

# Complaints Policy and Procedure 2017-2018

At Westminster Kingsway College, we want to provide you with an outstanding educational experience and an excellent service. One of the ways in which we can improve what we do is by listening to you and responding to your views. The College values the feedback that students and employers provide and complaints are monitored, evaluated and reported to the College's senior management team and annually to the Corporation. We aim to deal with complaints in a fair, reasonable and timely manner.

Westminster Kingsway College is a member of the Capital City College Group. When signing your Learner Agreement / Employer Contract you are agreeing to the Group's policies and procedures which outline what you can expect from us and what we can expect of you. These policies, including the Complaints Policy, are available on the website: [www.westking.ac.uk](http://www.westking.ac.uk).

The Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form are also available online at <http://my.westking.ac.uk>. Copies are also available in the Library or Reception at each Centre. If you require the Policy in an alternative format, please email, [feedback@westking.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@westking.ac.uk).

We aim to provide you with any guidance and support you may need to complete our complaints procedure. If you need any help, please email, [feedback@westking.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@westking.ac.uk)

## Introduction

**What is a Complaint?** A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of a service or facility provided by the College.

### Who can make a Complaint?

- Students / Apprentices who are enrolled on a course/programme/activity at the College. This includes students on Higher Education (HE) courses affiliated to partner universities in the first instance. Once the College Complaints Procedure is completed an HE student may then take their complaint to the partner university if they wish.
- Employers who have employees enrolled on a course/programme/activity at the College.

We would not normally accept a complaint from:

- Ex-students unless the complaint is received by the College within eight weeks of the end date of the course.
- An anonymous source.
- Third parties e.g. parents / guardians or legal representatives.

It is expected that complaints are made promptly and normally within 3 months.

If a complaint is about a member of staff, they will be notified and given the opportunity to respond. In all other respects the College will maintain confidentiality regarding complaints and request that students, apprentices and employers do the same.

The College has the right not to accept complaints (e.g. where a complaint is judged by the Director for Learner Experience, or her nominee, to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious).

Separate procedures exist for the following:

- Academic appeals relating to assessment decisions, covered by the Assessment Appeals Procedure
- Complaints relating to disciplinary processes are covered by the Learning and Behaviour Policy
- Complaints relating to bullying and harassment are covered by the Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Complaints relating to admissions are covered by the Admissions Policy

Copies of the above policies are available online at <http://my.westking.ac.uk> or on the College website [www.westking.ac.uk](http://www.westking.ac.uk). Copies are also available in the Library or Reception at each site.

## Complaints Procedure

**Stage 1- Informal Complaints Procedure:** You should in the first instance raise any concerns with the tutor or a college manager. The College aims to resolve the issues you raise within 10 working days.

**Stage 2 – Formal Complaints Procedure:** If your complaint has not been resolved using the informal complaints procedure, or if it is inappropriate to use the informal procedure because the complaint is of a serious nature, you may make a formal complaint. Your complaint may be referred back to the informal complaints procedure if you skipped that stage without due consideration.

**How to make a formal complaint:** Formal complaints must be made in writing using either a Complaint Form available online at [www.westking.ac.uk](http://www.westking.ac.uk) by email to [feedback@westking.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@westking.ac.uk) or by email to: [Jasbir.sondhi@westking.ac.uk](mailto:Jasbir.sondhi@westking.ac.uk) Director for Learner Experience at Westminster Kingsway College.

Your complaint form or email should include clear detailed reasons for your complaint, an indication of the resolution or outcome you seek, and copies of any documents upon which you wish to rely.

The Director for Learner Experience, or their nominee, administers the formal complaints process and will acknowledge, monitor and respond to your complaint.

The College aims to acknowledge, investigate and report on the outcome of your formal complaint and any resulting action within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. These timescales may be extended by the College in certain circumstances e.g. where the issues raised by a complaint are serious ones or to take account of College holidays.

You can normally expect:

- **Complaint acknowledgement:** Your complaint to be acknowledged by the Director for Learner Experience, or her nominee, within 3 working days of receipt.
- **Complaint investigation, outcome and action:** An investigation of your complaint will be undertaken by a College manager and the College aims to complete this stage within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint.

The investigation may involve speaking with relevant individuals and / or looking at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. You may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student Union Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (e.g. English as a second language, a learning difficulty and / or disability) you may bring a second person with you.

- **Complaint response:** The College aims to provide a written response to you from the Director for Learner Experience, or his nominee, within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. If after 10 working days of getting a response you do not request a review, the College will regard your complaint as closed.

**Stage 3 - Review of Formal Complaints:** The College aims to investigate and resolve all complaints in a fair and reasonable manner. If you are not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to your formal complaint you have the right to request a Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- New material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation
- You believe the outcome of the complaint was manifestly unreasonable &/or any resulting action was disproportionate
- The complaints procedure was not followed.

If you wish to request a Review email within 10 working days of the date of the College's written response to your complaint to: [angela.edwards@capitalccg.ac.uk](mailto:angela.edwards@capitalccg.ac.uk), Director of Performance & Quality at the Capital City College Group.

You must clearly explain the reasons for your request for a Review including the grounds upon which it is based and enclose copies of all the documents you wish to rely upon.

You can normally expect:

- **Complaint acknowledgement:** The Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, will acknowledge your review request within 3 working days of receiving it.
- **Complaint review and action:** The Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, will consider your request for a Review and determine whether it meets one or more of the grounds stated above.
  - If your request for a Review does not meet one or more of the grounds for review, the complaint outcome will not be reviewed. A Completion of Procedures notification will be sent to you by the Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, to close the matter.
  - If the Director of Performance & Quality, or her nominee, determines that your case needs to be reviewed, you will be notified who will lead the Review (reviewing manager) and what the Review will involve, including timelines. This may include speaking with relevant individuals and / or looking at relevant documentation. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. Again, you may not bring legal representation with you to this meeting if it is to occur but you may bring a friend, relative or representative from the Student Union Executive to accompany you. If you have any particular requirements (e.g. English as a second language, a learning difficulty and / or disability) you may bring a second person with you.
  - You will receive notification about the Review arrangements or Completion of Procedures within 10 working days of receipt of the Review request.
- **Review outcome:** The outcome of a Review will be either to:
  - Uphold the complaint outcome and/or any action.
  - Substitute an alternative outcome and/or action.

You will be informed of the outcome of the Review normally within 5 working days of it being decided upon by the reviewing manager. The decision of the reviewing manager is final and the College will not consider your complaint further. The Review outcome will be contained in the Completion of Procedures notification.

### External Agencies

Following the conclusion of a Review and the receipt of a Completion of Procedures notification, you may be able to take the matter further with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) ([www.esfa.gov.uk](http://www.esfa.gov.uk)), or if you are on a Higher Education course, with your College partner University and/or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk>).

## FLOW CHART OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

