

COMPLAINTS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To detail Cornwall College processes for resolving complaints.

2. Applies to

- 2.1 Complaints raised by students, parents, guardians, employers, customers, staff members or the general public in relation to college activities, staff and provision.
- 2.2 It is not applicable to students or staff members who have a grievance against an individual person such as another staff member or student. Such grievances are the subject of separate staff and student grievance procedures.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** for maintaining an overview of complaints and their satisfactory resolution.

- 3.2 **Data Protection Manager, Information Systems:** for

- a. Monitoring the operation of the complaints system
- b. Briefing, and where necessary involving, the CEO in investigations
- c. Recording complaints on the Complaints database
- d. Termly analysis of formal complaints and bringing significant issues or trends to the attention of the CEO.

- 3.3 **Heads of Departments, Business Units and Outreach Activities (all hereafter referred to as 'Heads'):** for

- a. Managing the investigation and resolution of formal complaints within their areas of responsibility
- b. Allocating suitable managers to investigate complaints
- c. Completing Complaint Checklists and acquiring and retaining related documentation.

- 3.4 **Other College Managers:** for investigating and taking action to resolve formal complaints that involve the managers in 3.3 and more senior managers.

- 3.5 **Staff:** for taking action, on receipt of complaints, in accordance with this procedure.

4. Processes and documentation

STEP 1- INFORMAL COMPLAINTS – (No record needed)

- 4.1 Complaints of a minor nature should be raised immediately with:

- a. A member of staff directly involved or who is able to address the concerns.

- b. One of the college support services, to solve the problem directly and informally.
- c. The Complainant's Senior Tutor, Personal Tutor, or Class Tutor
- d. The Data Protection Manager, who can advise who best to contact with regard to a complaint.

STEP 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINTS (Including those received via e-mail)

- 4.2 A complaint will be regarded as formal if it is of a serious nature and/or cannot be satisfactorily resolved on an informal basis by the college department or individual against whom it is directed. A complaint of a "serious nature" may include but not be limited to the following definitions:
- Health & Safety issues
 - Equality & Diversity Issues (including but not limited to; ethnicity, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation)
 - Failure of a College service or product
 - Breach of confidentiality
 - Theft or damage to personal property
- 4.3 Formal complaints can be handed in to Student Services on each site. A Complaints Record Form should be completed. A copy of the complaint should then be forwarded to the Data Protection Manager, Information Systems. Complaints may also be sent via e-mail to complaints@cornwall.ac.uk or addressed to the Data Protection Manager, Information Systems, Cornwall College, Trevenson Road, Pool, Redruth, TR15 3RD.
- 4.4 Complainants should provide details of their name, address and telephone number together with all supporting information regarding the complaint e.g. relevant documentation, details of dates, locations and witnesses if appropriate. Complainants should also detail any previous attempts to resolve the problem and what action they would like taken to resolve the complaint.
- 4.5 If the complainant is unable for any reason to submit a complaint in writing to Student Services, they should be asked to contact a member of the Data Protection Manager, Information Systems (Tel: internal 3839) who will record the complaint on a Complaint Record Form and forward the complaint to the appropriate manager for resolution.
- 4.6 The Data Protection Manager will check that an acknowledgement to a formal complaint is made in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. The acknowledgement will detail who the complaint has been referred to for investigation.
- 4.7 The Data Protection Manager will refer complaints to the most appropriate Head of Faculty or Senior Manager within the College, copied to the appropriate Head of College/Business Unit who will then communicate directly with the complainant. A copy of the complaint will also be forwarded to the CEO for information.

- 4.8 The Head or Senior Manager will investigate the complaint fully and provide a full response within 20 working days.
- 4.9 During the course of their investigations the Head or Senior Manager will normally arrange to meet with:
 - a. The complainant to discuss the complaint.
 - b. Any person(s), if appropriate, who are the subject of the complaint.
- 4.10 During any meetings the complainant and/or subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a colleague or fellow student. A written record of all proceedings will be made by the Head or Senior Manager.
- 4.11 If the complaint cannot be resolved within 20 working days for any reason, the complainant will be advised why the response has been delayed.
- 4.12 Once all investigations are complete, the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation and what, if any, action is being taken within the bounds of confidentiality

STEP 3 - APPEALS

- 4.13 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Data Protection Manager. This appeal should outline:
 - a. The grounds for the appeal. This should not re-iterate the original formal complaint but state the reasons why the suggested resolution is not satisfactory.
 - b. Any aspect of the response or action taken that is considered inadequate.
 - c. The response or action that would be considered appropriate by the complainant.
- 4.14 The Data Protection Manager will acknowledge appeals in writing within five working days of receipt.
- 4.15 Depending on the nature and cause of dissatisfaction the Data Protection Manager will:
 - a. Conduct further investigations and/or consult with the CEO in order to respond to specific issues raised and make a final decision with regard to the complaint.
 - b. If appropriate, refer the complaint to an Appeals Panel within 20 working days of the conclusion of any further investigation. This panel will consist of three college managers not previously involved in the complaint. The panel will review all documentation and make appropriate recommendations. The panel will provide a written response to the complainant within five days of their meeting.
- 4.16 Appeals are final and no further correspondence with regard to the substance of the complaint will be entered into.

IF YOU WISH TO TAKE THINGS FURTHER

4.17 The College hopes that the above procedure will satisfactorily resolve any complaints. Very occasionally this may not be the case and if a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can contact any of the external bodies listed in the College Charter. The Data Protection Manager will provide a copy of the College Charter and can advise which external body would be the most appropriate to contact depending on the complaint.

5. Related documents and data

Staff Guide to Handling Complaints

Complaints Record Form

Student Grievance Procedure

Staff Grievance Procedure

Summary of complaints processes

