



**SWANSEA  
COLLEGE**

*Building foundations for your future*

# Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students and Parents

Updated: December 2021

This Policy is available to students and parents on request.

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**Dear student and parents:**

In order to create a calm working environment, the Swansea College Complaints Procedure has been adapted to suit a student’s individual needs.

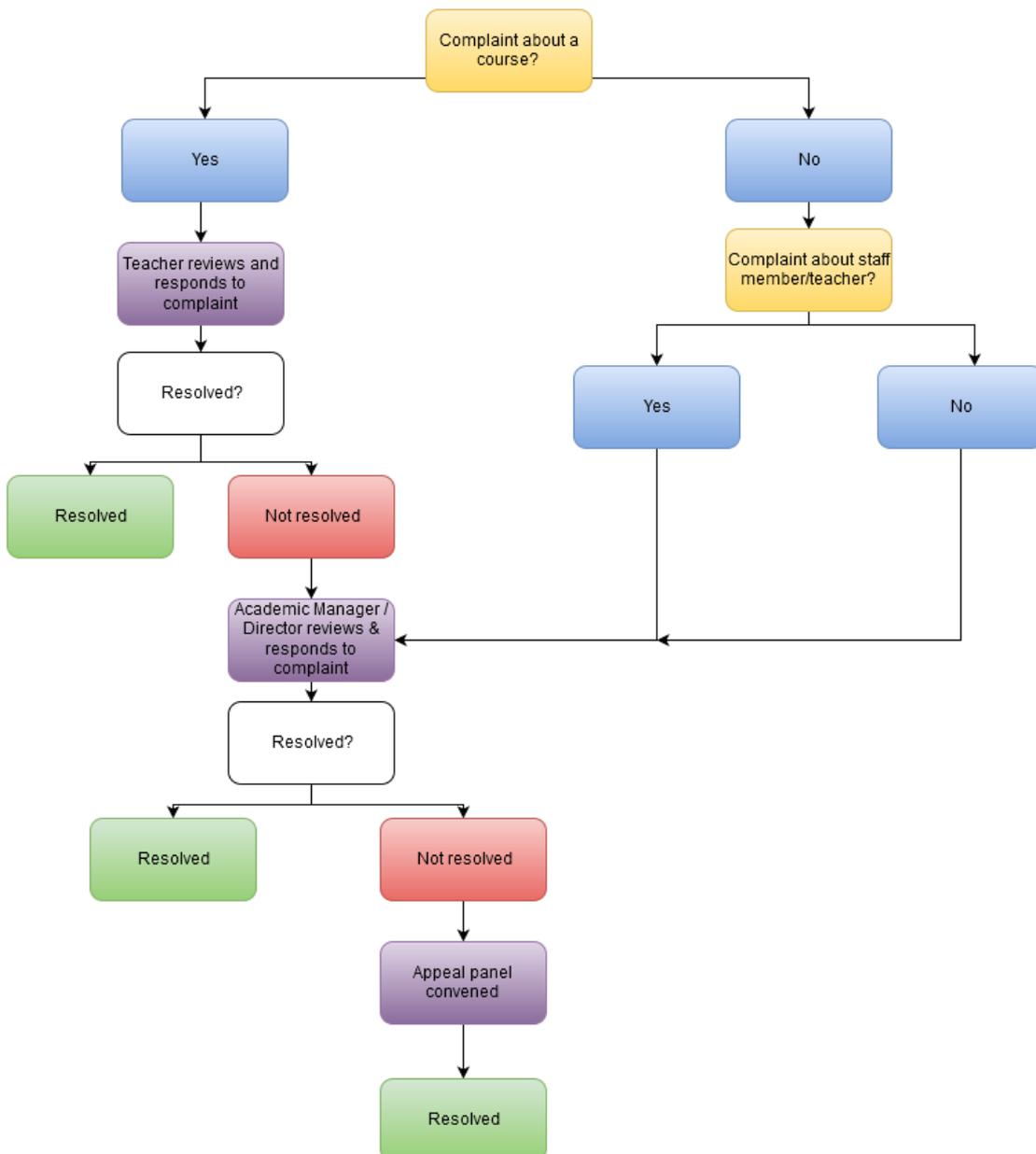
A copy of this policy can be found on the Student Drive and under “Policies” on the Swansea College Website.

Any student or parent who wishes to make a complaint, you can do so by emailing their complaint to: [office@swanseacollege.com](mailto:office@swanseacollege.com)

There is a procedure in place (see below) for dealing with students' and parents complaints and, once received, the complaints procedure ensures that they are reviewed and resolved as soon as possible.

All complaints at Swansea College are dealt with seriously and treated confidentially.

