



Coatbridge College

MAY 2005

**STUDENT COMPLAINTS
PROCEDURE**

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

Coatbridge College has a commitment to providing high quality services and facilities for its students. The College welcomes and promotes the views and suggestions of students as these play an important role in its attempt to constantly improve the services which it offers to students. However, there may be occasions when students are dissatisfied with particular aspects of the College and wish these issues to be addressed. It is hoped that in the majority of such situations, a practical common sense approach by both students and staff in an informal setting will resolve most problems. The need for more formal procedures is recognised however and for this reason this formal complaints procedure can be accessed by any student of the College.

1.1 Fundamentals of the Complaints Procedure

Coatbridge College wishes to ensure that students accessing the Complaints Procedure:

- Feel that it is worthwhile complaining.
- Know how to make a complaint.
- Are not afraid to complain.
- Know that the complaint will be treated confidentially.

1.2 The College Commitment

The College is committed to ensuring that complaints are dealt with quickly, efficiently and fairly. We guarantee, therefore that:

- We will deal with your complaint objectively with due regard to evidence from all parties concerned.
- We will acknowledge a complaint promptly and state a timescale for consideration of that complaint.
- We will explain why a particular decision has been made with regard to a complaint.

1.3 Equal Opportunities

The College Complaints Procedure forms an integral part of the College's commitment to equal opportunities; namely, that all students, regardless of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or age can expect equal treatment and consideration. They also have a right to learn in a safe and healthy environment where all students are treated with respect and consideration and without fear of harassment. If you have a complaint regarding any aspect of equal opportunities, the College urges you to make this known so that effective action may be taken.

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1.4 The Student Association

The College recognises the key role played by the Student Association and College staff in the various aspects of the Complaints Procedure and works closely with the Student Association to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of its policies.

1.5 Course Representatives

Students have a right to elect a representative from each course to represent their interests on the Course *Board*. This presents an opportunity for issues, particularly those affecting the course as a whole, to be addressed in an open environment. The College urges students to ensure that a course representative is elected and that Course Committees are used as effective channels for the opinions of students.

1.6 Course Assessments

Appeals against course assessments are not covered by the Student Complaints Procedures. A separate procedure exists for this (Internal Moderation Procedure) and this can be explained to you by your Department.

1.7 Where to obtain a copy

Copies of the Student Complaint Procedures can be obtained from:

- The College Library
- The Admissions Office
- Administration Offices
- Student Association Office

A copy of the procedure can also be found on the College Intranet (with effect from August 2005).

2 CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINT

2.1 Complaints about your Course

The first point of contact for a complaint about any aspect of your course should be your lecturer or Departmental Guidance Tutor. *If students wish to make a complaint, they may in the first instance wish to discuss their complaint informally and confidentially with a student adviser at student services.*

- 1) **Lecturer/Tutor.** Students may approach the lecturer or tutor either personally or through the class representative to raise particular issues. At that stage, the lecturer should attempt to resolve the problem. If that is not possible or you are dissatisfied with the response, the lecturer should inform you that the complaint may be made in writing to the Senior Lecturer with a copy to the Head of Department.
- 2) **Course Leader/Senior Lecturer** – The Senior Lecturer will provide an answer to your complaint in writing normally within 5 working days. This should contain a statement regarding what his/her proposed course of action will be, together with a time limit for implementation, if appropriate. At this and any subsequent stage, you may be represented at any meeting by the Student Liaison Officer or an Office Bearer of the Student Association.

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- 3) **Head of Department:** If the issue cannot be resolved at Senior Lecturer level or if you remain dissatisfied with the written response or the outcome of the meeting, you can request that the Senior Lecturer refers the issue to the Head of Department. You will receive an acknowledgement normally within 5 working days outlining the course of action to be taken.
- 4) **Associate Principal, Curriculum:** If the Head of Department is unable to resolve the issue or you are dissatisfied with the response from the Head of Department, you can request that the issue be referred to the Associate Principal, Curriculum. Such a request should be made in writing.

2.2 Complaints about another student

- 1) Try to resolve the situation with the other student concerned.
- 2) If the situation remains unresolved and/or you feel that you cannot approach the other student because you feel threatened or intimidated, contact your course leader, guidance tutor, student association staff or an Office Bearer of the student association.
- 3) If the situation still cannot be resolved you can make a formal complaint in writing, to the Head of Department.

2.3 Complaints about non-course matters

This section refers to those issues relating to college facilities (e.g. services, buildings health and safety, college environment, etc). In such cases:

- 1) You should approach the Student Association and outline the nature of the problem. The Student Association will undertake to discuss the issue with the appropriate Manager/Head of Department. You will receive an answer normally within 5 working days outlining the course of action to be taken.
- 2) Should the matter remain unresolved, your representative will then refer the matter to the Associate Principal responsible for the service at Senior Management level.

3 UNRESOLVED COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 If, after going through all stages of the procedures outline you are still dissatisfied with the handling of your complaint, you can apply in writing to the College Principal, Coatbridge College, Kildonan Street, Coatbridge ML5 3LS.

4 APPENDIX

Appendix A Sample Student complaint form to be issued/used by student.

Appendix B Sample Department response form.

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APPENDIX A (continued)

Outline of complaint (continued)

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Signed Date

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| Complaints about: Course issues – Copies to Senior Lecturer and Head of Department Non-course issue or another student – Copy to Student Liaison Officer |
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Official Use Only

Date of receipt

Course of action

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Signed Date

