

Updated April 2006

## **SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1. SUGGESTIONS**

Our mission is to provide quality, equality and value. The college charters explain what you can expect of us and what we expect of our learners and clients. We welcome suggestions on how we can improve. If you want to make a suggestion about your course, you should contact your course representative, the course team leader or the Curriculum Group Manager for your curriculum area. If you are not sure who to contact, Learner Services staff can advise you. If you would like to make a suggestion about another aspect of the college, please use the Suggestions Scheme forms which you can get from Centre Offices, Learning Resource Centres, Learner Services and on the Intranet. If you are based at an outreach centre, your DISC administrator or tutor can help you get a form.

If you are an employer, please contact the Marketing Manager.

### **2. COMPLAINTS**

We realise that sometimes things go wrong and people who use our services may want to make a complaint. This document tells you how the procedures work so that the person making the complaint gets a response within a reasonable time. It also helps us to make sure that our procedures and practices are of the highest standards possible within the resources available.

#### **2.1 What constitutes a complaint?**

- A person who uses our services believes the service was either
  - not provided or
  - of an unacceptable standard
- Although most complainants are likely to be learners, the procedure can also be used by other individuals or bodies.
- The complaint must be specific and must be about something which has happened in the last twelve months. There are Appeals procedures to deal with these situations
  - your application to join a course has been turned down
  - you want a mark or grade to be reconsidered
  - you want a disciplinary decision to be reconsidered.

Please ask Learner Services for details of the relevant Appeals procedure.

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### 2.2 Complaints: informal procedure

- (a) Wherever it is possible, make suggestions or sort out possible problems by talking to the member of staff immediately concerned. If you would like to be accompanied when this meeting takes place, you can ask your local Learner Services Manager to come with you. S/he will support you in getting your points across as clearly as possible and help where they can to enable you and the tutor to resolve the problem informally.
  
- (b) If you are a learner and cannot or do not want to talk to the member of staff directly concerned,
  - ☞ talk to your personal tutor
  
  - or ☞ discuss the matter with your course representative who can accompany you to a meeting with the course tutor
  
  - or ☞ discuss the matter with your local Learner Services Manager who can accompany you to a meeting with your personal or course tutor.
  
- (c) If, as a result of taking the actions described above, the problem is not resolved, you can arrange to see your course representative or local Learner Services Manager.

This person can arrange a meeting with the Manager for Quality and Equality or the Director of Learner Services who can support you through the process of making a formal complaint.

### 2.3 Complaints: formal procedure

- (a) Once you have decided that you wish to make a formal complaint you will need to complete a **complaint form**, which is available from Learner Services or Learning Resource Centres. If you want help to fill in the form, you can ask in your local Learner Services Unit.
  
- (b) If your complaint is about Learner Services, you can send the completed complaint form direct to the Manager for Quality and Equality. Ask at your centre office for the name and college address.

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- (c) For all other complaints, once you have completed the form, give it to a member of staff in Learner Services. You will be given an acknowledgement and your complaint will be passed on to the relevant manager.
- (d) You will be given the name of this manager and will receive a written response to your complaint no later than **10 working days** after it has been given to Learner Services.
- (e) You will in most cases be able to withdraw your complaint at any point. But if your complaint is serious, college managers may have to follow it through even if you want to withdraw.

### **2.4 Equal Opportunities and Harassment**

- (a) Your complaint may be about harassment on the grounds of personal identity, age, gender or disability. Or you may feel that you have been denied equality of opportunity. In any of these cases, you may use the systems described above or, if you prefer, you may complain to the manager for quality and equality.
- (b) You can get a copy of the Equality Policy from the Intranet, Learner Services or Learning Resource Centres.

### **2.5. Appeal Procedure**

- (a) If you want your complaint to be reviewed by a senior manager because you do not feel you have had a satisfactory response from the manager concerned, you should make a written request to have your complaint reviewed. You can use the appeal form available from Learner Services to do this. You can expect a response within **10 working days** of the date your Appeal was received.
- (b) If you still do not feel your complaint has been resolved after this process, and your complaint is about a course funded by the Learning and Skills Council, you can appeal to the Council. Learner Services will tell you if your course fits this category. The Council's address is

Complaints Officer, LSC Greater Merseyside, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor. Tithebarn House, Tithebarn Street, Liverpool L2 2NZ

