



CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FRAMEWORK

Complaints Policy and Procedures

1.0 Purpose

This policy provides guidance on voicing complaints and the procedures involved when it is felt that a complaint has not been dealt with correctly.

2.0 Policy Statement

Jewel & Esk College will ensure that any complaint regarding any of its courses, staff or services will be dealt with quickly, effectively, sensitively and objectively.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy is based on the principle of good customer service in dealing with customer comments and complaints.
- 3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedures and its Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes and the Student Disciplinary and Student Appeals Policies.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Principal is responsible for the development of this policy.
- 4.2 The Depute Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 4.3 Staff and students are responsible for the effective operation and implementation of this policy.
- 4.3 Quality & Qualifications Manager is responsible for co-ordinating the process and for the effective monitoring and reporting of complaints to senior management.
- 4.4 Student Services and the Students' Association on request are responsible for advising and representing students within the complaints process.

5.0 Complaints

- 5.1 While recognising that it is everyone's entitlement to have representation or support in making a complaint the College will normally only accept a complaint that is made in the complainant's own name, unless they are under 16 years of age.
- 5.2 Where possible complaints about staff, students and college facilities or services should in the first instance be made at the point of contact where every effort will be made to "put things right" immediately.
- 5.3 Complaints may be made in writing either by using the 3Cs form "compliments, comments and complaints" or to the Quality & Qualifications Manager as detailed in the leaflet "Making a Complaint".
- 5.4 Complaints will be acknowledged in writing and every effort will be made to resolve the issue within 10 working days.
- 5.5 Where a complaint may take longer to resolve, for instance where external agencies may have to be consulted, the complainant will be regularly informed of progress.

6.0 Complaints to the Principal

- 6.1 Complaints sent to the Principal's Office will be acknowledged and forwarded to the appropriate manager for action.

7.0 Complaints Relating to Discrimination

- 7.1 The College is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. Everyone at Jewel & Esk whether they are a student, staff or visitor, has the right to be treated sensitively and with respect. The College does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Complaints relating to discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race (including national or ethnic origins), religion/belief, sexual orientation, or social background should be made with reference to the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy & Procedure, which indicates that any breach of that policy will be regarded as a breach of our Disciplinary Code.

8.0 Appeals and Adjudication

- 8.1 Every complainant has the right of appeal.
- 8.2 Grounds for Appeal

A complainant will have grounds to appeal where he or she believes that the complaint has not been handled objectively or appropriately or if it has not been satisfactorily resolved.

- 8.3 For full details of the appeals procedure refer to the internal **Student Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

- 8.4 On an unsuccessful appeal, right of final adjudication on complaints can be made to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPO), which is authorised to consider most complaints and will undertake an independent and impartial review of a complaint. The jurisdiction of the Ombudsman extends to all persons 'aggrieved by' a decision of the College, but does not apply to complaints about matters relating to academic judgment.
- 8.5 With exception to the above 'the final arbiter in any dispute regarding Health & Safety Executive (HSE) courses is the HSE'.

9.0 Monitoring and Reporting

- 9.1 Complaints will be monitored by the Quality & Qualifications Manager to ensure adherence to the Complaints Policy requirements.
- 9.2 Quarterly reporting on the type and frequency of complaints will be made to the Senior Executive Team and annually to the Board of Governors.

10.0 Data Protection Act 1998

- 10.1 Jewel & Esk College is committed to ensuring that the processing of personal data is only undertaken in the legitimate operation of the business of the College. The College will ensure that the eight principles on which the act is based are made known to and observed by all College staff.

11.0 Review of Policy

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually.

12.0 Communication Guidance

- 12.1 It is acknowledged that each complaint is unique and as such a standard letter approach would be too prescriptive. Therefore these guidelines indicate the content that must be included.

Acknowledgement letter

- Outline of complaint
- Manager dealing with complaint
- A timeline for considering the complaint
- Include a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedures

Letter after consideration

- Detail of complaint
- Process for consideration
- Outcome of consideration
- Any action to be taken, with timescale
- Include a copy of the Student Appeal Policy and Procedures
- Clearly state timescale for appeal – usually 5 working days

The Student Appeals Policy and Procedures details the process for appeals.