

How to complain

A guide to the complaints procedure



How to complain

There are two ways of complaining:

1. Making an informal complaint

Discuss your concern first with your student learning adviser (SLA), your teacher or apprenticeship assessor and explain what you would like to be done about it. Usually they 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. Complaints will usually only be investigated if they are made within three months of the subject of complaint occurring.

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.

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, teacher or assessor, or if you prefer you may contact any member of the Student Services Team in the student common room.

How do I make a formal complaint?

1. Before making a formal complaint, try to resolve your concern with your SLA, teacher or 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 them. The table overleaf explains who the person responsible is.

i) If you go to see the person responsible, they 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.

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.

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.

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 days, including your grounds for appeal, by writing to the Executive Assistant:

Prunella D'Souza, Executive Assistant,
West Thames College London Road,
Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 4HS

Or email your appeal to
prunella.d'souza@west-thames.ac.uk.

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

Adult Courses;

GLA Skills and Employment Unit
Provider Complaints
Greater London Authority
169 Union Street London SE1 0LL

Or email to: aebcomplaints@london.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
website www.oiahe.org.uk

16-18 Courses;

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this appeal you can complain to the government department which provides our funding either by post or email to the relevant address below.

Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT

Or email to: complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT..	WHO TO COMPLAIN TO:
Learning Resources Centre	Marta Gajewska-Kopczyk (Vice Principal, Curriculum Quality and Student Experience)
Student Experience and Careers	Samantha Louisy (Director, Student Experience)
Teaching and learning issues (e.g. for Appeal Against Assessment)	<p>Business, ICT, Travel and ESOL Adult: Eric Stober (Director - Business, and Partnerships)</p> <p>English, Maths and ESOL: Reman Swidan (Director, Core Skills)</p> <p>Creative Industries, Supported Learning and Higher Education: Katrin Lehmann (Assistant Principal)</p> <p>Health, Care and Science: Carolyn Moncrieffe (Director, Health, Care and Science)</p> <p>Inclusion: Ann Tucker (Head of Inclusion)</p> <p>Skills+Logistics Centre, Feltham: Beverley McGuire (Director)</p>
Catering, Estates, Health & Safety, IT, Nursery and Security	Terry Stevens (Executive Director, Resources)
Finance, Enrolment, Fees/Refunds, Exams and HR	Mark Cooper (Director, Finance, HR & Development)

The relevant managers responsible will normally handle complaints related to their areas of work.