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Suggestions and Concerns Policy and Procedure



Synopsis

Telford College is committed to providing an environment which serves all students, staff, visitors and other clients on employer or in community sites to the highest degree, regardless of their gender, creed, age or nationality. In order to achieve this, the College feels it is essential for you, the student or visitor, to be able to express dissatisfaction in complete confidence. Therefore, as part of our commitment to quality, a Suggestions and Concerns procedure has been introduced whereby you may register any suggestions you may have regarding the services available to you. It is not intended that this procedure extends to cover existing academic appeals, staff grievance or racial/sexual harassment and discrimination procedures, as these issues are covered by other procedures

IMPACT ASSESSED: 21 February 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

- a. This procedure explains what you should do if you are not satisfied with the services you have received from the College.

2. HELP US TO PUT THINGS RIGHT

- a. The College is committed to providing excellent service. We are always keen to hear the views of learners and customers about what we do right and what we do wrong. We are also keen to hear any suggestions you may have to improve our service to you.
- b. Our aim is to handle your concerns as quickly, fairly and helpfully as possible.

3. STAGES:

a. STAGE 1 - EXPRESS YOUR DISSATISFACTION INFORMALLY

- You may wish to speak to the person concerned or talk through the issue with a member of the Student Services team, your Personal Tutor or Trainer.
- Frequently things can be put right at this stage.
- You can also register your dissatisfaction at this stage by letter, email, fax or telephone.
- The person you contact may require a short period to review the concern. You would normally receive a response within 10 working days.
- If you are not satisfied by the response you may proceed to Stage 2.

b. STAGE 2 - MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT A SERVICE

- Should you wish to formally register your concern regarding the service you receive, you need to put it in writing, or ask to speak to a member of the Student Services team, using one of our forms or contact the Director of Student Services & Learner Support, Student Services Unit, Telford College of Arts and Technology, FREEPOST, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford TF1 2BR (no stamp required). Please note that if you use FREEPOST your letter may take longer to arrive.

- Concerns relating to Student Services or Learner Support will be referred to the Vice Principal (Corporate Services)
- You may also wish to email your concern to studserv@tcat.ac.uk. Your email will be passed to the Director of Student Services.
- If you wish you can register your complaint verbally with a member of the Student Services team, however you will also be asked to write your complaint for our records. You may request a writer to write the complaint for you.
- Your concern will be acknowledged with 3 working days by telephone or email, and you will receive an acknowledgement by letter within 5 working days.
- Your concern will be passed to the relevant Director, who will investigate the issue.
- You should expect your concern to be acknowledged within a further 15 working days.
- You will be notified of any further delay and the reasons why.

c. STAGE 3 - A STUDENT MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT A STUDENT

- If a student is complaining about a student, then the Directorate will investigate the concern by interviewing both students and any named witnesses. Resulting evidence will be reviewed by the Academic Director and Head of School.
- Both students will be sent a copy of the Suggestions and Concerns procedure.
- Both students will be informed of the outcome by letter.
- During the interview process, the student may be accompanied by a parent, guardian or other representative.
- An outcome of any concern may result in one or other of the students being disciplined in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

d. STAGE 4 - A STUDENT MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT A MEMBER OF STAFF

- If a student is complaining about a member of staff, then the Director of Student Services will conduct the investigations liaising with the appropriate Academic Director. The Director of Student Services will inform the member of staff of the investigations taking place, the concerns expressed by the student and the anticipated timeline of the ensuing procedure. This will be confirmed to the member of staff in writing. The member of staff and student will be given a copy of the Suggestion and Concerns Procedure.
- The student should supply the complaint in writing.
- The member of staff will be given a copy of the complaint and will be asked to reply in writing.
- The student may be accompanied at any interview by a parent, guardian or other representative.
- The member of staff may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- The Director of Student Services will then present any evidence and/or witness statements to the appropriate academic Director. Both Directors will then review the evidence and/or witness statements and will decide on whether the student's concern is upheld.
- If the student's concern is not upheld, the member of staff will be informed in writing by their Director. The student will be informed of the result in writing by the Director of Student Services. Directors may use their discretion as to whether they meet with the persons concerned.
- If the student's concern is upheld, the Academic Director will inform the member of staff. The Director of Student Services will inform the student.
- An outcome of the student's complaint being upheld may be that the incident is dealt with under the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy. The member of staff will be informed of the decision by their Director and Head of School in line with the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy.
- If the student's complaint is not upheld and the student is found to be fabricating facts, then the student may be disciplined by the Academic Director under the College's disciplinary code.

4. MONITORING

Incidents are analysed on an annual basis by Directorate, gender, ethnicity, learning difficulty or disability, and discussed at Team and Quality meetings. The analysis of trends may inform policies and procedures undertaken by the College.

5. APPEALS PROCEDURE

You may appeal in writing to the Principal against a decision within 10 working days of receipt of the decision.

Please address your letter to the Principal's Executive Assistant who will pass it on to the appropriate member of the Executive Management Team who will provide a response within 10 working days. The decision will be final and binding.

6. MATRIX STANDARDS

The College has Matrix accreditation for its course advice and guidance service. If your concern relates to course advice and guidance and you are not happy with the way your concern has been dealt with, you can refer to the Learning and Skills Council.

7. SUPPORT

If you have difficulty in writing your concern, you are entitled to support from a colleague, friend or a member of College staff.

8. RESULTS

General trends are published on notice boards in the foyer by the refectory on the College campus.

Associated Policies: Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy