



Complaints Handling Procedure

A Guide for Students

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Complaints Handling Procedure – A Guide for Students

City of Glasgow College is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about the college's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the college or on its behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- the admissions process;
- the disciplinary process;
- a request for a service or for information which has not been actioned or answered;
- wrong information about academic programmes or college services;
- the quality and availability of facilities and learning resources;
- accessibility of our buildings or services;
- failure or refusal to provide a service;
- inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service;
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies / procedures or its impact on the individual;
- failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services;
- failure to follow the appropriate administrative process;
- conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (except where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- disagreement with a decision (except where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

Your complaint may involve more than one college service or be about someone working on our behalf, such as a contractor.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice;
- a disagreement with academic judgment;
- a concern about student conduct;
- a routine first-time request for a service;
- a request for compensation only;
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process);
- disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector;
- a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts;
- a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment;
- a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern);
- a concern about a child or an adult's safety;
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision;
- abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Actions Guidance; or
- a concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent.

Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the college service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff in the department you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

You can complain in person, by phone, in writing, by email, or through our College web-site.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

Contact by phone or in writing

Performance Team
City Campus
City of Glasgow College
190 Cathedral Street
G4 ORF

Tel 0141 375 5555

Contact by e-mail

- Send your complaint to complaint@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk

Contact through the College web-site

Visit the College web-site at <http://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk/>

- Select 'About Us' from the top menu
- Select 'Feedback, Complaints and Appeals' on the left hand navigation bar

Using our Complaint Form

If you would prefer to use our Complaint Form, copies of this can be found at all our Reception Areas and Libraries or can be downloaded from our web-site.

On completing the form please send to the Performance Team at the above address.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about, or
- within six months of finding out that you have a reason to complain, as long as this is no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to Stage 2.

You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- within two months of receiving your Stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a Stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at Stage 1, you can ask us to handle it immediately at Stage 2 instead.

Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint:

- Where the customer remains dissatisfied after Stage 1.
- Those which are complex and will clearly require a detailed investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage.

When using Stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days;
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for;
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) or the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) (or other awarding body) to look at it. For qualifications that are regulated, if you remain dissatisfied with the way the awarding body has handled your complaint then you may complain to the qualifications regulator, SQA Accreditation.

The SPSO does not have the power to revise course awards. Only the SQA and other awarding bodies have the power to do this and students should always approach the SQA or other awarding body through the relevant procedure where this is what they want to achieve as a result of their complaint, following completion of the City of Glasgow College complaint handling procedure.

The SPSO consider complaints about the quality of service and maladministration, which may include issues surrounding course delivery.

Further information on who to approach about your complaint is available from:

Performance Team
City Campus
City of Glasgow College
190 Cathedral Street
G4 ORF

Tel 0141 375 5555

In all cases, the complaint must first have been considered by the college.

The SPSO are not able to look at academic judgement and do not have the power to revise course awards. This can only be achieved through an academic appeals process. The SPSO consider complaints about the quality of service and maladministration, which may include issues surrounding course delivery.

The SPSO are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support). You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through City of Glasgow College's complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at:

www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:

SPSO

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

We are open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9am-5pm

Tuesday 10 am – 5pm

Freephone: 0800 377 7330 or call 0131 225 5300

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

By Post

Freepost SPSO

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: **0131 260 5380** Fax: **0131 260 5381** Website: www.siaa.org.uk

We are committed to making our services easy to use for everyone. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure we make reasonable adjustments

to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing please contact Student Services. Contact details are as follows:

City of Glasgow College
City Campus
Level 2
190 Cathedral Street
Glasgow
G4 0RF

Tel: 0141 375 5076

Email: enquiries@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk/studying-city/student-support>

City of Glasgow College Student Association could also help and their contact details are as follows:

Students' Association Coordinator

Tel: 0141 375 5626

Email: citysa@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.citysa.co.uk/>

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as **large print**, audio and Braille).

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints handling procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1 : frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



Stage 2 : investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We will also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO (or awarding body) to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send our final decision.