



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Moray College

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Date of most recent review: November 2011

Date of next review: November 2013

Responsibility: Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching

Approved by: Board of Management

Please ask if you, or someone you know, would like this document in a different format or language.

University of the Highlands and Islands students should note that The University of the Highlands and Islands has developed a UHI Student Complaints Policy and Procedure which can be viewed on the web-site at www.uhi.ac.uk. Although there are slight differences between the two policies, particularly with regards to timescales, the two documents complement each other.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Moray College students, employers of students and all other users of college services and facilities are entitled to expect the highest quality of service from the College at all times.

In respect of students, this applies from the time initial contact is made with the College; the processes of recruitment and induction; the quality of the learning and assessment experienced and to the support and guidance services provided. This equally applies to services provided when the student has left college, e.g. certification, graduation and the provision of references.

- 1.2 The objective of the complaints procedure is to describe the appropriate steps a student or other party should take in the event that they feel that the expected or stated level of service has not been provided.

2.0 General principles

- 2.1 It is expected that most issues of concern will be resolved without formal procedure. A student who considers that he/she has not had the quality of experience expected should discuss the matter directly with the member of staff most closely involved. If the student does not feel able to do this they should take advice from the Student Advice Manager.
- 2.2 Matters of general concern to a class, or a group of students, may be dealt with through their Student Representative on Course Committees, or other channels provided to encourage student involvement in College and Course operations.
- 2.3 Before contemplating using the formal procedure, students may wish to discuss the situation with their Student Adviser, Course Leader or the Student Advice Manager.
- 2.4 The formal complaints procedure should be used by individual students when they have been unable to gain satisfaction through informal approaches to the member of staff most directly involved and/or their Course Leader.
- 2.5 All complaints shall be notified in writing to the student's Director of Curriculum and Quality. Responses shall also be made in writing, normally within five working days of

the receipt of the complaint.

- 2.6 The student is entitled to be accompanied at any meeting held under the Complaints procedure. If the student chooses to be accompanied, the member of staff shall also be accompanied. No meeting shall take place with two members of staff and one student, or two students and one member of staff.
- 2.7 The outcome of all meetings held under the complaints procedure shall be written up by the member of staff convening the meeting and countersigned by the student who raised the complaint. Copies shall be provided for others attending the meeting. This shall be completed within five working days of the meeting.

3.0 Stages of the formal procedure

- 3.1 The student shall notify the Director of Curriculum and Quality in writing of the details of his/her complaint. It is important that the letter should identify instances as accurately as possible. Wherever possible, reference should be made to a specific item of College policy or procedure that it is alleged has not been adhered to.
- 3.2 The Director of Curriculum and Quality shall convene a meeting to consider the complaint. The meeting shall normally take place within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 3.3 The Director of Curriculum and Quality shall decide on the complaint and issue his/her findings in writing to all relevant parties, normally within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 3.4 Appeals against the decision of a Director of Curriculum and Quality shall be made in writing and lodged with the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching, normally within 10 working days of the letter communicating the decision of the Director of Curriculum and Quality.
- 3.5 The Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching shall decide on the appeal and will either reject or uphold this and may do so with or without holding a meeting to consider this matter. The Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching shall issue his/her findings in writing to all relevant parties, normally within 10 working days of receiving an appeal.
- 3.6 Where a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal to the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching they will be entitled to a final internal appeal to the College Principal, normally within 10 working days of the letter communicating the decision of the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching.
- 3.7 Where the initial complaint is against a Director of Curriculum and Quality and agreement cannot be reached, the matter shall be referred to the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching. The Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching shall conduct a hearing and will be accompanied by a colleague in dealing with the complaint. The student must also be accompanied.

The member of staff accompanying the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching

shall not be from the same Directorate as the student or the member of staff against whom the complaint was raised, and shall not have been involved at the previous stage of the procedure.

The Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching shall decide on the complaint and issue his/her findings in writing to all relevant parties, normally within 5 working days of the meeting.

- 3.8 In this situation appeals against the decision of the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching shall be made in writing and lodged with the College Principal normally within 10 working days of the letter communicating the decision of the Assistant Principal: Learning and Teaching.

4.0 Further steps

- 4.1 Students who remain dissatisfied after all internal stages of the process have been completed, may appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

5.0 Procedure for complaints by employers of students or other users of College services and facilities and members of the public

- 5.1 The complainant should write to the Principal's Office, explaining the nature of their complaint.
- 5.2 The Principal's Office will provide an acknowledgement within 3 working days and will seek to provide a response within 10 working days. If the college is unable to provide such a response within 10 working days (e.g. because of holidays), the complainant will be informed of the delay and the reason for the delay.
- 5.3 Anyone who remains dissatisfied with the College's response may appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at www.scottishombudsman.org.uk