

STUDENT RELATED POLICY: COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

This policy is biennially reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Approved by: Principal Reviewed by: Assistant Principal: Quality, Performance & Standards	
Date of next review	August 2027

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual orientation, and Disability

1. Document Control

1.1. Document Details

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Author	Tom Hughes
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1.2. Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	Feb 2023	H. Marks / J. Hebdige	Definitive Release
1.1	August 2023	C. Foster / S. Martin	Definitive Release
1.2	August 2024	T. Hughes	Additional point 7.12, amendment to 9.1
2.0	August 2025	T. Hughes	Reviewed – No amends

1.3. Distribution

Name	Email	Organisation
All Staff	Uploaded to SharePoint	Boston College

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. Boston College is committed to being a 'learning organisation', valuing feedback on its service from learners and other stakeholders to facilitate continuous improvement.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the procedures for receiving and addressing compliments, concerns, and complaints from students, staff, and stakeholders of Boston College. It aims to ensure that all feedback is handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner, promoting a positive and inclusive learning and working environment.

2. **Principles**

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The active promotion of equality of opportunity at Boston College in all its activities and to benefit the learning experience.
- Engaging in an open and transparent process
- The resolution of concerns and complaints in a fair and equitable way within agreed timescales
- The absence of victimisation once a complaint has been reported.
- The continuous improvement of our service improvement
- Highlighting and sharing the good practice identified from compliments.

3. **Definitions**

- 3.1. Compliment: An expression of satisfaction, praise, or appreciation for a positive experience, service, or individual's contribution within the College.
- 3.2. Concern: An expression of dissatisfaction, unease, or worry about a specific issue or aspect related to the College.
- 3.3. Complaint: A formal expression of dissatisfaction or grievance regarding an incident, service, treatment, or decision made by the College that requires investigation and resolution.

4. **Scope**

- 4.1. This policy applies to all students, staff, and stakeholders of the UK FE College who wish to provide compliments, raise concerns, or lodge complaints.

5. **Compliments**

- 5.1. The College values and appreciates compliments received as they contribute to the improvement and motivation of the College community.
- 5.2. Compliments can be provided through various channels, including in person, written communication, or through an online feedback platform.
- 5.3. Compliments received will be acknowledged, and efforts will be made to recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.

6. Concerns

- 6.1. The College encourages individuals to raise concerns promptly to prevent minor issues from escalating into major problems.
- 6.2. Concerns can be raised informally by speaking directly with the appropriate staff member concerned or their manager. If the concern has been raised and a reasonable outcome has not been achieved, or if the concern is of a more serious nature, the formal complaints procedure outlined in Section 7 should be followed.
- 6.3. The College will make reasonable efforts to address concerns promptly, ensuring confidentiality and treating all parties involved with respect and fairness.
- 6.4. A designated staff member or department will be responsible for recording and monitoring concerns raised, taking appropriate action to investigate and resolve the issues.

7. Complaints

- 7.1. The College acknowledges that complaints may arise from time to time and is committed to resolving them fairly and efficiently.
- 7.2. Complaints must be made formally in writing, using the provided Complaint Form available on the College's website or in hardcopy from the College reception.
- 7.3. The Complaints procedure should be initiated if:
 - following a concern being raised, the individual is dissatisfied with the resolution and initiates the complaints process.
 - a concern has not been previously raised and the individual considers the issue serious enough to lodge a complaint.
 - the issues are complex and may for example, involve several parties, and therefore needs to be investigated.
- 7.4. Complaints should include specific details, such as the nature of the complaint, relevant dates, individuals involved, supporting evidence, and the desired outcome.
- 7.5. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the College will provide an acknowledgment within five working days, confirming the complaint's receipt, outlining the subsequent steps, and providing an estimated timeframe for resolution.
- 7.6. Complaints will be investigated impartially by an appointed complaint handler – typically a college manager - who was not directly involved in the incident or decision under complaint. The complaints officer will decide on the manager who is best placed to undertake the investigation.
- 7.7. The College will endeavour to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, aiming to provide a written response within 20 working days from the date of receipt.
- 7.8. If additional time is required to resolve a complaint, the College will notify the complainant, providing regular updates on the progress and expected timeframe.

- 7.9. This policy will apply to complaints received from learners only when they are an enrolled learner and therefore does not apply prior to enrolment and terminates after one month of sending the final transcript or withdrawal from the programme of study.
- 7.10 Any individual who feels that they have a justifiable cause for concern or complaint should feel able to raise this without feel of victimisation, providing they have supporting evidence or representation. Individuals have the right to raise concerns or complaints if done so in good faith.
- 7.11 Learners raising vexatious or malicious complaints may be subject to disciplinary action. A complaint considered vexatious may be rejected by Boston College and complainants will be notified of this decision and the reasons why it has not been upheld.
- 7.12 This complaints process must be followed prior to making any form of contact with Awarding Organisations.

8. Appeal Process

- 8.1. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may appeal by submitting a written request to the College within ten working days of receiving the final response.
- 8.2 Appeals will only be considered on based on one or more of the following:
 - The college procedure for complaints was not followed
 - new evidence has emerged that may materially affect the outcome of the decision.
- 8.3. Appeals will be reviewed by an independent panel appointed by the College, consisting of individuals who were not previously involved in the complaint investigation and led by a member of the senior team.
- 8.4. The appeal panel will conduct a thorough review of the appeal, including all relevant documents and the new evidence/evidence of failure to follow the policy provided by the complainant. However, the appeal will not involve further investigation or reconsideration of original evidence. Only new evidence will be considered.
- 8.5. The panel will provide a written response to the appeal within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal.

