

exeter college



Compliments, Comments & Complaints Procedure

Written by: Data Protection Officer and Compliance Manager
Consulted with: Senior Leadership Team
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1 Purpose

Exeter College welcomes feedback on all aspects of our provision and service. We do not pretend to be perfect, and we would like to encourage all stakeholders to tell us what we can do better. Compliments and constructive criticism help us to improve the quality of all that we do. We want to resolve issues that you bring to our attention as formal complaints. All courses and services at Exeter College are reviewed regularly and your comments will help us to prepare and, when necessary, redesign or change the provision and support services.

2 Procedure

2.1 Compliments and Comments

We would like to know what you think we do well. Positive feedback will help us to carry on doing what you think we are doing well. If you are a student or a parent/guardian of a student, an apprentice or an employer and you would like to acknowledge the support that you or your son/daughter/apprentice has received while at the college, please let us know. You can either contact the member of staff involved directly or contact your/their personal tutor/skills officer. They will ensure that your feedback reaches the relevant person and that the Senior Leadership Team is made aware.

2.2 Complaints

A complaint is defined as *“a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable”*. We are committed to excellence in all areas of our provision. If we make a mistake, we would like to know about it so that we can put things right. If you are a student or a parent/guardian, an apprentice or an employer or a member of the wider community, please help us to resolve issues and disagreements informally without reference to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Quality and Compliance Manager. If this is not possible, please use the formal complaints procedure described below and put your complaint in writing.

At Exeter College all staff have a responsibility to listen and to respond to constructive criticism. All complainants will be treated fairly and equally. If you make a complaint in writing, you will receive a clear response from us.

It is important that both the complainant and the College remain professional throughout. Exeter College has a duty of care to its students and staff, and if the behaviour or language of a complainant is insulting or aggressive during a phone conversation in a meeting or in emails/letters, the College reserves the right to terminate the complaint process. We wish to ensure that anybody with concerns will have those listened to and addressed. Exeter College will, however, not engage with complaints which are vexatious, rude, or threatening in tone.

2.3 Verbal Complaints

- 2.3.1 Wherever possible we try to settle verbal complaints informally. All members of staff have a responsibility to take action to resolve a complaint as soon as possible, wherever possible.
- 2.3.2 The member of staff listening to the complaint will complete a Verbal Complaint Record Form and pass it to the Head of Faculty or Head of Department. They will then try to resolve the matter together with the person who is complaining.
- 2.3.3 If a verbal complaint cannot be resolved easily, the Head of Faculty/Department will support the process.
- 2.3.4 The Head of Faculty or Department will keep the details of the verbal complaint and the outcome on record, including a copy of the Verbal Complaint Record Form. We will keep all documentation relating to a verbal complaint for three years.

2.4 Written Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint in writing, this is what you should do:

- 2.4.1 Send your written complaint to us by letter or e-mail. You can also use the Written Complaint Form, which is attached to this document. This Procedure and the Complaint Forms can be found on the College Website under: Home / About / About the College / Mission and Policies – please scroll down to “Other Documents”.
- 2.4.2 Please address letters of complaint to “Quality and Compliance Manager, Exeter College, Hele Road, Exeter, EX4 4JS”.
- 2.4.3 Please send email messages to feedback@exe-coll.ac.uk
- 2.4.4 If you wish to make a complaint regarding an apprenticeship, please contact the Director of Apprenticeships in the first instance through Apprentices@exe-coll.ac.uk or ring 01392 400800.
- 2.4.5 To ensure all complaints are dealt with in the most efficient way possible, we will only respond to correspondence that has reached us through the postal address, phone number and email addresses listed above. This is for your convenience and to prevent your concerns not being dealt with through the proper channels as set out in this procedure.
- 2.4.6 Whilst a complaint investigation is in progress, please may we ask that you refrain from contacting individual members of staff directly by copying them into your communications, as this will interfere with our efforts to investigate matters in accordance with our established policies and procedures.
- 2.4.7 If you wish to add any information to previously sent documentation, please send them to the emails listed above, so that we can ensure the correct channels of communication remain open to you for your reassurance and convenience.
- 2.4.8 It is helpful to us if you note down the facts as you see them and describe what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint.

