

Introduction

RACC aims to provide a service of the highest standard to all our users. This standard is set out in the College Charter.

This Complaints Policy and Procedure aims to provide a clear framework to help anyone who is not satisfied with the College services to raise their concerns formally and to ensure that the College responds effectively.

For the purposes of this policy a complaint is defined as a serious expression of dissatisfaction requiring an investigation and response.

1. Who should use this policy and procedure?

Anyone who wishes to formally complain about our services, including learners, employers, schools, partners, parents/guardians of students under 18, local residents and other users.

There are separate procedures for:

- learners wishing to appeal against assessment outcomes, who should use the College Appeals procedure ('Appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications')
- staff wishing to complain about any aspect of their employment, who should use the 'Employee Grievance procedure'
- those wishing to feedback (comment, compliment or make suggestions) on our services, who should use the RACC feedback systems found on the college website (www.racc.ac.uk), at reception (feedback cards) or by emailing feedback@racc.ac.uk

2. Principles on which the policy is based are that:

- complaints will be dealt with seriously, fairly, consistently and courteously
- complaints will be investigated promptly
- complaints will be treated in accordance with the College's policy on equality and fairness, with no resultant victimisation of a complainant
- appropriate support will be given to people with physical impairments or low literacy skills who wish to make a complaint
- complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to confidentiality for both students and staff
- complainants will be kept informed, whatever the outcome
- complaints made more than three months after the incident will not be investigated (except in exceptional circumstances)
- anonymous or malicious complaints will not normally be investigated
- complaints are recorded, monitored and analysed. Reports are reviewed at Senior Management and Governor level
- appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrence of complaints where possible
- documentation will be filed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy
- this policy and procedure is well advertised and actively promoted to learners and other users through inductions, learner handbooks, posters, employer/employee packs and the website. Copies of the policy and complaints form are available on the website and at Reception.

<i>Owner:</i>	<i>Louise Ellis</i>	<i>Approved by:</i>	<i>Christina</i>
<i>Review interval:</i>	<i>2 years</i>	<i>Approved on:</i>	<i>7th May 2010</i>
<i>Date of next review:</i>	<i>May 2012</i>	<i>Post to website:</i>	<i>Yes</i>

3. Roles and responsibilities

- **The Quality team** receives all formal complaints and is responsible for logging and monitoring the complaints in accordance with the procedures below
- **All College staff** have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and appropriately. All complaints (formal and informal) received by a member of staff must be forwarded to the Quality Team to be recorded
- **College managers and directors** have a responsibility to take a lead role in resolving complaints, through investigation (when appropriate) and responding to the complainant
- **The College Principal and Vice Principals** are responsible for resolving complaints that have reached the appeals stage.

4. Method

4.1 Formal complaints procedure

- 4.1.1 Ideally the complainant should have tried to resolve the matter through discussion with the member of staff most directly concerned, before resorting to the formal complaints procedure
- 4.1.2 **Filling out a complaints form:** the complainant should fill out a Complaints Form (Appendix 1) having read the Complaints Policy and Procedure (both available from College Receptions or website – www.racc.ac.uk). The form should be returned to Reception or to the Quality Team at The Clifden Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham, TW1 4LT
- 4.1.3 All complaints received directly by a member of staff should be passed on immediately to the Quality Team to ensure proper response
- 4.1.4 **Logging** the complaint: the Quality team maintains a spreadsheet of all complaints and their progress
- 4.1.5 **Acknowledgment:** the Quality Team sends an acknowledgment (normally within 5 working days), stating who will be investigating the complaint and that a response will be provided within 20 working days
- 4.1.6 **Investigation** of the complaint: the Quality Team forwards the complaint (with an investigation form, clearly identifying timescales - Appendix 2) to the most appropriate senior member of staff, normally the manager of the area about which the complaint is made, and copied to the director of the area, or directly to the director. An independent manager/director may be asked to conduct the investigation if appropriate. During this stage the complainant may be contacted for further information or to be invited to meet with the investigating manager. (They may be accompanied by a friend or family member)
- 4.1.7 **Equality & Diversity:** any complaint that appears to contain equal opportunities related matters will be referred to the Equality & Diversity Committee, to decide on the appropriate course of action
- 4.1.8 **Safeguarding:** any complaint that appears to contain matters relating to safeguarding will be handled under the Child Protection Policy or Adult Safeguarding Policy, as appropriate
- 4.1.9 **Resolution:** the investigating manager will consider the complaint thoroughly and respond to the complainant. The manager will return the completed investigation form to the Quality Team with a copy of the response sent to the complainant, to be filed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy
- 4.1.10 **Quality improvement:** the investigating manager will ensure that relevant action is taken to change procedures or implement staff training to prevent recurrence of the complaint
- 4.1.11 **Monitoring** the complaint: the Quality Team will monitor all logged complaints to ensure they are resolved within the allotted 20 working days. S/he will inform the investigating manager of any unresolved complaints and will notify the complainant if they are unable to meet the agreed timescale
- 4.1.12 **Evaluation:** a record of complaints, appeals and outcomes will be recorded on a complaints database. These will be analysed and presented annually to Senior Management and to Governors

