policy
- Fairness - if you think we have not treated you fairly
- Significant new information has come to light of which we were unaware

Your appeal will be acknowledged by the Quality Officer and passed to a manager unconnected with the original complaint. They will review the issue and may interview you or others concerned as part of their investigation, although this will not happen in all cases. Reviews can take longer than original investigations but we will endeavour to complete them within 20 working days during term-time.

They will respond to you in writing giving brief reasons as to why they have upheld your complaint or why it is unfounded. If they have upheld your complaint, the manager will try to ensure that the issue is resolved. This result of this appeal is final.

For members of the public, no further internal appeals are possible.

However, if as a parent and/or student you are unhappy about the process through which the College has dealt with your complaint, you can write to The Principal providing full details. Please note, this appeal route is only available for complaints about failure to follow process.

If the Principal is the subject of the complaint or has been involved in the process already, then you should write to The Chair of Governors, Cirencester College providing full details. Please note, this appeal route is only available for complaints about failure to follow process.

Oversight

A member of the senior team (currently the Vice Principal Student Experience and External Relations) will monitor all concerns/complaints, which will be recorded centrally and confidentially.

The complaints log is regularly analysed by senior staff to identify patterns and an annual report of all compliments and complaints is produced for the Senior Management Teams and College Governors (Corporation) by the Quality Officer.

Exceptions or extensions to our complaints policy.

On some of our courses (e.g. HE level) there are alternate or extended complaints routes which you will be advised about. Where complaints are about services provided by contractors we will deal with the complaint as well as passing complaints on through their own processes.

There is a separate process covering complaints about examinations which must be used for anything to do with exams.

Where complaints are about the organisations we work with, we will attempt to pass on your complaint to them but we will not investigate it ourselves.

If, after exhausting our internal process, you wish to complain about the quality of the education service provided by the College, you can complain to the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency).

Repeated complaints

Where repeated complaints are made about any issue which is outside our control (e.g. a civil or police matter) we may issue a standard acknowledgement and log the complaint but we will not investigate or correspond further on the matter.

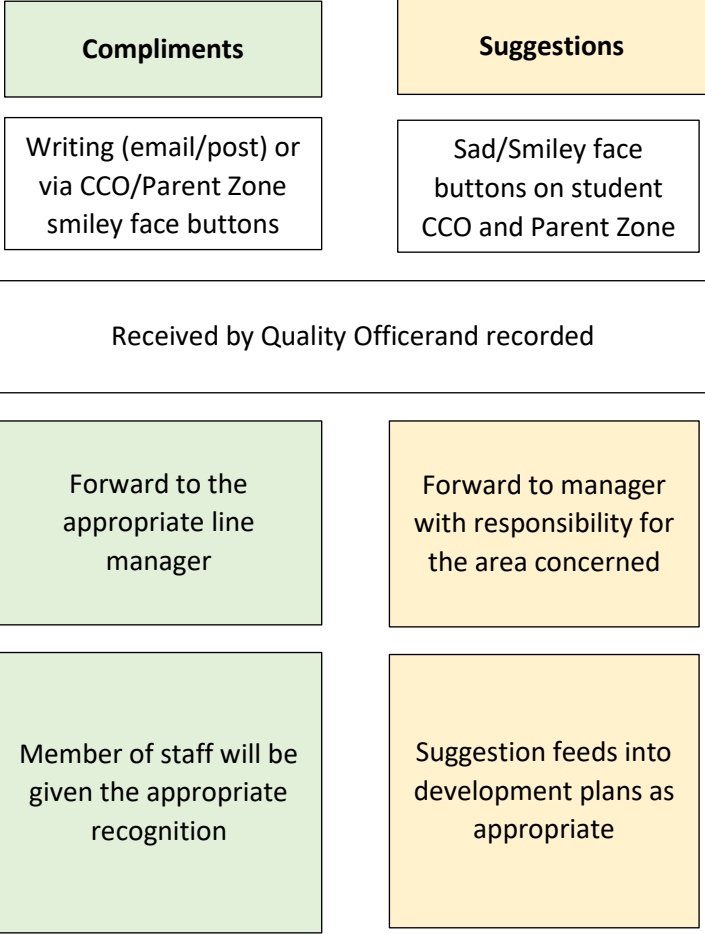
Where we have completed our complaints process, we will not correspond further with the complainants on the same issues.

Data Protection

When managing a student's personal data information, it will be collected in accordance with the College's data protection policy. Data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purpose of information relating to this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of student data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure.

Equality

As with all College Policies and Procedures due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all students regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion/faith. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding the College's commitment to providing equality to all.



Parent/guardian

Student

Public/external stakeholder

Complaints first stage - Informal resolution

Email the person
(lecturer/tutor) directly

Talk to the person directly
or to
your tutor, Head of
Faculty or a member of
the Pastoral Team

Email/write to Quality Officer
*Note: Safeguarding concerns
contact by telephone or in-
person*

Member of staff responds
with explanation,
clarification and/ or
resolution

Discuss, resolve and
record issue

Received by Quality Officer,
recorded and forwarded to
relevant manager

Member of staff responds
with explanation, clarification
and/ or resolution

Unsatisfactory response? > Formal complaint

Contact the Quality Officer
by email

Contact the Quality Officer
by email or CCO button

Contact the Quality Officer
by email

Quality Officer acknowledges complaint
forwards to appropriate area/line manager or escalates for investigation and monitors progress

Outcome communicated to complainant by manager in a timely way (see policy detail)

Still unhappy with response? > Appeal

Appeals – for Students and Parents/guardians - can be made on the
grounds of Process, Fairness or Significant new information

Appeals are not available
for public complaints

Quality Officer acknowledges complaint
forwards to involved manager to review and monitors progress

Outcome communicated to complainant by manager in a timely way

Further Appeal only on grounds of failure to follow process

Write to the Principal

Where the Principal is the subject of the
complaint, write to The Chair of Governors

Complaint investigated and outcome communicated to complainant by
Principal/Chair in a timely way

Still unsatisfied? You can write to the Education & Skills Funding Agency
(ESFA) about the quality of the education service provided by the College