



HIGHER EDUCATION

Chichester College Group Higher Education Complaints Procedure 2017-2020



Quality Code Part B Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality (B8, B9 and B10) and Part C Information about Higher Education Provision, ESG Standards (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9), Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Office for Independent Adjudicator (OIA) as at June 2017.

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college

Chichester College Group

Higher Education

Complaints Procedure

Aim

The HE Complaints policy ensures that Chichester College Group has fair, accessible and timely procedures for handling student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities. The outcome from these procedures will facilitate enhancement of the learning opportunities provided. The policy is designed to comply with the Quality Code chapter B9 Academic Appeals and Student Complaints (April 2013). It also complies with Quality Code chapter B10 Managing Higher Education Provision with Others (December 2012). The Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals Good Practice guides (December 2016 and March 2017) have been used in the production of this policy.

Objectives

1. Chichester College Group will make available opportunities for students to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage.
2. Chichester College Group will encourage constructive engagement with the complaints process which offers opportunities for early and informal resolution.
3. Chichester College Group will make its complaints procedures easily available to all higher education students through college communication systems, supported by the college's HE Student Advisor. The college will make clear distinctions so that students know which procedure to follow depending upon where the responsibility for complaints lies.
4. The policy is intended to provide clear and accurate advice and guidance for students making a complaint, and for staff involved in handling or supporting complaints.
5. Complaints procedures will be conducted in a timely and fair manner.
6. The complaints process is monitored by the college's senior HE Deliberative Body (the HE Board) which will review policy and operations following complaints and will require changes to practice where appropriate.
7. The HE Board will monitor and evaluate the complaints procedure and reflect outcomes from complaints in order to enhance learning opportunities.

Definitions of roles

Where Chichester College Group is responsible for the quality of delivery of learning opportunities the complaints process will be handled by the college. For example, this is the case for Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications. The internal process has three stages, if the complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, the college will guide and support the student to approach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for final resolution.

Where an external awarding provider (University) is responsible, the internal process will be followed (unless specified otherwise) and after the third and final internal stage, the student will have a right of appeal to the University. The student retains the right to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, if the University has not resolved the complaint to the student's satisfaction. Students following Foundation Degrees or top-up to Honours degrees validated by a University will be covered by this process.

Stage 1 - Informal process

The student should raise a concern with the course leader, subject lecturer or HE Advisor. The student should explain their concern which will be noted by the course leader, subject lecturer or HE Advisor. If a satisfactory resolution can be agreed, then this should be noted by the course leader, subject lecturer or HE Advisor and signed by the student and the note taker. A copy of the concern should be sent to the Quality Co-ordinator within two working days. All complaints, including informal stage 1s will be reported to the HE Board for review and action where deemed necessary.

Stage 2 - Formal process

If the student does not feel that an informal complaint is appropriate, they should email the HE dropbox: HE@chichester.ac.uk with details of their name, contact details and a brief description of their complaint. The complaint will be logged and receipt acknowledged within 5 working days. The complaint will be passed to the Quality Manager who will contact the complainant to discuss and agree an investigation. Every effort will be made to ensure that contact takes place within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complainant does not respond to correspondence within 10 working days, the complaint will automatically be closed. All relevant persons will be interviewed by the Quality Manager, who will produce a Stage 2 report and recommended actions within 10 working days of the initial discussion for the complainant to consider. Where the complainant is satisfied with the outcomes of the report and recommended actions, he/she will be asked to sign a statement to that effect. The report and recommended actions will be sent to the next HE Board for discussion and agreement of further action where the board deems necessary. If the complainant is not satisfied with the

outcome from the report and recommended actions, they will be asked to write to the Executive Principal stating the reasons.

Stage 3 - Final formal process

The complainant should write to the Executive Principal within 15 working days of receiving Stage 2 report, stating the reasons for dissatisfaction. The following will be taken into account when considering the case:

- Whether there were procedural irregularities or bias in the investigation of the complaint at stage 2
- Whether fresh evidence can be presented which was not available at stage 2

If the Executive Principal is satisfied that either of the above conditions apply, a fresh investigation will be undertaken, to be led by a different investigator. The outcome of this investigation will be presented in a report with recommended actions which the complainant will be asked to consider. If the complainant considers that the proposed report and actions resolve the complaint, they will be asked to sign a document to this effect. The reports and action plan will be sent to the next HE Board for consideration and further action where required. The student will be issued with a closure of procedures letter which will provide guidance on how to proceed if they choose to take the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. If the complainant does not respond to correspondence within 10 working days, the complaint will automatically be closed. A student on a Foundation Degree or Honours Degree programme will be issued a Completion of Procedure Letter by the appropriate institution, as per the agreement with that institution.

Students on Foundation Degree or Honours Degree programmes will be advised how to take their complaint to the University responsible for their qualification. If the University does not resolve the complaint to the student's satisfaction, they will be advised on how to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Students on Pearson/BTEC Higher Nationals will be advised in the closure of procedures letter how to take their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the timescale for all complaints.