



Winston College of London

Version Control Statement

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next review
1	Aug 2024	New Policy		Assistant Principal Quality	Aug 2025

External Reference Points

The Complaints Policy provides practical guidelines on how Winston College of London (WCOL) will ensure that all learner complaints are dealt with fairly and according to the current policies relating to providers registered with Ofsted and funding partners

It is developed based on the QAA's UK Quality Code Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

As far as possible, this policy references and reflects the good practice guidelines from the Office of Independent Adjudicators.

Internal References

- Student Recruitment Selection and Admission Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- Appeals Policy



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Winston College of London (WCOL) Complaints Policy and Procedure

Scope: This policy and procedure apply to all learners at WCOL, current and those who have also completed their course.

External stakeholders can also recourse to this policy for raising a complaint.

Purpose: to ensure that learners have a clear policy and procedure to follow when submitting a genuine complaint.

Introduction

WCOL treats all complaints seriously and ensures they are dealt with promptly, transparently, fairly, consistently and efficiently.

The Complaints Policy is made simple and easy to follow to be Accessible to all learners and stakeholders:

- This policy is summarised into a simple procedure that should always be on display on all boards, and both the policy and procedure are distributed and explained to each learner during the Induction process
- Each learner is required to sign off the Induction checklist to confirm that they have been given the set of important documents which include the Complaints Policy
- The Complaints Policy is available from the College campus, on the website and through VLE

The Complaints Policy covers all complaints received, including formal and informal.

Each Complaint including the Appeal against the Complaint Decision should be internally dealt with within 90 days of the initial report.



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Complaints with a major effect on the learner will be given the highest priority about processing times and access to staff, processes, and stages at a higher level.

Wherever possible, WCOL aims to address learner concerns about their course and WCOL's services informally through discussion. Learners must raise their concerns locally, at an early stage, with their lecturer or any other member of staff.

Learners, stakeholders and staff have rights and responsibilities under this procedure. Consequently, complainants must make complaints in good faith and without malice.

Complainants who make complaints that are frivolous, malicious, obscene, or abusive may be subject to disciplinary action. All complaints will be confidential and only disclosed to individuals involved in the investigation.

This Policy respects complete independence:

- No person with any potential conflict of interest will be included in any complaint or appeals process or stage of such process where any such conflict or potential of such conflict exists

All complaints are additionally addressed with regards to enhancement procedures:

- the review process should capture any learning gained concerning the general welfare of the learners or for the enhancement of the learner's experience.

An anonymous complaint/comment box is located at reception for informal complaints for similar purposes as above.

The Learner Support Officer collects the complaints/suggestions from the box every week and will assess and monitor those complaints/suggestions.

Feedback from these complaints is discussed at appropriate meetings and communicated to learners verbally by tutors and on notice boards.

This policy is designed to ensure that:

- WCOL improves the learner experience systematically by learning from its processes, and other bodies' decisions and guidance, sharing this learning where appropriate
- Procedures are clear, accessible, inclusive, flexible, and reviewed regularly
- Explain the key terms clearly, describes processes and time limits accurately, covering all types of course and partnership arrangements



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- Learners / stakeholders raising issues and staff who are subject to complaints are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and are supported appropriately
- Considers cases thoroughly but proportionately. The required evidence in support of a case, and the decision, is proportionate
- Procedures follow principles of procedural fairness and are applied consistently. Decision-makers are properly trained and resourced and have no conflict of interest in the matter. Providers give clear, detailed reasons for their decisions
- Information is released only to those who need it to investigate or respond to the case
- Providers operate reasonable timeframes and allow identification of concerns, complaints and appeals that require swift action. Staff are encouraged to deal with matters informally where appropriate. Learners/ stakeholders are informed if any delays occur

Review Process

All complaints will be reviewed as follows:

- The Head of Operations maintains a register of all complaints/suggestions in a complaint's logbook. This helps WCOL to learn from the outcomes of concerns, complaints and appeals to improve the learner experience
- The Complaints logbook is normally presented to the next Standardisation Meeting for analysis, further action, and review.
- Records of such reviews are presented to the Board of Directors for further discussion and advice to ensure that senior managers involved in considering the outcomes of complaints processes
- Feedback from these reviews is disseminated back to the learners through the learner representatives and in some cases as notifications via the VLE.
- The Standardisation Meeting also assesses, monitors, and reviews the number, level, type and frequency of complaints and academic appeals made over the course of each academic year, during the Annual Monitoring Review.
- The Review report is discussed and signed off by the Senior Leadership Team.



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Who to speak to if learners/ stakeholders are dissatisfied with their experience of WCOL?

If learners are dissatisfied with any aspect of WCOL's services, they should speak informally to any of the following people in the first instance:

- Learner representative
- Subject Lead
- Lecturer
- Centre Manager, Program Leader, Head of Operations or the Principal and the Board of Directors, where the complaint is serious

Types of complaints considered under this Policy / Procedure:

Examples of grounds for complaint include:

- A failing in WCOL's academic or support services
- Inaccurate information about a program
- Inadequate provision of a program and/or related resources
- Inadequate facilities
- The conduct of a member of staff.

Learners must be registered on a program to lodge a formal learner complaint. The only exception to this is where learners have completed their program and have a complaint about any aspect of certification of their program (e.g. delays in receiving qualification certificates). Any complaints by external stakeholders will be monitored separately from learner complaints.

