

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College (HLNSC) is committed to providing excellent academic and support services. Occasionally things go wrong, and it is important that you tell us about it at once so that we can try and put it right. The complaints procedure aims to help to resolve individual complaints in a manner which is as fair as possible.

This procedure applies to complaints received from students or external individuals, groups or organisation. It is used to investigate and resolve complaints which do not fall into categories already covered by other College complaints procedures, namely:

- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Complaints Against the Corporation.

### Informal Stage

If you have a complaint to make about our service, you should in the first instance, approach your course tutor or a member of the teaching team/department manager and see if it can be resolved.

### Stage 1

If you have a complaint to make about any aspect of the College's service and it cannot be resolved informally or you remain dissatisfied, you should put the nature of your complaint in writing, submitted via the following channels:

- by email or post to the Manager responsible for the area, or
- by email to [quality@hlnc.ac.uk](mailto:quality@hlnc.ac.uk).

In the correspondence, the complainant should clearly identify the nature of their complaint, when and where the incident occurred and what has been done to attempt to resolve the complaint informally with the staff member. We aim to send an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days.

We aim to provide the complainant with a formal response within ten working days. If we are unable to do this, the complainant will be kept informed of our progress. Every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2.

### Stage 2

If after Stage 1 you remain dissatisfied then you should put the reasons for your dissatisfaction in writing, submitted via the following channels within ten days of receiving the stage 1 outcome:

- by email or post to the relevant Assistant Principal or Head of Department, or
- by email to [quality@hlnc.ac.uk](mailto:quality@hlnc.ac.uk).

In the correspondence, the complainant should clearly identify the nature of their complaint and explain why the outcome of the Stage 1 process is not satisfactory. We aim to send an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days and confirm the investigating officer.

Following acknowledgement of the complaint we will investigate, and you will receive a written response. As part of a Stage 2 complaint, HLNSC may make a request for additional information. If this is the case, then HLNSC would expect to receive the requested information from the complainant within five working days from the date of our request.

If we should find that your complaint is well founded, we will explain the action which we are taking. If we should find that your complaint is not justified, we will give you the reasons. We aim to provide the complainant with a formal response within ten working days. If we are unable to do this, the complainant will be kept informed of our progress.

### **Stage 3**

Where a complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily at Stage 2 the complainant may choose to progress their complaint for a Stage 3 complaint review, which is the final stage of the complaint's procedure. This should be made in writing within 10 working days of when the Stage 2 response was received. Again, the complainant should explain why the outcome of the Stage 2 process is not satisfactory and what they would like us to do next. Correspondence for Stage 3 should be addressed to the Principal, Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, Folly Lane, Hereford, HR1 1LS or by emailing [s.tomkins@hlnc.ac.uk](mailto:s.tomkins@hlnc.ac.uk). We aim to send the complainant an acknowledgement within five working days and confirm the review officer. We aim to provide a response to the Stage 3 complaint within twenty working days.

Where a request for a Stage 3 complaint review is received outside of the timescale specified above. The complainant is required to provide a compelling reason, supported by independent evidence which demonstrates why they were unable to submit a request for a Stage 3 review within the timescale specified following the conclusion of Stage 2. Late requests for a Stage 3 review will be considered on an individual basis and acceptance will be at the discretion of the Principal. The complainant will be advised of the outcome within five working days.

Complaint records will be retained for three academic years.

### **This ends the HLNSC Complaints procedure.**

On exhaustion of the College's complaints procedure, and where the complainant feels the outcome of the College's complaint investigation is deemed unsatisfactory, the matter can be raised with the awarding body, if it is within the scope of their complaints policy.

For degrees awarded by the University of Worcester, if the complainant, after seeking resolution at stage 2 is still not satisfied, the complainant has the right to request a review by the University of Worcester. Complainants enter the university's complaints process at stage two. The University's Students Complaints Procedures can be found here: <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/662.htm>. You can contact the University's Complaints and Appeals Officer by emailing [complaintsandappeals@worc.ac.uk](mailto:complaintsandappeals@worc.ac.uk).

Please note that the University of Worcester will normally only accept requests for escalation if the complaint relates to an aspect of service which the partner university or awarding body has whole or partial responsibility.

### **Additional entitlement for Pearson HN Students**

If you make a complaint and are studying a Pearson Higher National course, please see Appendix A of this policy about your entitlement to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if you are dissatisfied following the stage 3 complaint review.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR REGULATIONS**

For students who are studying on a Pearson Higher National programme at Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, you may request a Completion of Procedures Letter if you are not satisfied with the outcome at stage 3. The Completion of Procedures Letter will outline your entitlement to apply to the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to review your complaint.

The completion of procedures letter will contain:

- A summary of the complaint or appeal the student has made to the provider.
- The title of the regulations/procedures which were applied.
- A summary of the issues considered at the final stage of the internal complaint's procedures.
- The final decision taken by the provider.
- The reasons for that decision.
- Information about the role of the OIA.

The OIA **must receive** a student's Complaint Form **within 12 months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter. For example, if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 7 January, the OIA should receive the Complaint Form by 7 January the following year.

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/online-complaint-form.aspx>

For further information about the Completion of Procedures Letter please contact the PA to the Principal via email: [s.tomkins@hlnc.ac.uk](mailto:s.tomkins@hlnc.ac.uk) or post to HLNSC, Folly Lane, Hereford, HR1 1LS.