

## Southwark College Complaints Procedure

Despite being an organisation committed to the highest standards of education, training and service standards, Southwark College understands that occasionally our learners, students, apprentices, parents, employers, clients or other direct or third-party stakeholders may wish to express their formal dissatisfaction with our services by making a complaint to the college.

To enable complaints to be dealt with effectively Southwark College has a 4 staged complaints procedure through which we aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible:

### Stage One - Informal

- Your concerns should be raised immediately and no later than three months after its occurrence.
- Student concerns should be brought to the attention of the person, who in your opinion is responsible, your assessor / programme leader / curriculum leader in the first instance.
- Employers/parents/members of the public concerns in the first instance should be raised directly with the person, who in your opinion is responsible.
- If you do not know who to contact, then the issue should be raised formally using the College's Complaints weblink which can be found on the college website or by completing a College Complaint Form which can be collected from Student Services
- Whilst this is an informal stage, upon receipt of your complaint – Southwark College will record the complaint in the complaint log indicating the nature of complaint, date it was raised, outline resolution and date closed.

### Stage Two - Formal

If your concern is not resolved at Stage 1 or you feel the issue has not been responded to satisfactorily, you can take your complaint to Stage 2 of the College's Complaints Procedure.

- Stage 2 concerns should be raised within three months of exhausting Stage 1.
- Formal complaints are submitted to Southwark College's Quality Unit and are overseen by the Head of Quality.
- A formal complaint form should be submitted by completing the weblink on the Southwark College website or in writing, completing the College Complaints Form (available from the Student Services)
- Upon receipt of the complaints form, we will write to you or your representative within 3 working days, acknowledging receipt of your complaint.

- The complaint will be assigned to one of the Senior Managers from Southwark College, who will take responsibility to fully investigate the matter and provide a formal response within 10 working days. If we are not able to do so within this timescale the investigating officer will contact you.

### **Stage Three – Appeal**

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your Stage 2 complaint, you have the right to escalate your complaint to Stage 3.

- Stage 3 concerns should be raised within one month of exhausting stage 2
- You should put your complaint in writing, detailing the reason for your dissatisfaction and why you consider the response to the formal complaint (stage 2) to be inadequate.
- Stage 3 appeals should be sent to the office of the Principal
- The Principal will review the appeal, fully investigate the matter and provide a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 3 appeal. Where this is not possible, due to complexity, the complainant will be informed in writing.

### **Stage Four – Group and External Referral**

#### **For Further Education Complaints**

- Stage 4 concerns will be raised within one month of exhausting stage 3
- If your concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and the complainant remains unsatisfied, then a final appeal can be made to NCG's Chief Executive Office, Complaints should be addressed to Chief Executive's Office, NCG, Rye Hill House, Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7SA
- Before a complainant proceeds, they must have exhausted all stages above.
- Chief Executive's Office, NCG will provide a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 4 complaint. Where this is not possible, due to complexity, the complainant will be informed in writing, with an inductive timescale.
- If the issue cannot be resolved through the CEO's office, then the Executive Director of Quality, will notify the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) The complainant will be informed in writing that this is the next stage and that it has been actioned.

#### **For Higher Education Complaints**

- Stage 4 concerns will be raised within one month of exhausting stage 3
- If your concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and the complainant remains unsatisfied, then a final appeal can be made to NCG's Chief Executive Office, Complaints should be addressed to Chief Executive's Office, NCG, Rye Hill House, Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7SA
- Before a complainant proceeds, they must have exhausted all stages above.
- Chief Executive's Office, NCG will provide a formal response within 10 working days from receipt of the stage 4 complaint. Where this is not possible,

due to complexity, the complainant will be informed in writing, with an indicative timescale.

- If the issue cannot be resolved through the CEO's office, then the Executive Director of Quality, will notify Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The complainant will be informed in writing that this is the next stage and that it has been actioned.