



Glasgow Clyde College Complaints Handling Process

FOREWORD

Our complaints handling procedure reflects Glasgow Clyde College's commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery. It also seeks to conduct thorough, impartial and fair review of customer complaints. Then, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.

Working closely with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) this procedure has been developed by college staff who are experienced at handling complaints. It provides a standard approach across the college sector, which complies with the SPSO's guidance on complaints handling.

The procedure aims to help us resolve problems successfully at the first time of asking. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with early resolution by capable, well-trained staff. The procedure will enable us to tackle a customer's concerns properly and may prevent the same things going wrong for other people.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve our service. They give staff a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers redress when things go wrong, and can also help us continuously improve our services.

Resolving complaints early saves money and creates better customer relations. Sorting them out quickly and as close to the point of service as possible means they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure. Complaints that we do not resolve swiftly can greatly add to our workload.

This complaints handling procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance the college's reputation. It will also help us keep students and other customers at the heart of what we do.

Principal and Chief Executive

Introduction

Glasgow Clyde College aims to provide learners and other users of our college with a high quality responsive service. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services please tell us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the College or on its behalf.

What can I complain about?

*Examples of things you may complain about include:

- a failure to provide a service
- an inadequate quality or standard of service
- the admissions process
- the disciplinary process
- a request which we have not actioned or answered
- our policies and procedures
- incorrect information about courses or services
- the quality and availability of facilities and resources
- accessibility of our buildings or services
- the behaviour of a member of staff, student or contractor

What can't I complain about?

*Examples of things you may not complain about include:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a disagreement with academic judgement eg academic appeal
- a claim for compensation against the College
- issues that are being dealt with by a court or tribunal
- Data Protection or Freedom of Information requests
- an attempt to have us reopen a concluded complaint

*These lists are not meant to be complete.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by the College's services can make a complaint, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied. To ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, where a complaint is made on behalf of anyone who is over 12 years of age, consent must be given by that individual for the third party to act on their behalf (this excludes vulnerable adults or complaints made by MSPs on behalf of constituents).

Anonymous complaints

Generally, an anonymous complaint will only be considered if it provides enough information to enable a review to be carried out, failing this, it will not be pursued.

If someone expresses dissatisfaction, however does not wish to invoke the formal procedure, their complaint will still be recorded, but will be treated as an anonymous complaint, and as such, personal details will not be recorded and the complainant will not be contacted about the matter.

How do I complain?

In the first instance you should attempt to resolve the matter with a member of staff in the department. However, if you are not happy, you can complain in person, by phone, in writing or by email as follows:

In person / by post:

Glasgow Clyde College, Anniesland Campus
19 Hatfield Drive, Glasgow G12 0YE

Glasgow Clyde College, Cardonald Campus
Mosspark Drive, Glasgow G52 3AY

Glasgow Clyde College, Langside Campus
50 Prospecthill Road, Glasgow G42 9LB

Telephone: 0141 272 9000

Email: complaints@glasgowclyde.ac.uk

If you require support to make a complaint please speak to staff in the Student Advice Centre.

What happens when I complain?

In the first instance, we must record some standard information in relation to your complaint, including your name and contact details, the date you made the complaint, the nature of your complaint and what you hope to achieve by making the complaint.

Our complaints procedure has 2 stages:

Stage 1

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and this could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action has been taken to resolve problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 within five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and escalate your complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Stage 2 deals with complaints which have not been resolved at Stage 1 or those which are complex and require detailed review.

In reviewing a Stage 2 complaint we will:

- acknowledge the Stage 2 complaint within three working days
- ensure your complaint is passed to the most appropriate person to review
- provide a full response to your complaint within 20 working days or let you know if this is not possible and advise you of revised timescales

Managing unacceptable behaviour

All complaints will be taken seriously and properly assessed however please be aware that if you act in an unacceptable manner whilst making your complaint staff are permitted to take appropriate action which might include:

- terminating a telephone call
- asking you to leave the office / building
- requesting Campus assistance
- referring your complaint to a more senior member of staff

Dealing with Vexatious Complaints

A complaint may be rejected at any time if it is deemed to be vexatious. If a complaint meets at least two of the characteristics listed below it will be deemed vexatious:

- unmeritorious complaints and / or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- complaints which do not clearly identify precise issues, despite reasonable efforts of College staff to help identify the issues;
- complaints which focus on a trivial matter to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point;
- changing the substance of a complaint or continually raising new issues or seeking to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response or whilst the complaint is being addressed;
- unwillingness to accept documented evidence as being factual or denying receipt of an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically answering the complaint;
- non acceptance that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify when a long period of time has elapsed;
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- insistence upon pursuing a complaint where the complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted; and / or
- where a complainant has harassed, threatened or used actual physical violence towards staff or has been personally abusive or verbally aggressive.

You will be notified if your complaint has been deemed vexatious and if you wish to appeal against our decision to terminate consideration of your complaint, you can do so by writing to the Assistant Principal Quality and Performance within ten working days of being informed that the complaint will not be considered.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally you must make your complaint:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about
- within six months of finding out that you have a reason to complain as long as this is no longer than 12 months after the event itself

What if I am still dissatisfied?

After we have fully reviewed, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), to review it. The SPSO cannot normally consider:

- a complaint that has not yet exhausted our Complaints Procedure
- events that happened or that you became aware of more than a year ago
- a complaint where revision of a course award is the desired outcome

You can contact the SPSO as follows:

In person:

SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

By post:

Freepost SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Depending on the nature of your complaint, you can also ask SSSC or an awarding body to review it. You must contact them directly. For qualifications that are regulated, if you remain dissatisfied with the way the awarding body handled your complaint, you should complain to the qualifications regulator.

Quick Guide to our Complaints Procedure

Complaints Procedure

You can make a complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed review, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

Stage 2

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed review.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

Independent External Review

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO, SSSC or an awarding body to look at it.

For qualifications that are regulated, if you remain dissatisfied with the way the awarding body handled your complaint, you can complain to the qualifications regulator.