Exclusions from this Policy / Procedure

The following matters are excluded from this policy/procedure:

- Complaints against final grades or progress
 - Complaints against the admission procedures
- (These are dealt with in other policies and procedures)

Complaints procedure

There are three parts to the complaint's procedure:

- i) Informal stage (conciliation)
- ii) Formal stage
- iii) Appeal stage



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Informal stage (conciliation): Local resolution of the complaint: complaints are generally best dealt with by the people most closely involved with the issues. Therefore, learners should first discuss the matter either directly with the source of the complaint or with the person responsible for the program area.

Formal stage: making the complaint: if learners are dissatisfied with informal attempts at resolving the complaint, they should make a written complaint using the form in Appendix 1 and e-mail it to complaints@wcol.co.uk. The Head of Operations compiles the details of the complaints and hands them to the Assistant Principal Quality, who commissions a Complaints Panel to investigate and report its findings to the standardisation meeting to make the final for consideration. Acknowledgment of the receipt of the complaint will be sent within 5 working days. Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, the Learner Support Officer sends a copy of the complaint to them for their response. If the learner has been granted anonymity the name will be redacted. When the Standardisation Meeting has completed their consideration, they will determine one of the following:

- iv) that there is a substance in the complaint and what action(s) should be taken in response
- v) that there is no substance to the complaint and that no further action needs to be taken
- vi) that there is no substance to the complaint and that the complaint is malicious, obscene, or abusive. In this case, disciplinary action in line with WCOL's misconduct policy may be taken against the complainant.

Learners will be informed in writing of any action as a result of the complaint within 15 working days.

7.2 Appeal stage: learners may appeal against WCOL's decision by completing the form in Appendix 2 and e-mail it to appeals@wcol.co.uk within 15 working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of the complaint on the following grounds:

- i) there was a procedural irregularity which has materially disadvantaged the learner in making their complaint.
- ii) there is new and relevant material/evidence that was not available at the time the complaint was first submitted.
- iii) there is evidence that the complaint decision was unreasonable.

The Head of Operations compiles details of the appeal and submits it to the Board of Directors for further consideration.

The Board of Director (BOD) Office appoints an Appeals Panel which will decide either to:



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- i) confirm that the complaint has been resolved satisfactorily.
- ii) resolve the complaint.
- iii) hear the complaint a fresh.

The Appeals Panel should not include any other member of staff who may have been involved with the case as a member of the Complaints Panel.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

The Appeals Panel will normally be expected to complete its processes within twenty working days.

If the learner is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they can correspond with the appropriate external body or the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA). Full details for external recourse will be included in the Completion Letter.



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Appendix 1:

Learner Complaint Form

Before filling out this form, learners are requested to read the Complaints Policy and Procedure

Name:	
Learner Number:	
Year of Study:	
Tutor:	
Contact Address:	

Please identify the factor(s) you are not happy with and tick / check one or more, as appropriate. ✓

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff (<i>communication/performance</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment (<i>faulty/not available</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures (<i>rules</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Premises (<i>rooms</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please tell us details (grounds) regarding your complaint here:



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Appendix 1 (continued):

Please outline the preferred outcome to your complaint (i.e. how would you like to see your complaint resolved?)

Please read the following statement and tick the box to indicate your agreement.

☐

I have read and understood the WCOL Complaints Policy and Procedure. All the information provided on this form as well as any additional documentary evidence I have provided, are an accurate and true reflection of the situation that led to the complaint outlined above. I am aware that, regardless of the outcome of this complaint, this paperwork will be held in accordance with the Training Provider's Data Protection Policy.

Signed

Date.....

This Form is to be submitted to complaints@wcol.co.uk

You should receive a response in writing within **15 working days** of the Standardisation Meeting.

WCOL's Office use only:

Date Received.....

Passed to.....

Date

Outcome.....

☐

Learner informed of outcome

Date.....



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Appendix 2:

Learner Complaint Appeal Form

Before filling out this form learners are requested to read the Complaints Policy and Procedure

Name:	
Learner Number:	
Year / Days of Study:	
Tutor:	
Contact Address:	Email: Phone No:

Please identify the ground(s) for appeal. Please tick one or more, as appropriate. ✓

- ☐ there was a procedural irregularity which has materially disadvantaged the learner in making their complaint
- ☐ there is new and relevant material/evidence that was not available at the time the complaint was first submitted
- ☐ there is evidence that the complaint decision was unreasonable



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Appendix 2 (continued):

Please use the space below to explain the ground(s) for your appeal:

Please read the following statement and tick the box to indicate your agreement.

☐

I have read and understood the WCOL Complaints Policy and Procedure. All the information provided on this form as well as any additional documentary evidence I have provided, are an accurate and true reflection of the situation that led to the complaint outlined above. I am aware that, regardless of the outcome of this complaint, this paperwork will be held in accordance with the Training Provider’s Data Protection Policy.

Signed Date.....

This Form is to be submitted to Bod@wcol.co.uk
You should receive a response in writing within **15 working days** of the full complaint appeal being received by WCOL.



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WCOL's Office use only:

Date Received.....

Passed to.....

Date

Outcome.....

☐

Learner informed of outcome

Date.....