

INTERNAL PROCEDURE

Title: Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure

POLICY HOLDER: Executive Manager
SMT OWNER: Principal
VERSION NO: 14
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Summary:

Accessibility: If you would like this information in an alternative format, e.g. Easy to Read, large print, Braille or audio tape, or if you would like the procedure explained to you in your language, please contact the College's marketing team on 01603 773 169.

Further information: If you have any queries about this policy or procedure, please contact the named policy holder.



Amendments log

Review date	Version	Changes	Originated by	Approval
August 2021	11	OIA contact information updated		Exec
December 2021	12	Policy amended to ensure clarity on definition of 'student' in line with other college documentation. Step 5 - Right of Appeal updated to include OIA and completion of procedure information.		Exec
February 2023	13	Policy Review to include compliments and concerns. Zero Tolerance Statement added.	J Sturman / Creative Excellence	SMT
March 2024	13	Policy review – no updates.	J Sturman	SMT
March 2025	14	Policy review – addition of managing vexatious complaints and barring from college sites.	J Sturman	SMT

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1 Introduction – Why Compliments, Concerns and Complaints are important

City College Norwich* gladly receives all feedback.

Receiving compliments allows us to recognise good practice and identify areas that are working well.

The College also takes seriously any issue raised by a complaint because they allow us to rectify faults or shortcomings in our provision and allows us to improve the operation and services of the College.

We would also like to know of any concerns because these allow the College to investigate potential poor practice and rectify issues, thereby mitigating potential complaints.

The College is also aware that dissatisfied customers are very likely to discuss their concerns or complaint with a range of other people. Matters which are not addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant may well lead to the reputation of the College being tarnished.

Thus, dealing successfully with concerns and complaints will improve the provision that we make, improve the reputation of the College and give us knowledge to help us develop in a positive way.

* Reference to City College Norwich includes Paston College, Easton College, Norfolk House and the International Aviation Academy Norwich.

Definition

Compliment	Concern	Complaint
A compliment is a voluntary expression of gratitude or praise for a member of staff or service area of the College.	A concern may seem too trivial to raise in a formal manner; however, they allow the College to investigate potential poor practice or 'near misses' and rectify issues, thereby mitigating potential complaints.	A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, in any form, with our services, whether justified or not, which requires a response.

2 Our Ways of Working – Zero Tolerance Statement

Staff and students of the College are expected to work in line with the College's 5 Ways of Working. Our Ways of Working ensure that our college community provides a welcoming, respectful and positive experience for all. They are embedded into the College strategy and they have become a common language between staff and students alike.



Likewise, whilst the College welcomes all feedback, it holds a zero-tolerance stance regarding the use of threatening, abusive language, including that of a discriminatory nature and any unreasonable behaviour that hinders our consideration of complaints.

On rare occasions, complaints might be raised in a manner that is vexatious. Sections 7 and 8 provide more details on how we deal with these.

3 Submitting a compliment and what happens next

Compliments allow us to recognise good practice and identify what's working well. If you have received a particularly good service, we enjoy hearing about what has gone well, it is just as important in helping the College shape services as negative feedback and complaints.

Compliments will be forwarded to the relevant Manager for dissemination to relevant parties.

Please submit your feedback via ccc@ccn.ac.uk

4 Submitting a concern (or near miss) and what happens next

A pattern or trend of concerns can provide an early warning that something needs attention. It makes good business sense to be proactive and take action early when problems are likely to be less serious. A concern may seem too trivial to raise in a formal manner, but they are a valuable source of information. By informing us of any concern you may have allows the College to investigate potential poor practice or near miss and rectify issues, thereby mitigating potential complaints. Feedback of this nature is forwarded to the relevant Manager for dissemination to relevant parties, appropriate action will be taken to mitigate a future incident of said nature.

If you wish to raise a concern, please submit your feedback via ccc@ccn.ac.uk

5 Submitting a complaint and what happens next

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a service, action or lack of action, however made, provided directly by the College or by a contractor or partner, affecting an individual or a group, that requires a response. Any student, apprentice, parent, carer, employer, or other customer of the College can raise a formal complaint about any aspect of college services and have it dealt with in a speedy, fair, thorough and confidential manner. Wherever possible a solution will be found that is satisfactory to all concerned and the underlying causes of the problem will be removed so that the problem does not recur.

Help regarding the operation of this procedure is available from the Advice Shop or the Students' Union (studentunion@ccn.ac.uk).

5.1 Further Education Students and Apprentices

Complaints about Further Education assessment processes or outcomes should be made using the Assessment Appeals Procedure, which is available from the Advice Shop or the Students' Union (studentunion@ccn.ac.uk).

