

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure

Policy Reference No.	QD062
Issue/Version Number	August 2025
Owner	Quality Lead
Review Period	Every 3 years
Review Date	August 2028
Equality Analysis	July 2025
SLG approved	29 September 2025

This document can be provided in a larger font, electronically or other accessible requirement, upon request.

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This policy seeks to ensure that any person has the opportunity to raise, individually or as a group, areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the College. Such matters can be raised confidentially to avoid possible disadvantage. Individuals who may wish to raise matters as stakeholders include students, applicants, apprentices, parents, carers, employers, placement leads, partners, contractors, local residents, visitors and wider customers of the college. Complaints shall be dealt with quickly and reasonably with an appropriate solution, within the bounds of what is reasonable and feasible for the College to provide.
- 1.2 Feedback from stakeholders is valued and is an essential element of the College's quality improvement.
- 1.3 Students are able to provide feedback in a number of ways via student voice mechanisms, which include: complaints email, verbally, paper version, feedback form, group forums run across the year, and committees.
- 1.4 The objective of this policy is to share good practice and respond to any dissatisfaction with the College's services fairly and promptly.
- 1.5 The College encourages complaints to be resolved informally in the first instance, moving to formal where this is not possible.
- 1.6 The College seeks to learn from matters raised and to further improve services and celebrate strengths.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all stakeholders in East Coast College.
- 2.2 The Policy covers concerns, complaints or compliments relating to the following areas of College's activities:
 - the delivery of a programme of study
 - presentation of misleading or incorrect information
 - poor quality of facilities or learning resources provided by the College
 - inefficiencies in administration
 - an action or inaction on the part of the College
 - customer service
 - Inequality of treatment
 - Safeguarding response
 - Complaints relating to Higher Education provision will be referred to the University of Suffolk
- 2.3 The policy does not cover the following areas:
 - matters where litigation is in process
 - appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards
 - anonymous or third-party complaints

3 Monitoring

- 3.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years.
- 3.2 A report on concerns, complaints and compliments will be submitted termly to the Senior Leadership Group and annually to the Governance Standards Committee.
- 3.3 All complaints will be treated as confidential and details will only be shared with the people who need to know in order to implement this policy.

4 Procedure

- 4.1 A concern or complaint may be made verbally or in writing via complaints@eastcoast.ac.uk, by a form available at reception or via student mechanisms noted above.
- 4.2 All concerns and complaints must be referred to the Quality Co-ordinator via the email address above, for recording and, where appropriate forward on for investigation.
- 4.3 Where a concern or complaint is made that is not with the scope of this policy the Quality Co-ordinator will advise the complainant of the correct route within 5 working days.
- 4.4 To highlight positive feedback when a compliment is received staff should record the compliment on the compliments form via Sharepoint <https://forms.office.com/e/8VpmKaXrMS>
- 4.5 The Quality Co-ordinator acknowledges and logs the receipt of a concern or complaint in writing within 5 working days, recording the severity as low, medium, high or extreme (as per definitions below) and informs the relevant manager or assistant principal to investigate within 10 working days, which may include organising to discuss the details of the complaint further.
- 4.6 Where a complaint is rated as Extreme the CEO, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing will be notified.
- 4.7 Where a complaint is relating to the CEO the Quality Co-ordinator will inform the Director of Governance.
- 4.8 If the investigation takes longer than 10 days the investigating manager will keep the complainant informed of progress and readjust the timescale for any action required.
- 4.9 Complaints that have not been resolved within three months will be escalated to the Senior Management Group (SMG) for a formal review.
- 4.10 For concerns or low-level complaints, the investigating manager will communicate the final outcome with the complainant and close the complaint in writing, this should be communicated to the Quality Co-ordinator first, who can advise on wording where required.

- 4.11 For complaints within the medium to extreme level the Quality Co-ordinator and manager will agree who will communicate in writing to the close the complaint, dependant on level of contact and specific case requirement. Where the CEO has been communicated to directly this may be a personal response to close the complaint. The Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing or Deputy Principal will correspond with Members of Parliament or solicitors where appropriate.

Where this closure includes personal information regarding another student or staff member, the details cannot be shared, only that the investigation is complete and identified action taken.

- 4.12 Where multiple parties are involved or the complaint escalates to require legal advice by either party the complaints process is likely to extend beyond 10 days.

The complainant may wish for a person to attend meetings alongside them as support. This person may not speak on behalf of the complainant, however where they are supporting a disability need, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure the complainant is not disadvantaged during the process.

The designated meeting chair has 10 working days after each complaint resolution meeting to share a discussion summary. They may seek legal advice before doing so. If a delay beyond 10 working days is anticipated, the College will inform the complainant, with communication handled by the Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing.

- 4.13 If a complainant wishes to appeal against a response to a complaint this must be done within 10 working days of the receipt of the original response.

The appeal will be heard by the next level of management higher than the person responsible for investigating the case. Where this related to Extreme level complaints this may be organised by the Director of Governance.

- 4.14 Where an appeal is not raised within 10 working days the College will record the complaint as closed.

- 4.15 Following an appeal, if a complainant is still dissatisfied with the College's response, they have the right to contact the relevant external body, details of which will be provided by the Quality Co-ordinator.

5. Definitions

- **Concern** - an expression of dissatisfaction which does not require a response. A concern will usually be made verbally, but may also be written.
- **Complaint** - rated as follows (note all complaints will be treated as having equal value):
 - **Low** - Unsatisfactory service or experience not directly related to provision of education, usually a single resolvable issue. Minimal or no impact or risk to provision of education.
 - **Medium** - Service or experience below reasonable expectations in

several ways and/or directly related to the provision of education, but not causing lasting problems. Has potential to impact to provision of education.

- **High** - Significant issues regarding standard or quality of education or safeguarding which may cause lasting problems. Possibility of adverse local publicity.
- **Extreme** - Serious issues that will cause long-term damage, such as grossly substandard provision of education or professional misconduct. Possibility of adverse national publicity.
- **Compliment** - an expression of satisfaction which does not require a response.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

