



Stratford College London

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluating informal Student Complaints

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Stratford College London

Contents	Page
Background	4
The nature of the complaint	4
A new approach	5



Stratford College London

RECORDING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING INFORMAL STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Background

The College has a well-established complaints procedure, within which students can escalate their concerns internally and, if there is no satisfactory resolution, have recourse to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

When an informal complaint is made, the system for recording, monitoring and evaluating it, is less well developed. It is the aim of this new Policy to provide such a framework.

The nature of the complaint

The focus of a complaint may be any aspect of College provision. It may be raised as a concern on the part of a group or an individual. It may relate to the learning and teaching, to assessment, or to resources and planning. In any event, it represents a genuine concern on the part of the learner.

The learner is likely to raise the issue with any member of staff that they feel they have a relationship with. This is far more likely to be a module tutor or course tutor, than an identified manager. This raises a number of issues:

- All staff must be aware of their responsibilities in this context and the points of reference for actions.
- Informal complaints represent an important aspect of student feedback and should be treated as such.
- Individual complaints should be recorded and collated and used to enhance the provision.

As part of a recent Stratford College London QAA Review [December 2017] both staff and students were able to provide examples 'where issues have been effectively dealt with informally or through the student representative system' [Paragraph 2.60]. There was, however, 'no documentary evidence of how the College records and reviews informal complaints or appeals' [Paragraph 2.60]. This new Policy will resolve this perceived deficiency. All complaints, however small, must be recorded – and will be used to inform the College managers of any concerns.

Stratford College London

A new approach

All academic and/or administrative staff receiving a verbal complaint, however small, will record it in the Informal Complaints Booklet.

The template in the Informal Complaints Booklet is structured to accommodate detailed information on the student's concern. It is easy to complete. The completed template must be passed on to the college complaints coordinator for review, action and filing.

On a weekly basis, all informal complaints must be summarised and passed onto management for consideration.

This recording will be made clear to the learner initiating the complaint, who will be fully informed of any action(s) taken to resolve the issue.

All staff will receive training on the new recording strategy and given information on the various reference points that may represent a follow-up action.

No more than 5 minutes should suffice in most cases. Completed forms must be passed to the College Complaints Coordinator for review and action.

An analysis of the issues will be part of the College Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report. It will provide the College with opportunities to enhance the provision in the identification of pro-active measures to enhance the student experience.

This new Policy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness.