



BRENTWOOD
OPEN LEARNING COLLEGE

Complaint Procedure

September 2013

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Brentwood open Learning College, believes in providing the services of the highest quality. Its aim is to provide a supportive environment to the learners and to be responsive to the complaints or concerns from any source. We regard feedback, both negative and positive, as a valuable resource to help us improve the quality of our services and provision. The college has designed a complaints Procedure to enable anyone interacting with the College to bring matters of concerns about their experiences of our services and provision of our attention and to enable investigation to those concerns to reach to satisfactory conclusions. This procedure provides us with welcome feedback to help us improve our services further and to resolve any particular problems experienced by the complainant.

What is a Complaint?

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- a) action or lack of action by the College, or staff
- b) standards of service, courses or facilities provided by the College;
- c) provisions of the College affecting students, customers, partners or stakeholders

The Complaints Procedure does not cover the following:

- a) matters related to academic performance
- b) request for a new or different services or provision
- c) matters covered by separate policies or procedures, including:
Academic Appeals

Disciplinary related issues

Equal Opportunities

The Complaint Procedure is for the use of students, prospective students and for those people, who are directly affected by the activities of the college.

Guidelines for Making and Handling Complaints

All complaints will be taken seriously, in line with equal opportunities policy, these will be treated equally. Any complaints made more than three months after the incident or action which is the subject of the complaint will not be investigated.

- 1) With all complaints due consideration will be given to confidentiality for all concerned.
- 2) Complaints will normally be made by the complainants themselves and not by others on their behalf. However, vulnerable adults and those students who would have difficulty in making a complaint on their own behalf are entitled for assistance what they require.

How to Complain

This procedure outlines number of simple routines to be followed by any student or user depending on the seriousness of the complaint. Informal resolution is encouraged at every stage of the process. Use of the formal complaints procedure should only be taken as a last resort.

Informal Stage

Stage 1

Complaints of a minor nature should be raised immediately with the member of staff responsible with the aim of resolving the problem directly and informally. It is anticipated that large number of complaints will be resolved in this way. The complainant who is a student as well can approach his/her course Tutor first in this regard. For users of College who are not Students may approach the member of staff by:

- a telephone conversation with appropriate person
- an email or letter to the appropriate person

Informal complaints should normally be responded to within 7 days of receipt of the complaint. Records of such complaints will not normally be retained or recorded centrally, unless the member of staff dealing with it wishes to do so.

If the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at this stage, the complainant can use stage 2 of the procedure underlined below.

Formal Stage

Stage 2

The college is also aware that there may be occasions in which, for whatever reason, a complainant feels that it is impossible to raise an issue directly with the member of staff concerned. In any of these circumstances, the College's formal complaints procedure should be used.

The complainant can write to the Quality Manager. This can be done by letter or by using the College's complaint, compliments and comments section on the website. Or can be submitted by post. The complaint should be specific and comprehensively documented, should include the complainant's name, address, relevant documentation, dates, and witness as appropriate.

The complaint will be referred to the appropriate person, who will carry out an investigation and report the findings in writing within 20 working days of its receipt.

At this stage majority of complaints will be resolved with no further action required. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the response received as a result of stage 2, the complaint may be taken to stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3

If the complain has still not been satisfactorily resolved after stage 2 of the Procedure, the complainant can write directly to the Programme Director. Normally, the complainant can receive a full response within 14 working days.

Stage 4

If despite the best efforts of the Quality Manager and the Programme Director, the complainant still remains concerned. He/ she can approach the C.E.O; however the complainant must have followed stages 1-3 before doing so.

Learning from Complaints

In order that the College can learn and improve from as a result of complaints, The Quality Directorate will keep accurate and complete records of all complaints received and the resulting correspondence, interviews and actions. A report on the complaints received and their outcomes will be submitted to the Directors at least once per academic year.