5.2 Higher Education Students and Higher Apprentices

If you are studying on a programme of Higher Education and your complaint is of an **academic** nature you should use the Academic Appeals and Academic Complaints Procedure which is available on Blackboard under, HE@CCN/Regulations and Procedures. If your complaint is of a general nature, please follow this procedure.

5.3 Staff

This procedure is not applicable for staff use. Please contact your Staff Forum Representative or follow the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure or contact HR or your line manager in the first instance.

5.4 Members of the Public, and Other Stakeholders

Members of the public and other stakeholders are to use this procedure when submitting a complaint.

6 How to make a complaint and what happens next

The College takes all complaints seriously. If you wish to give constructive feedback, are dissatisfied with a service, or have a general complaint to make, this is what to do:

6.1 Step 1 - Talk to the person concerned or the relevant manager in the first instance

Your concerns will be taken seriously, and most issues can be resolved quickly at this point.

Students can ask their course representative or the Students' Union President to do this on their behalf or give support to do so.

6.2 Step 2 – Submit a Complaint

Having taken step 1, if you are not satisfied with the response (or feel unable to discuss the issue directly), please complete and submit a complaint form ([Appendix 1](#)).

Complaint forms are available electronically from Blackboard under Student Charter and Policies, on the Colleges' websites, or in paper format from:

- The Advice Shop (Norwich, room A1)
- The Advice Shop (Paston, room SC0.7)
- Jubilee Reception (Easton, Jubilee Building)
- Norfolk House Reception
- Students' Union Office (Room A40a Norwich or email studentunion@ccn.ac.uk)

Students' course representative or the Students' Union President can provide help in filling in this form. Once you have completed the complaints form please hand it in at one of the areas noted above, or email it to ccc@ccn.ac.uk.

Complainants should limit their communication with the College that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as this action will delay an outcome being reached.

○ **Complaints directly to the Principal**

Complaints that are sent directly to the Principal by email or letter will be dealt with as above and follow the same formal process.

○ **Complaints via social media**

Complaints that made on social media will be received by Marketing and Events Team, details will be recorded and sent to ccc@ccn.ac.uk and will be dealt with as above with the same formal process.

○ **Complaints received by staff members**

Complaints that are sent directly to the staff members, maybe escalated to a formal complaint, with the complaint sent to ccc@ccn.ac.uk and will be dealt with as above and follow the same formal process.

○ **Complaints received by phone**

Complaints received by phone will be recorded by a member of staff on the concern and complaints form and sent to ccc@ccn.ac.uk and will be dealt with as above and follow the same formal process.

6.2.1 Complaints Against the Students' Union

If you are dissatisfied with your dealings with the Students' Union you have the right to have the complaint investigated. This applies whether or not you are a member of the Students' Union. If you are a student who is not a member of the Students' Union and feel that you have been unfairly disadvantaged as a result of opting out of the Union, you also have the right to have your complaint investigated.

A student who has a complaint about the Students' Union should follow the above procedure.

The complaint will be investigated by a member of the Senior Management Team and the above procedure followed.

6.2.2 Complaints Against the Principal

If the concern relates directly to the activities of the College CEO/Principal the investigation will be undertaken by the Chairperson of the Board and the Director of Governance and Legal. (Please refer to the College's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.)

6.3 Step 3 - What happens next

You will receive confirmation that your complaint has been received (usually within 2 days and normally via email).

A copy of the complaint will be sent to the manager responsible for the service to which the complaint relates, who will carry out an investigation and make a full response to the Executive Manager. Normally this will be done within 5 working days to allow a full written reply to be made to you. You may be contacted for further or supporting information.

You will receive a full written response within 10 working days from the date of confirmation of receiving your complaint form, however this could be subject to extension during times of extreme pressure and demand. Should there be a reason for delay you will be informed of this.

6.4 Step 4 - What to do if you are dissatisfied with our written response

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you may ask the Principal to reinvestigate. You must do this by writing to the Principal within 10 working days of receiving our response, via ccc@ccn.ac.uk. After a further investigation, you will receive a full reply from the Principal within 10 working days.

6.5 Step 5 - Right of Appeal

If you are still not satisfied, depending on the nature of your complaint, you may have the right to appeal to an outside organisation.

For more information regarding your right to appeal outside of the organisation please contact ccc@ccn.ac.uk.