### Diagram of complaints procedure



# **Full complaints procedure**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 SSC is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we have made and we will apologise. We aim to learn from mistakes and use that experience to improve what we do.

1.2 Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the College or a member of its staff' that requires a response from the College.

1.3 This complaints procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the College can raise a concern with confidence that it will be heard and, if well-founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

## **2. When to use this procedure**

2.1 When you have a concern or make a complaint, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the College, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times, you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.

2.2 If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the College, we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern.

## **3. Have you asked us yet?**

3.1 If you are approaching us for the first time, you should give us a chance to respond. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person at the College, without the need to use a formal procedure. If you are not happy with our response, then you may make your complaint using the procedure we describe below.

## **4. What we expect from you**

4.1 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. College staff have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining.

## **5. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint**

5.1 We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.

5.2 At all times, the College will respect the rights and feelings of all those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.

5.3 Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you.

5.4 We may ask for advice from other bodies where appropriate.

5.5 Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken.

5.6 Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the college depending on the nature of the complaint.

5.7 Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the college, the college will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'no action'.

## **6. Answering your concern or complaint**

6.1 You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process but you will be expected to speak for yourself. However, we recognise that, when the complainant is a student, it is reasonable for the companion-parent or guardian to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the student.

6.2 As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the College needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.

6.3 If you are a student under-18 and wish to raise a concern or bring a complaint, we will ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s). If you are a student under-18 and are involved in a complaint in any other way, we may ask your parent(s) or guardian(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you.

### **Stage A**

6.4 If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to your tutor. You should raise your concern as soon as you can; normally, we would expect you to raise your issue within 10 college days of any incident. The longer you leave it, the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

6.5 If you are a student, you can raise your concerns with the Academic Manager, a teacher chosen or another adult at the College who can deal with student concerns. This will not stop you,

at a later date; from raising a complaint if you feel that the issue(s) you have raised has/have not been dealt with properly.

6.6 We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 college days but, if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you.

6.7 The person overseeing your concern or complaint will keep you informed of the progress being made. This person will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

## **Stage B**

6.8 In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally. If you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately, you should put your complaint in writing to the Director.

6.9 We would expect you to aim to do **this within five college days of receiving a response to your concern as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible.**

6.10 The Director or Academic Manager will invite you to discuss your complaint at a meeting. Timescales for dealing with your complaint will be agreed with you. We will aim to have a meeting with you and to explain what will happen, normally within 10 college days of receiving your letter. The Director or Academic Manager will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within 10 college days of completion.

## **7. Appeals**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you can appeal against the decision. To do this, you must write to the Director within ten working days of the date of the complaint response. You can email ([aisha.rasul@swanseacollege.com](mailto:aisha.rasul@swanseacollege.com)) or post a letter of your appeal to:

Director

Swansea Sixth-form College,

18 Mansel Street,

Swansea,

SA1 5SG

The appeal should outline:

- a) The grounds for appeal; this should not re-iterate the original complaint but state the reasons why the suggested resolution is not satisfactory.
- b) Any aspect of the response or action taken that is considered inadequate.
- c) The response or action that would be considered appropriate by the complainant.

For the appeal, SSC will convene a panel comprising of three (3) members, to include

- a) 1 member of staff who has not been involved with the cause of the complaint.
- b) 1 member of the management team who has not yet been involved with the complaint.
- c) 1 external member of:
  - a. Taha Idris, Swansea Court Magistrate and retired Chief Executive Of Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council.
  - b. Dr Minkesh Sood, Swansea University, Director of Student Union.
  - c. Tony Burnett, Leadership Development Officer at Swansea University.

One member of the panel will be the Chair. The panel will hear from the complainant (and any representatives they wish to bring), any witnesses, and the members of staff involved in the situation(s) that have led to the complaint. The Panel will consider the complaint in light of SSC policies and any relevant legislation where applicable.

The panel has the power to make recommendations. Any outcomes of the panel will be shared with the Director and proprietor. A copy of the Panel's final report, including any such recommendations or next steps, will be emailed to you or your representative within 5 college days of receiving them, along with SSC's response, and what SSC will do to implement the recommendations or next steps, if appropriate.

Please note; the Panel's decision is final.

## **8. Our commitment to you**

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them.

## **9. Timeline**

Please be aware that we can get extremely busy at times and will reply to your complaints as soon as we are able.

We aim to respond to your initial complaint within 7 working days. If the complaint is not resolved after that initial email and you further correspond with us – moving up the chain of command to the Director - we will try to get back to you within a further 7 working days.

Please be aware that 'working days' does not include Saturday or Sunday. If you send us an email on either of these days, it is extremely unlikely that someone will be able to get back to you.

Please have patience and someone will get back to you within the timeframe detailed above.