What happens when we receive your complaint?

- 2.4.9 The Data Protection Officer and Compliance Manager will receive your letter or email. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it, either by letter or email. Please let us know your preference.
- 2.4.10 We will log your complaint and send a copy to the member of the College Leadership Team who will be investigating. Depending on the nature of the complaint, meetings or telephone conversations may be needed to establish exactly what happened. We may contact you again for further information.
- 2.4.11 It is our ambition to send you a written response to your complaint within 30 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances or the complaint was received at the beginning of, or during a holiday period. The response will describe the outcome of our investigation and any action that we will take because of your complaint.
- 2.4.12 All paperwork relating to a written complaint will be retained for three years.

What happens if you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint?

- 2.4.13 If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should write to us again within 5 working days of receiving our response, using the same way of contacting us as described previously.
- 2.4.14 Your complaint will be passed to a Director, Assistant Principal or Vice Principal. They will investigate the complaint again and respond within 30 working days of receiving your further correspondence unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a complaint is made just before or during a period of holiday time, the response may take longer, because if staff are on leave an investigation may take longer.
- 2.4.15 If the complaint is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you can refer the matter in writing to "The Principal, Hele Road, Exeter College, Exeter, EX4 4JS". This should happen within 5 working days of receiving the written response from the Director, Assistant Principal or Vice Principal. The decision of the Principal is final.
- 2.4.16 Unresolved Apprenticeship issues or concerns can be referred to the ESFA Apprenticeship helpline on 0800 005 0600 or helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

What do you need to do if you want to complain about the Principal, Vice Principal or the Clerk to the Corporation?

- 2.4.17 If your complaint relates to the professional behaviour of the Principal, or a Vice Principal you should write directly to the "Clerk to the Board, Hele Road, Exeter College, Exeter, EX4 4JS".
- 2.4.18 If your complaint is in relation to the Clerk, you should write to the "Chair of the Board, Hele Road, Exeter College, Exeter, EX4 4JS".
- 2.4.19 Timescales and procedure of response will follow as closely as possible the ones described previously.

3 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This Procedure has been agreed by the Senior Management Team and it will be monitored and reviewed by the Quality and Compliance Manager. All paperwork relating to a written complaint will be retained for three years. The Quality and Compliance Manager monitors the complaints and writes a report for the Governing Body.

4 Associated Documentation

The Verbal Complaint Record Form and the Written Complaint Form are attached to this document for your convenience. Please see the next page:

Verbal Complaint Record Form

To be completed by member of staff receiving the complaint

Name of Complainant:

Address:

Telephone No:

Details of Complaint:

Signature:

Name (Block capitals)

Name of staff receiving complaint:

Faculty/ Department:

Action taken to address complaint:

Was the complainant satisfied?

Yes/No

Signature of staff dealing with complaint:

Date:

Name: (Block capitals)

Copy to: Head of Faculty/ Department Copy to: Data Protection Officer and Compliance Manager

Written Complaint Form

Name of Complainant:

Home address:

Post Code:

Telephone Number:

Have you already tried to resolve this complaint verbally?

Yes/No (Please indicate)

By completing this form, you are making a written complaint, which will be investigated by a member of the College Leadership Team and logged by the Quality and Compliance Manager.

Nature of complaint:

(You should include details of date(s), time, place and people involved and highlight exactly why you are making a complaint)

Please continue overleaf if required 

Desired outcome: (What would you like to happen as a result of your complaint?)

Signed:

Date:

Please return this form to the DPO and Compliance Manager, Exeter College, Hele Road, Exeter EX4 4JS or by email to feedback@exe-coll.ac.uk