



Essex International College Complaints Procedure

Policy name	Complaints Procedure v1.4
Author:	Dr. Keith Hoodless
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Approved by	Academic Committee
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Through its policies and in its day to day work, the College is committed to promoting equality and fairness and combating discrimination. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age and embraces the College's legal responsibilities.

We want to ensure that all our students get the best out of their time in College. We want them to learn, to participate and to enjoy their education. If things go wrong, it is important that they can get in touch with us immediately, especially if they wish to complain.

Please contact the Principal, in writing, leaving your name and contact details, stating the nature of the complaint.

The Principal will reply within **5 working days** of the written request.

You are welcome to come into the College at any time, but in order to ensure that the Principal is free, please make an appointment so that we can give you the necessary time.

Please telephone 01708 740300.

(Please see Procedure Diagram on page six).

Staff Structure –2013/2014

Principal	Dr Keith Hoodless
Academic Coordinator	Md A. Naim
Head of Student Welfare.....	Ms C Edmead
Individual Welfare Staff	(see staff structure pastoral)

Introduction

This procedure sets out arrangements for the College in respect of complaints other than:-

- complaints about admissions or exclusions appeal procedures
- staff grievance procedures

for which separate complaints procedures exist.

General Principles

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, the intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period which is reasonable in all the circumstances.

All complaints, received, including those ultimately resolved at an informal stage, are recorded by the College in the Complaints Log Book. The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- Complaint resolved informally
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
- Complaint upheld and the appropriate action is deemed to be one of

- 1) counselling
- 2) training
- 3) general supervision
- 4) other management action

Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.

All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of each stage.

The main aim at all stages will be to secure that either the complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.

STAGES

The arrangements set out two levels at which a complaint could be considered. These are the informal stage and the formal stage.

A complaint could be considered at both of these stages if necessary.

INFORMAL STAGE

Many minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally.

There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straightaway through the Welfare Team or the Academic Coordinator depending upon the nature of the complaint.

This is where the procedure should start and unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example if the complaint is against the person receiving the complaint, then the Principal will appoint another person to look into the complaint, and tell the complainant the name and telephone number of the person looking into the complaint.

There should always be full discussion at the informal stage.

If the complaint has not been resolved at the first meeting/discussion, the complainant should contact the Principal.

The complaint should be made in writing at this stage.

The Principal, if asked, will help anyone who would like assistance to set out their complaint, including access to translation services where necessary. An appointment is likely to be necessary, so that the Principal can give the matter his/her full attention.

If the complaint is against the Principal, then he will nominate another senior person to attempt to resolve the complaint informally.

FORMAL STAGE

If the Principal cannot resolve the complaint informally, the College undertakes to deal with the complaint as follows:

- Formally acknowledge the written complaint within **5 working days**
- Respond to it within **20 College days**
- Or if this is not possible answer telling the complainant what is being done to investigate and how long it is expected to take

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant should contact the Director of Human Resources, who will appoint an Independent Person, or himself, to review the complaint. The College shall make the name and address of the Director of Human Resources available to the complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the complainant may refer the matter to the QAA, being the oversight body for Independent Colleges of Higher Education, if he/she believes that the Panel of Senior Managers or Academic Committee has acted unreasonably, or has failed to carry out its duties properly.

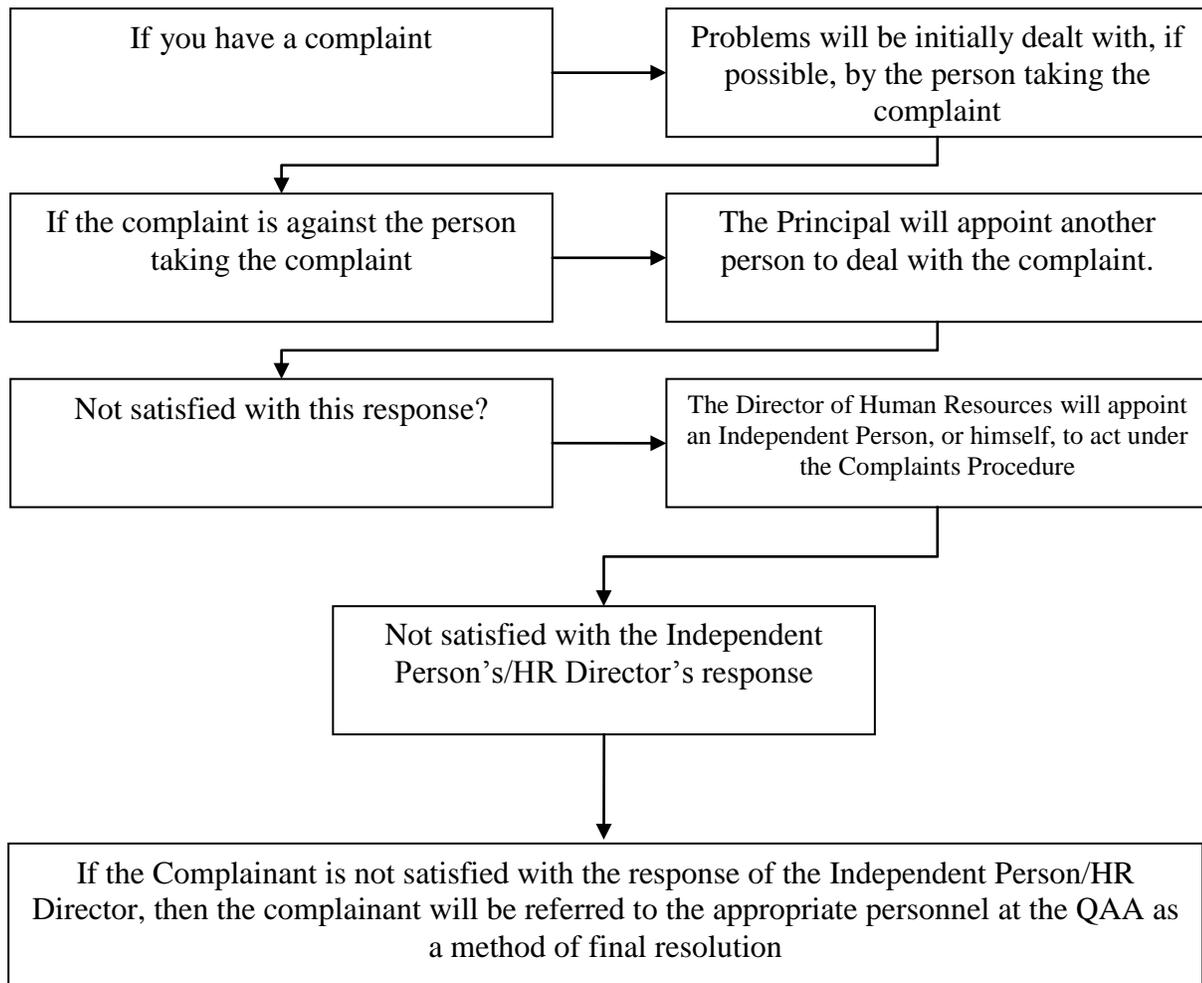
The names and addresses of the appropriate QAA personnel will be made available to the complainant on request.

Once the complaint has reached the findings and recommendations stage (at any point in the proceedings), then the complainant, Directors, Principal and where relevant, the person complained about, will be given a copy of the said findings and recommendations.

Written records of all complaints will be kept indicating at which stage they were resolved at i.e. preliminary or whether they proceeded to the panel hearing

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

Complaints Procedure



** Please see the policy for individual timescales*