



## Complaints Policy

**REFERENCE: PL/QU/2021/002**

Lead Officer	Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality
Review Officer	Quality Manager
Date first approved by BoM	22 September 2009
First Review Date	12 September 2011
Date review approved by BoM	01 April 2021
Next Review Date	February 2024
Equality impact assessment	February 2021
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
Quality Manager	12.09.11	Reviewed by BoM
Quality Manager	13.06.13	Reviewed by BoM
Quality Manager	01.12.15	Reviewed by BoM

Quality Manager	01.01.21	<p>Updated to reflect changes to the Model Complaints Handling Procedure.</p> <p>Specific updates to the Policy Statement are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• inclusion of word “Transparency”,</li><li>• Direction to the academic regulations for other processes,</li><li>• Addition of “and other awarding bodies”,</li><li>• Change of wording to say that all complainants are made aware of their right to appeal/complain,</li><li>• Inclusion of final statement “In exceptional circumstances, where there are multiple strands to a complaint or where elements of the complaint are time sensitive, the college may respond separately to different aspects.</li></ul>
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## 1. Policy Statement

Inverness College UHI is committed to the provision of providing a high quality and enjoyable learning experience to all learners and high-quality services. On occasion, learners, customers and / or key stakeholders may have cause to make a complaint.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the college's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the college or on its behalf.

The College views complaints seriously and investigating a complaint provides an opportunity to review and enhance the services we offer. When complaints are received, College staff will follow the complaints handling procedure which ensures that all complainants are dealt with:

- Fairly
- Timeously
- With courtesy and respect
- Transparently

The College will ensure that all complaints are:

- Identified as to the nature of the complaint
- Thoroughly investigated
- Brought to a satisfactory resolution

The College will ensure that complainants

- Are kept informed as to each stage of the process
- Can make a complaint without fear of reprisal or victimisation; however, where complaints are proven to be malicious or vexatious the College reserves the right to pursue possible sanctions against the complainant.
- Students may not complain about an academic judgement – the internal academic appeals process, as outlined in the Academic Regulations, should be used for this purpose.
- Are aware of their right to complain to SQA, and other awarding bodies about assessment-related matters (but not assessment judgements) if they remain dissatisfied once they have exhausted the College's internal complaints procedure.
- Who are candidates on regulated qualifications, have a further right to complain to SQA Accreditation or Ofqual once they have exhausted the College's internal complaints procedure and the SQA / Awarding body's complaint procedure.
- Are aware of the right to escalate their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) about issues other than assessment-related matters.

Anonymous complaints will be investigated if enough information is provided for us to make further enquiries.

The complainant will be informed of who will take the lead in dealing with the complaint. One response will be sent covering all issues raised. In exceptional circumstances, where there are multiple strands to a complaint or where elements of the complaint are time sensitive, the college may respond separately to different aspects.

## **2. Legislative framework/related policies**

- 2.1. Freedom of Information Policy
- 2.2. Data Protection Policy
- 2.3. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (From 25 May 2018)
- 2.4. Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) Policy
- 2.5. Academic Standards and Quality Regulations (FE and HE)
- 2.6. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy
- 2.7. FE Guidance Policy
- 2.8. Learner Agreement
- 2.9. Staff Discipline Policy
- 2.10. Staff Code of Conduct
- 2.11. Equality Schemes
- 2.12. SPSO/Government Legislation
- 2.13. Awarding Body Quality Assurance Requirements

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. The policy applies to staff, learners, customers and key stakeholders of Inverness College UHI.

## **4. Compliance**

- 4.1. This policy must be complied with and it will be audited regularly with quarterly and annual complaints reports submitted to Executive Management Team (EMT), Academic Management and Quality Committee (AMQC) meetings, and Board Committee meetings.

## **5. Monitoring**

- 5.1. Each College policy will be monitored and its implementation evaluated. Appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluation are the responsibility of the Lead Officer. These procedures will be subject to audit by the Quality Unit.

## **6. Review**

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed in February 2024 and every three years thereafter unless legislation requires this to be completed sooner.