



PPA COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Complaints Policy and Procedure – Summary

Stage 1 Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dealt with informally between student and any member of PPA staff
Stage 2 Formal Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referred to Course Leaders• Acknowledged within 3 working days• Initial response with 10 working days
Stage 3 Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referred to Principal within 5 working days• Response within 10 working days
Stage 4 Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appealed to Company Director or De Montfort University• Response within 5 working days

STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy reflects the principles, good practice and procedures that relate to responding to student complaints.

For the purpose of this policy the term “student” is used to mean any student enrolled at PPA. Where the student is under 18, or classified as a vulnerable student, then their parent, guardian or caregiver may make a representation on their behalf, with the agreement of the student.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all services offered by the College.

This policy applies to all students who are enrolled at PPA (hereinafter referred to as “The College”). This policy applies to all students equally regardless of the race, gender, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation of the complainant and all complaints will be dealt with without prejudice. The time lines and principles of prompt response and right to appeal set down here apply to all student complaints.

For those students on the degree course, please find further information via the below link regarding the collaborative partner’s disciplinary procedure, which may or may not be used in specific cases:

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/exams-deferrals-regulations-policies/student-complaints/index.aspx>

All College staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure set out below.

COLLEGE ACCOUNTABILITY

- All College staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure set out below.
- The Management have the responsibility for tracking, recording and reporting on the outcomes of formal complaints.
- Members of the College Management Team and Course Leaders have a responsibility for resolving a complaint and leading or contributing to an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate.
- The College Principal is responsible for resolving complaints which have reached the appeals stage.
- PPA is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy is operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Principal, other senior post holder or members of the governing body.

1. Stage One - Informal

- Concerns should be raised in the first instance with any member of staff
- This should be done as soon as possible and not later than within ten days of the incident being reported. However, complaints made beyond this timeline will not be rejected for being out of time, but may prove more difficult to resolve satisfactorily
- Verbal complaints to staff should be referred to the Welfare Officer who, if not able to deal with it informally, will involve the Principal, who will deal with the initial complaint and, as appropriate, make a written submission on behalf of the student and forward it to the Principal

2. Stage Two – Formal

- If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should make a formal complaint in writing, or seek support from a member of staff to do so. This should be forwarded to the appropriate Course Leader who will acknowledge the complaint within 3 days and respond within 10 days
- The Course Leader to whom the complaint has been referred will investigate the complaint fully (or delegate a person to do this on their behalf whilst retaining responsibility for the outcome). They must make an initial written response within ten working days, providing a copy of correspondence to the Principal
- Where appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the complainant and the individuals they are complaining about to reach an agreed resolution

3. Stage Three – Review

- If the Course Leader is unable to resolve the issue, or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, it should be referred to the Principal for a decision, with a clear outline regarding what grounds the review is being requested on

The response will be one of the following:

- Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons
- Mediate an amicable settlement
- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, and take appropriate steps to address the issue and avoid a similar problem arising in future

All complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. Receipt of all formal complaints will be acknowledged. An initial response will be given within 10 working days and a further, more detailed response provided where appropriate. All formal complaints will receive a formal written response stipulating the outcome and the right of appeal where appropriate

4. Stage Four - Appeal

- If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the College's response to their complaint they may appeal in writing to the Company Director (Louise Pieri) or, if appropriate, De Montfort University. The appeal must be received within 10 working days of being sent the outcome of the complaint.
- The Company Director will review all the available evidence of the investigation and the College's response. The Company Director will respond within 5 working days

The response will be one of the following:

- Uphold the decision of the Principal
- Dismiss the complaint
- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, recommend appropriate steps are taken to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future

The complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome within five working days.

The decision of the Principal or De Montfort University is final.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL OR PPA

Complaints against the Principal should be addressed to the Company Director, or, where appropriate, to De Montfort University

UNSURE HOW TO PROCEED

For any instances where it is felt that the complaints procedure does not set down a precise course of action, reference should be made back to the underlying principles of natural justice and equity. When in doubt the basic principles of timely response, appeal and fair hearing should apply.

RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

The Principal will maintain a record of all formal complaints and their outcomes. Issues will be fed into the College's self-assessment and other quality improvement processes as appropriate.

Complainants will be advised that, while confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, it is not normally possible to resolve complaints without disclosing details of a complaint to relevant staff in order to allow the College a fair opportunity to resolve the issue.

All records relating to complaints should be retained for a maximum of three years

Policy Approved: August 2021

Due for Review: August 2022

