



LINCOLN COLLEGE

**CUSTOMER COMPLAINT AND
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE –
HIGHER EDUCATION**

POLICY CQ/PR/9

SPONSOR

Principal & CEO

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Lincoln College strives to treat all its members and visitors fairly and aims to eliminate unjustifiable discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs or practices, disability, marital status, family circumstances, sexual orientation, spent criminal convictions, age or any other inappropriate grounds.

LINCOLN COLLEGE

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE HIGHER EDUCATION

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LINCOLN COLLEGE

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure applies to all Higher Education customers of Lincoln College and is designed to give the opportunity to have complaints and grievances dealt with fairly and consistently. A customer is defined as any person with a relevant interest to the college including, but not limited to, students of the college, staff members, members of the public and associated employers. Complaints relating to Further Education and Training provision should use the 'Customer Complaints and Grievance Procedure – Further Education and Training'. The procedure is not for use by college staff to make a complaint.
- 1.2 The purpose of the procedure is to maintain a high standard of student care and rectify causes of dissatisfaction as quickly as possible.
- 1.3 This procedure should be considered in conjunction with the Admissions Policy and the Learner Assessment and Appeals Policy.

2 AIMS

- 2.1 The procedure aims to ensure that all complaints and grievances are dealt with fully, promptly and allow all persons involved the opportunity to state their point of view.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 It is expected that, unless in exceptional and fully documented circumstances, a student who wishes to make a complaint will invoke the Informal Stage within three calendar months of the incident which is the cause for complaint.
- 3.2 All complaints and grievances will be handled as confidential matters.
- 3.3 Any person making a complaint will have the right to appeal against any judgement made as a result of the Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure being used.
- 3.4 Any person involved will have the right to be accompanied by an advocate (who may be a member of staff, another learner of the college or a relative) during any part of the Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure.
- 3.5 Advocates can be used by those individuals who are not able or do not feel sufficiently confident to represent themselves.
- 3.6 Students who have a disability that prevents them from submitting a written complaint may request that a member of staff completes any required documentation on their behalf.

3.7 Where it is not possible to deal with a complaint or grievance to the satisfaction of the student then the reason given will be provided in writing to them.

3.8 In the rare event that complaints are vexatious or malicious, students bringing those complaints may be subject to the college's HE Student Conduct Procedure.

4 STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

4.1 The Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure is not intended to replace the established Student Assessment and Appeals Policy and Procedures.

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 Informal Stage

5.1.1 When a student has a complaint or grievance, it may first be discussed with a member of the college staff and attempts should be made to resolve the matter by a direct approach to the persons involved where appropriate. Customers can receive guidance on who to make an informal complaint to by accessing support from the college reception (in person or by calling 01522 876000) or the Quality Improvement Team (quality@lincolncollege.ac.uk).

5.2 Investigation

5.2.1 If the matter remains unresolved the student may raise a formal complaint or grievance either:

- Verbally to any manager of the college.
- In writing: a Student Complaint Form (Appendix A) is available from College Receptions.
- By email to complaints@lincolncollege.ac.uk.

5.2.2 All completed Student Complaint Forms will be logged and distributed as follows:

- Complaints regarding curriculum areas will be sent to the relevant Curriculum Lead.
- Complaints regarding issues that are not directly curriculum-related will be sent to the relevant senior member of the Unit or Directorate.
- Complaints regarding members of staff will be sent to the relevant Curriculum Lead or senior member of the Unit, unless they are deemed serious enough, including those about the Quality Improvement Team, to be passed to the Group Head of Human Resources for consideration.

Written acknowledgement will be sent to the Student with the name of the allocated respondent and the proposed response date included.

- 5.2.3 The student may request a personal meeting with the allocated respondent. The interview should be arranged within five working days of the submission of the request and the person may be accompanied by an advocate (who may be a member of staff, another learner of the college or a relative). Outside of term time, the interview will be arranged at as soon possible but at a mutually agreed time, considering potential restrictions caused by staff taking leave.
- 5.2.4 The allocated respondent shall investigate the matter and send a written reply to the student, usually within ten working days of either receipt of the formal complaint or the date of the interview noted in 5.2.3 (whichever is later). In rare situations, such as during holiday periods when staff members are on leave, it may not be possible to complete an investigation within the ten-day timescale. Where this occurs, the student will be informed in writing and a new deadline given.
- 5.2.5 In cases involving complaints regarding members of staff, the matter will be referred to the Group Head of Human Resources, who will respond directly to the student.

5.3 Formal Investigation

- 5.3.1 If, after any action to resolve the complaint or grievance, the student is still dissatisfied, they may escalate their complaint or grievance to the relevant Assistant Principal or senior manager to investigate further. As part of this, the student may request a personal meeting with the Assistant Principal or senior manager which, usually, shall be arranged within ten working days of the submission of the request. Outside of term time, the interview will be arranged at as soon possible but at a mutually agreed time, considering potential restrictions caused by staff taking leave. The Assistant Principal or senior manager will conduct a formal investigation, interview all parties concerned, take steps to resolve the issue and initiate appropriate action.

5.4 Appeals Procedures

- 5.4.1 If a complaint remains unresolved, then the student has the right of appeal and this will be made clear in the written confirmation noting the outcomes of the formal investigation.
- 5.4.2 Appeals must be made, in writing, to College Appeals Panel and be received within ten working days of receipt of the written confirmation of the formal investigation into the complaint.

5.4.3 All appeals must follow the procedure noted in the College Appeals Panel Policy and Procedure (Policy CQ/PO/26) which can be obtained by contacting quality@lincolncollege.ac.uk.

6 MONITORING OF THE STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

6.1 For the purpose of monitoring, reports will be presented to the following committees, providing analysis of complaints and grievances received:

- Higher Education Academic Affairs Committee
- Learning Standards Quality Committee
- Board of the Corporation

7 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

6.1 The Learning Standards Quality Committee will review the Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure – Higher Education on an annual basis and make recommendations for its development.

APPENDIX A



Ref No:

Lincoln College HE Student Complaint Form

Lincoln College welcomes your feedback and takes every complaint seriously. You will receive written confirmation that we are dealing with your complaint and will be given a date by when you will receive a response to your correspondence.
Thank you for your time.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... Post code:

Home Tel: Mobile:

Learner Other (Please specify)

Please give full details of your complaint below or attach a separate sheet.

Office Use Only

Date received:

Referred to:

Response date:

APPENDIX B

HE STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

