

How to complain

A guide to the complaints procedure



How to complain

There are two ways of complaining:

1. Making an informal complaint

Most problems that students or apprentices come across can be dealt with quickly and informally. Discuss your concern first with your student learning adviser (SLA) or your teacher and explain what you would like to be done about it. Usually she or he will be able to resolve the matter and you will be satisfied.

2. Making a formal complaint

If your SLA, teacher or other member of staff has not been able to help you, you may wish to make a formal complaint. This leaflet explains how to make a formal complaint.

We hope that these procedures will make it as easy as possible for you to register a formal complaint with us.

Who can use the complaints procedure?

Any actual/potential student or apprentice of the college or member of the public.

When should I make a formal complaint?

Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event you wish to complain about. Delays can make it difficult for us to deal with your complaint. We will not usually investigate complaints more than 3 months after the decision or action was taken.

What happens if I make a formal complaint?

Making a formal complaint means that:

- your complaint will be dealt with seriously and thoroughly
- you will receive a written acknowledgement within 5 working days
- you will receive a final written reply within 15 working days or, if this is not possible, you will be sent an update letter at least every two weeks
- you will be given the reasons for our response
- you will receive a written apology from the college if your complaint is upheld
- matters will be put right as soon as possible (where applicable).

We reserve the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious.

How do I make a formal complaint?

1. Before making a formal complaint, try to resolve your concern with your SLA, your teacher or your assessor. Most complaints can be dealt with satisfactorily in this way.
2. If you need to make a formal complaint, it is best to make it in writing if you can. Please remember that Student Services staff will be pleased to help you with any aspect of your complaint and guide you through the process, for example how to write it down and who is responsible.
3. You can make a formal complaint either by going to see the person responsible for the service that you are complaining about, or by writing to him or her. The table overleaf explains who the person responsible is.
 - i) If you go to see the person responsible, he or she will help you to fill in a college complaints form. This asks you what the basic facts are as you see them and also asks you what you would like to be done about your concerns.
 - ii) If you write to the person responsible, you can use the college complaints form.
 - iii) Or you can simply write a letter. Please provide your full name, address, enrolment number and the title of your course. Please also explain the basic facts as you see them and what you would like to be done about your concerns.
4. If the person responsible cannot reply straight away, they will get back to you as soon as possible. You will get a final written response within 15 working days. Where this is not possible, you will be notified.

Can I get help with making a complaint?

Yes. If you are a student or apprentice at the college, you can get help in presenting your complaint from your SLA or teacher, or if you prefer you may contact any member of the Student Services Team in the student common room.

Where can I get a college complaints form?

At the Information Centre at Isleworth, Reception at the Skills + Logistics Centre, or from Student Services staff or the Learning Resources Centre.

Who do I complain to?

The table on page 4 is a brief guide to the people responsible for the services in the college, and tells you who you should complain to about a particular service.

Can I appeal against the response I get to my complaint?

Yes. If you are not happy with the response to your complaint, you can appeal within 10 working days by writing to the Vice Principal:

Dave Evans, Vice Principal
West Thames College
London Road
Isleworth Middx TW7 4HS

If you are unhappy with our response to your appeal, you can complain to the government department which provides our funding:

Complaints Team
The Office of the Chief Executive
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
Email: complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

For higher education courses:

If you are unhappy with our response to your appeal, your complaint will be passed to your awarding body to resolve. Higher education students who are directly enrolled by West Thames College can contact:

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Second floor, Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading, Berkshire RG1 3AB
www.oiahe.org.uk

What happens to complaints?

Complaints are taken seriously at West Thames College. We keep a record of each complaint and we report on the number and types of complaint regularly to our Executive Team and to our Governing Body. We make sure that we learn from complaints that are upheld and that improvements are made to our systems wherever necessary.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT...	WHO TO COMPLAIN TO:
Learning Resources Centre	Tony Bhabra, E-Learning Manager
College buildings: lifts, heating, premises, cleanliness, toilets, classroom facilities, catering and security	Michael Michaelides, Executive Director Resources
Student services, student support and welfare funds, Student Union, student counselling, sports and gym facilities	Graeme Baker, Executive Director Business Development and Student Experience
Teaching and learning issues (except assessment grading – see Procedure for Appeal Against Assessment)	Business, ICT and Travel: Eric Stober Core Skills: Marta Gajewska-Kopczyk Creative Industries: Katrin Lehmann Foundation and Supported Learning: Sharon Honey Health, Care and Science: Ranjit Singh Inclusion: Jaswant Kaur Nagra Skills + Logistics Centre, Feltham: Beverley McGuire
Employer partnerships	Eric Stober, Director of Business, ICT and Travel
Cafeterias and vending machines	Michael Michaelides, Executive Director Resources
Applications, enrolment, fee payment, refunds, awarding body registration and exam entry, exam conditions	Graeme Baker, Executive Director Business Development and Student Experience
Course information, guidance and careers	Martina Greeves, Work Experience and Employability Manager
Nursery provision	Carolyn Moncrieffe, Senior Nursery Manager
Finance	Mark Cooper, Executive Director Finance and Compliance
IT Services, college computers and Print Room	Michael Michaelides, Executive Director Resources
Health and safety (including first aid)	John Levett, Health and Safety Manager
The above managers will normally handle complaints related to their areas of work. However, from time to time another manager may be designated by the Vice Principal to investigate a complaint in any area.	



www.west-thames.ac.uk

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