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4.2 Appeals

- 4.2.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response they receive from the investigating manager they may appeal to the Principal or Vice Principals of the College (within 20 working days of the date on the response letter).
- 4.2.2. The appeal should be made in writing stating reasons for the appeal and any action they are seeking.
- 4.2.3. A written notification of the result of the appeal will normally be sent within 20 working days of the College receiving the appeal.
- 4.2.4. The complainant may be invited to attend an appeal hearing and they may be accompanied by a friend or family member. The appeal panel will consider the complaint and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome within 5 working days of the hearing. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Related Documents:

College Charter
 Employee Grievance Procedure
 Appeals Procedure (appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications)

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Formal Complaints Form

APPENDIX 1

Before completing this form, complainants should read the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure, available on our website (www.racc.ac.uk) and at Reception. A summary is included on the reverse of this form.

When completed, please hand in to Reception or send to: The Quality Team, RACC, Clifden Road, Twickenham, TW1 4LT

If you require assistance to complete this form please ask at Reception.

Section 1: Details of complaint			
Details of any contact you have had with staff to discuss this complaint:			
How would you like this complaint to be resolved?			
Section 2: Personal details			
Name:		Course:	
Address:			
Tel no:		Email:	
Declaration: I have read and understood the College Complaints Policy & Procedure: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Signed:		Date:	
For office use: Date complaint logged:			

How to make a Complaint

This form is for formal complaints only. If you wish to feedback on our services (comment, compliment or make a suggestion) please use the RACC feedback systems found on the college website (www.racc.ac.uk), at reception (feedback cards) or by emailing feedback@racc.ac.uk

If you are complaining about the outcome of an internal assessment you should refer to the College's Appeal procedure (appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications)

Stage 1: Informal complaint

Before making a formal complaint we ask you to discuss it with your tutor/assessor or a member of staff who is involved in the problem.
They will try to resolve the problem informally.

Stage 2: How to make a formal complaint

If you find that stage 1 does not solve your problem, or you feel it is of a serious or confidential nature, you should make a formal complaint by completing this Complaints form and returning it to the Quality Team at The Clifden Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham TW1 4LT
You will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days, and following an investigation into your complaint, we will send a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint (unless you are informed otherwise).

Stage 3: How to appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you may (within 20 working days of the date on your response letter) appeal to the Principal or Vice Principals of the College in writing, stating your reasons and any action you are seeking. Please ask the Quality Team for contact details. You will be notified in writing of the result of your appeal (normally within 20 working days of the College receiving your appeal). The decision of the appeal panel is final.

For a full copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure please contact the Quality Team, ask at Reception or refer to the website www.racc.ac.uk

Complaints Investigation Form

APPENDIX 2

Investigating Manager:	
	Department:

Section 1: Details of Complaint			
Name:		Course:	
Address:			
Tel no:		Email:	
Summary of Complaint: (background and issues – attach original complaints form)			
Staff involved:			
Date complaint received:		Deadline for reply:	

Section 2 : Investigation			
Interviews:			Date
Findings:		Evidence (attached)	
Recommendations/Actions:		By whom	By when
Reply letter sent:	By whom:	Date:	
Signed (investigating manager):		Date:	

Please return completed form with a copy of letter to the complainant and any other supporting information to the Quality Team