



Coatbridge College

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Status: Operational
Policy Dated: September 2010
Author: Depute Principal
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This policy is designed to enhance the student learning experience in the following way:

By providing a framework within which students who have experienced dissatisfaction with the College's services can raise their concerns.

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 Procedures

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

- Know how to make a complaint.
- Feel that it is worthwhile complaining.
- Have no fear of recrimination against them for having made a complaint.
- Know that the complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

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.
- Any student complaint will be given unbiased consideration.
- We will acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days and state a timescale for consideration of that complaint in the acknowledgement.
- Each complaint will trigger the creation of an appropriately experienced representative group. The group will report to the student in writing and within agreed timescales giving detailed outcomes with rationale.

The College will put in place an Appeals and Complaints Monitoring Group which will meet twice during each academic year. The College will keep a record of all complaints that have been received by students (whether formal or informal) and this record will be monitored by the Appeals and Complaints Monitoring Group. This allows any decisions regarding student complaints and appeals to be considered by the Group on an equal basis. The role of the Group will be restricted to monitoring the decisions reached regarding student complaints and appeals. This Group cannot re-open any previous student complaint or appeal but is necessary to ensure that the College learns lessons from complaints where appropriate.

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, disability 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.

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 and procedures.

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 (Appeals Against Assessment Decisions) and this can be explained to you by your Division during induction and, where appropriate, on instruments of assessment.

1.7 Where to obtain a copy

Copies of the Student Complaint Procedures can be obtained from:

- The College Library

- Student Services
- College Reception
- Office Bureaus within the Students Association

A copy of the procedure can also be found on the College Website and the student and staff intranet

2 How Do I Complain?

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 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 the student is dissatisfied with the response, the complaint may be made in writing to the Curriculum Leader with a copy to the Faculty Director.
- 2) **Curriculum Leader:** The Curriculum Leader 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 an Office Bearer of the Student Association or an individual of your choice.
- 3) **Faculty Director:** If the issue cannot be resolved at Curriculum Leader level or if the student remains dissatisfied with the written response or the outcome of the meeting, the student may request that the Senior Lecturer refers the issue to the Faculty Director. The student will receive an acknowledgement normally within 5 working days outlining the course of action to be taken.
- 4) **Depute Principal:** If the Faculty Director is unable to resolve the issue or you are dissatisfied with the decision reached you can request that the issue be referred to the Depute Principal. 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 Curriculum Leader, guidance tutor, student services 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 Faculty Director.

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 Student Services or a Student Association representative and outline the nature of the problem. Student Services or the Student Association will undertake to discuss the issue with the appropriate Manager/Faculty Director. 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 appropriate College Management Advisory Committee member responsible for the service at Senior Management level.

3 What If My Complaint Is Unresolved?

If, after going through all stages of the procedures outlined the student is still dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint, they can apply in writing to the College Principal, Coatbridge College, Kildonan Street, Coatbridge ML5 3LS.

4 Appendices

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

Appendix B - Sample Department response form.

Student Complaints Procedure

Appendix B

Thank you for completing the Student Complaint Procedure form. Below is an outline of the action to be taken by the College.

Action Plan

Student Name:	Course:
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Subject:	Date:
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Points for Action	Action Required	Date for Completion	Person Responsible	Progress

Signed:	Date:
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