Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Policy Details			
Policy Owner	Quality Manager		
CE Sponsor	Deputy Principal		
Date created	11 June 2024		
Version:	**Approved by:**	**Date approved:**	**To be reviewed:**
1	College Executive	June 2025	June 2026
1	Curriculum and Quality Committee	26 June 2025	June 2026
2	College Executive	15 June 2026	May 2029
2	Curriculum and Quality Committee	23 June 2026	May 2029

Version Control	
Version Number	**Changes from previous 12 months policy**
1	Complete re-write of policy.
	Changes to policy in year
2	June 2026 Terms of reference added to ensure clarity of remit Section 1: Addition of a time limit for complaints Section 2: Addition of reference to seeking an informal resolution with the department in the first instance Section 2: Replaced 'Portal' with 'website' Addition of new Artificial Intelligence Section Section 4: Stipulation that the Quality Team will log and track all formal complaints Addition of Section 5, 6 and 7 Section 8: Amendment to include third party harassment Section 9: Department for Education inserted Section 11: Compliments and Comments inserted

Equality Impact Assessment Tool
Name of Policy: Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	**Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:**		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	No	
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	**Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?**	No	
3	**If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?**	N/A	
4	**Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?**	No	
5	**If so, can the impact be avoided?**	N/A	
6	**What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?**	N/A	
7	**Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?**	N/A	

Terms of reference:
This policy applies to all students on Further Education courses delivered by Colchester Institute, including apprenticeships, adult education programmes, and short duration courses. The only courses not covered by this policy are Higher Education courses delivered by University Centre Colchester. Please refer to section 10 for more details.

1. **Complaints Procedure**
   It is the aim of Colchester Institute to provide all students, apprentices, parents/guardians of students and employers with a high-quality service. However, from time-to-time problems may occur. You have the right to pursue the resolution of any difficulties, and the College will undertake to respond to your complaint with care and concern. We do ask that complaints are logged within the same academic year of the incident of concern occurring.

2. **Making a Complaint**
   Problems should first be discussed with the relevant department with the aim being to resolve the issue informally.

   If discussion does not resolve the matter or if it is not appropriate, you may wish to escalate matters using the formal complaints procedure. The complaint should be made via the online process which can be accessed here: https://www.colchester.ac.uk/forms/concerns-and-complaints-form/

   Complaints can also be made via telephone or in writing.

   When accessing the College website directly, the online form is located on the Colchester Institute home page via the Contact button and then clicking the Concerns or Complaints button: Concerns and Complaints Form - Colchester Institute.

3. **Use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)**
   The College welcomes all feedback, whether positive or constructively focused on improvement. While feedback may be informed by a range of sources, including Artificial Intelligence tools, the College places particular value on feedback that demonstrates human judgement, contextual awareness, and reflective thought.

   Where it is evident that feedback has been generated largely or wholly through AI without appropriate human interpretation or adaptation, the College reserves the right to treat such feedback with caution or to seek further clarification.

4. **Response to complaints**
   In response to complaints the College will make an initial response, acknowledging your complaint within 5 working days. The college will then research the circumstances/details of the matter and provide, usually with a maximum of 15 working days, a full response, including, where appropriate, explanation and details of any actions taken.

   The Quality Team will log and track all formal complaints for Quality Assurance purposes.

5. **Complaints about external assessment/examination results**
   If your complaint is about the result of an external assessment or examination, you should contact the Examinations Office who will explain the procedure for the relevant awarding organisation concerned. The Exams Office can be contacted on: exams@colchester.ac.uk.

6. **Complaints about the outcome of formal disciplinary or progression decisions**
   Complaints about the outcome of a disciplinary process or a progression decision will be dealt with via an appeals process and not this Complaints policy. This process is set out in the email

received by the student and Next of Kin.

7. Complaints about admissions

Complaints in relation to not being granted a place on a course of study as a result of an Application Review Panel are managed by a separate appeals process as described in the letter of notification sent to the learner and Next of Kin.

8. Vexatious Complaints and Third-Party Harassment

The College reserves the right to restrict, manage, or, in exceptional circumstances, prohibit contact with College employees in relation to any complaint deemed to be frivolous, vexatious, unreasonable, or malicious, in order to protect staff wellbeing and comply with its obligations under third-party harassment legislation.

This includes, but is not limited to, complaints or conduct that are obsessive, persistent, abusive, repetitive, harassing, threatening, or intended to cause disruption, distress, or unreasonable pressure on College staff.

Any such action will be proportionate, reasonable, and considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the behaviour and the College's duty to maintain a safe and respectful working environment for its employees.

9. If you are still not satisfied

If the College's Compliments, comments and complaints procedure has been exhausted and you are still dissatisfied, the Department for Education have their own complaints procedure which reviews the processes the College has gone through when dealing with your complaint and the decisions that have been made.

The Department for Education process can be accessed via this website:
https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship

10. Higher Education Programmes

The procedure for complaints relating to Higher Education can be accessed via this link:

https://www.colchester.ac.uk/legal/ucc-student-concerns-compliments-complaints-procedure-policy/

11. Compliments and Comments

Compliments and Comments should be submitted via the same online process for making a complaint and select either 'Compliment' or 'Comment', which can be access here: https://www.colchester.ac.uk/forms/concerns-and-complaints-form/.