9. Following Appeal

- 9.1 If the appeal is not upheld or the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant will be informed of their rights to take their complaint to the respective Awarding Organisation of their qualification, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or, in the case of higher education, directed to either the university procedures or those of the Office for Students (OfS) via the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIAHE). Agencies will typically refer the complainant back to the organisation if Boston College's own complaints procedure has not been exhausted.

Details of the ESFA process can be found here:

[Complaints procedure - Education and Skills Funding Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Details of the University of Derby complaints process can be found here:

[Student complaints - Academic regulations - University of Derby](#)

Details of the OIAHE procedure can be found here:

[Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education - OIAHE](#)

Details of the complaints processes for different Awarding Organisations can be found on each of the Awarding Organisations respective websites.

NB. Records of all complaints are retained for 3 academic years.

APPENDIX A

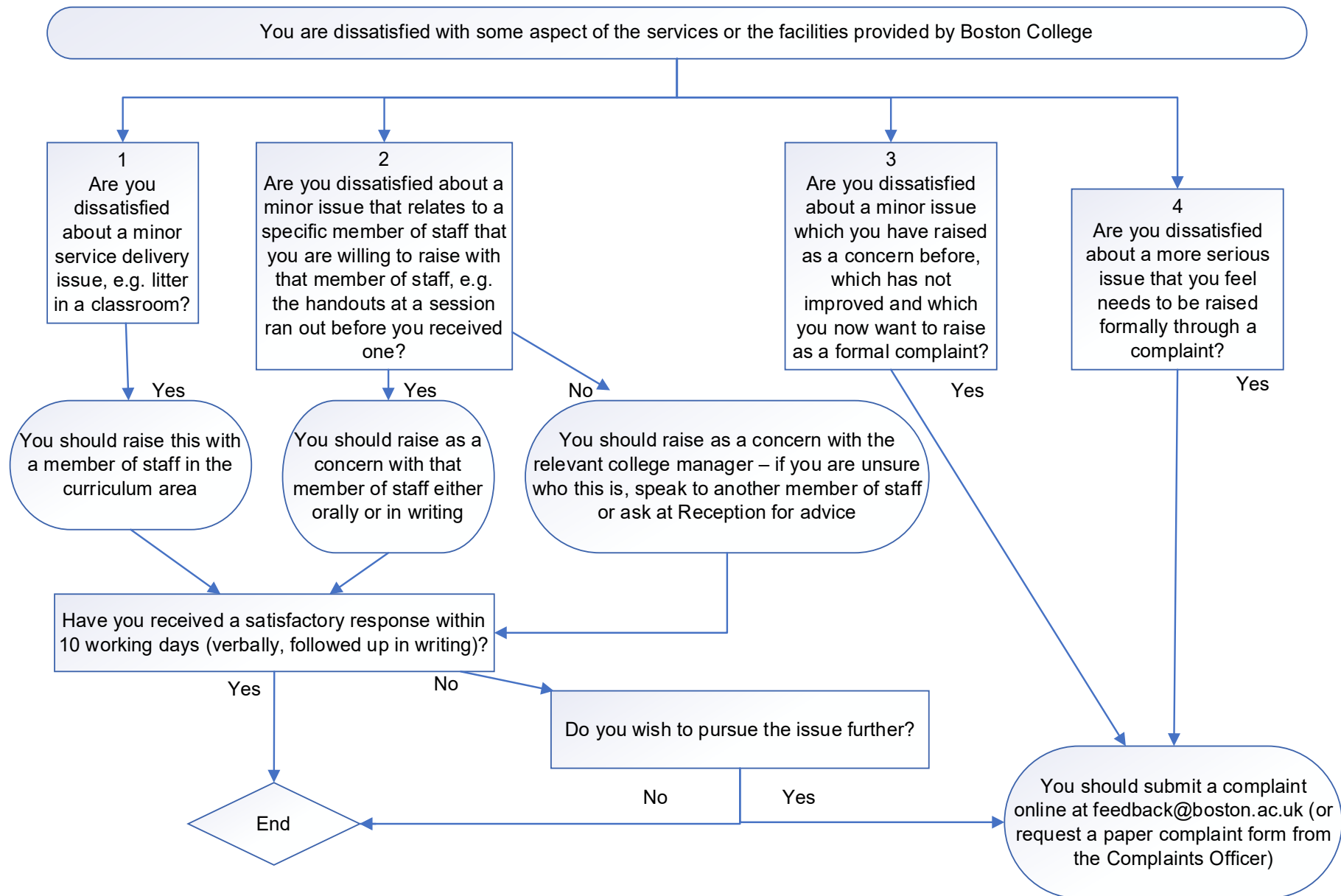
Compliments Concerns Complaints Form	
Form completed by:	
I am a ...	Learner/parent or carer/employer/ staff member/other
Contact details:	
Date :	
This is a Compliment Concern Complaint (please circle)	
Describe the issue (what, who, when, where etc.). Please give us as much detail as possible	
What evidence is there that would help us to understand the issue better? (This could include details of witnesses or other parties directly involved)	
What outcome would you like as a result of your compliment, concern or complaint?	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.

Please send to feedback@boston.ac.uk

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date form received:	
Case overseen by:	
Date initial response sent:	
Date final response sent:	
Date appeal letter received:	
Date final appeal decision sent:	

Raising a Concern



Formal Complaint Process Timeline