This right of appeal could apply if:

- you are taking a further education course or an apprenticeship, then you could appeal to the Education Skills Funding Agency;
- your complaint relates to our adherence to the Data Protection Act 2018 or General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), then you could appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

7 Managing vexatious complaints

The College defines unreasonable (vexatious) behaviour as, but not limited to, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the college's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on college time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats or intimidation
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

When a complaint is identified as vexatious, the complainant will be informed in writing that their behaviour is considered vexatious and will be asked to modify their behaviour. The College may decide to limit communication channels requiring all communication to be in writing.

Whenever possible, the Principal or a suitable member of the Senior Management Team will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. The College will cease to respond to complainants who excessively contact City College Norwich causing a significant level of disruption. The College also reserves the right to bar an individual from entering all City College Norwich premises.

8 Controlling access to college premises

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. The College also reserves the right to bar an individual from entering all City College Norwich premises.

8.1 Barring individuals from colleges premises

If a member of staff or student feels threatened due to aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language, the individual(s) causing the upset will be written to informing them they are barred from entering college sites.

This communication will usually be signed by the Principal. The individual will either be:

- barred temporarily, until the individual has had the opportunity to formally present their side
- barred indefinitely

8.2 Removing individuals from college premises.

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on college premises without legal permission to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance.

To have committed a criminal offence, an abusive individual must have been barred from the premises or have exceeded their 'implied licence', then also have caused a nuisance or disturbance.

If the College has reasonable grounds to suspect that someone has committed an offence, then they can be removed from the College by a police officer or a person authorised to do so such as the Principal or their representative.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises/controlling-access-to-school-premises>

9 Monitoring Complaints – Quality Improvements

In order to monitor our response to complaints and to ensure that there is effective scrutiny into the delivery of courses and services, there will be termly reporting of the pattern and nature of complaints received.

Significant trends and the actions taken to resolve complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the College Management Team and submitted to Governors who will be asked to reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the College's complaints and appeals procedures for enhancement purposes. The report will not name or identify complainants.

9.1 Annual Complaints Report

The Executive Office maintains the log of complaints and the Executive Manager will prepare an annual summary report of all complaints received. The report will not name or identify complainants or members of staff. This report will go to:

1. The Student Parliament (summary of complaints from students only)
2. The College Management Team
3. The Board of Governors

10 Anonymous Complaints

Please note we are not able to process anonymous concerns or complaints, it is important that the concern and complaint process is open and transparent, including the outcomes.

If a complaint is regarding a member of staff, where appropriate, the member of staff concerned will be invited by the investigating manager to give their response to the complaint.

In certain circumstances complaints will be anonymised before being sent for investigation, however this is not a guarantee of anonymity.

11 Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated as confidential, and details will only be shared with the people who need to know in order to implement this procedure. This will include the appropriate people at the University of East Anglia (UEA) for UEA validated courses. For complaints relating to contracted staff and or companies, complaints may be shared with appropriate employees and or departments within those companies.

Appendix 1 - Complaint Form

Confidential

Are you a:

- ☐ Student or Apprentice
- ☐ Parent/Carer of a student or apprentice
- ☐ Employer of a student or apprentice
- ☐ Member of the public
- ☐ Business involved with City College Norwich
- ☐ Customer of City College Norwich

Your name

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Name (if applicable)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Number (if applicable)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Contact address

Click or tap here to enter text.

Email address

Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone number

Click or tap here to enter text.

Which campus does your concern or complaint relate to?

- ☐ City College Norwich, Ipswich Road
- ☐ Norfolk House
- ☐ Easton College
- ☐ Paston College
- ☐ International Aviation Academy Norwich (IAAN)

Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Curriculum Area or Course (if applicable)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please state the nature of your complaint

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please tell us about anyone who has been involved in trying to resolve this issue and why it has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Click or tap here to enter text.

What is your preferred outcome? We will endeavour to meet any reasonable preferred outcome if the complaint is upheld.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Optional: Do you feel that your concern or complaint involves any area of discrimination, if so, please indicate which protected characteristic? (please tick all that apply)

☐ Age

☐ Pregnancy or Maternity

☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Disability

☐ Race

We will use this information to track, challenge and aim to eradicate incidents of discrimination.

☐ Gender Reassignment

☐ Religion or Belief

☐ Marriage or Civil Partnership

☐ Sex

Optional: Please provide more information if you have ticked any of the above

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature

Date:

Please return form via:-

1. Email: ccc@ccn.ac.uk
2. Post: Executive Office, B40, City College Norwich, Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR2 2LJ

3. In Person: reception at Easton College, Ipswich Road, Norfolk House, or Manager's Office at Paston College