

Bury College Policy and Procedures

Complaints Procedure (incorporating appeals)

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V2.0	March 2015	Review following re-structure. Also at this review incorporated HE and ER provision into cross college procedures	KW	Awaiting adoption by Leadership Team

BURY COLLEGE'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Scope of this Procedure

- For the purpose of this document and the procedure it describes a complaint is the expression, verbal or written, of dissatisfaction with any service for which the College is responsible.
- An appeal against a grade or an assessment decision made internally is also covered by the procedure described here.

Complaints will be monitored and administered centrally by The Head of Standards, under the supervision of the Deputy Principal, and will be used to inform managers on what action to take that will lead to improvements in provision and a satisfactory resolution, whenever possible, for the complainant. The Deputy Principal will monitor the complaints and outcomes through the college reporting procedures.

Section A: How to Complain

If you have concerns about any of your experiences at or with Bury College, please follow the procedure below in communicating your concerns so that the college can support you in achieving a satisfactory resolution to your complaint and respond appropriately to the concerns you have raised.

In all cases, complaints will, as far as possible, be treated as confidential and discretion will be exercised in the conduct of any investigation in order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Stage 1 – Informal Procedure

- 1.1 For current students: In the first instance, please take up the matter with the person(s) concerned, for example, other students involved, your Group Tutor/Academic Support Mentor, Subject Tutor or Assessor. Other staff members that may be able to help with your complaint at this stage are:
 - Other group tutors, subject tutors or assessors
 - Student Services staff
 - A Pastoral Manager

- 1.2 If you are not a current student please speak to reception staff, or Student Services.
- 1.3 For Employers - In the first instance, please raise your concerns with your designated Tutor, Assessor or Business Development Advisor. If this is not appropriate, our Business Solutions hotline may be able to quickly resolve your concerns (0161 280 8650).
- 1.4 All other Stakeholders – in the first instance please contact a member of reception staff or Student Services.

Your problems may be resolved informally through a discussion or explanation with the staff stated above, or other college representatives that they consult.

If you cannot or do not resolve your concerns through discussion with these individuals, you should follow Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Registering and resolving a formal complaint

- 2.1 If your problems or issues are not resolved informally at Stage 1, you may wish to make a formal complaint.
- 2.2 You should put your complaint in writing or complete a Feedback Form available from reception areas at all main centres, in the Learning Resource Centres, in Student Services, and on the Bury College website.

Please send your complaint, as indicated on the Feedback Form, to:

The Head of Standards
Millennium Centre - Bury College
Market Street, Bury.
BL9 0DB.

If you need assistance completing the form, please ask at one of the locations stated above and assistance will be provided for you.

- 2.3 The Head of Standards, or their nominee, will log your complaint, and refer it to an appropriate member of the Bury College staff to investigate, as part of the investigation you may be asked to meet the person undertaking the investigation.

The Head of Standards will also acknowledge receipt of your complaint, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of your written complaint or a completed Feedback Form, and confirm that it is under investigation.

- 2.4 You will receive a second written response to your complaint within 20 working days of receipt of your written complaint or completed Feedback Form. This response will address the complaint, detail the findings of any investigation and propose a resolution or indicate that a resolution has been put in place.

- 2.5 In certain circumstances, an investigation may take longer than 20 working days to resolve. In such cases, you will be contacted and the progress made will be discussed with you. A timescale for a full written response, as described in 2.4 above, will be agreed with you as part of this discussion.

Stage 3 – Appeal against a formal resolution

- 3.1 If you are dissatisfied or unhappy with the process or the resolution provided or proposed, you may make an appeal against it. Any appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days and addressed to:

The Deputy Principal
Enterprise Centre - Bury College.
Market Street, Bury.
BL9 0BG

- 3.2 The Deputy Principal will, acknowledge receipt, review the documentation, the investigation and the resolution and come to a judgment on the validity of the appeal. The possible judgements are:

- i. appeal rejected - the original resolution will be pursued.
- ii. The appeal is upheld – the Deputy Principal will propose an alternative resolution to the appellant.

- 3.3 The Deputy Principal will communicate any the judgment arrived at to the appellant within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal.

Stage 4 - Final stage Appeal to the Principal

- 4.1 If the original complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction after an appeal to the Deputy Principal, you may take your complaint to the Principal. The Principal's decision is final and any resolution that the Principal proposes will be implemented. The Principal will respond within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal.

No further steps are available to a complainant. **For students on Higher Education programmes refer to Section C**

Section B: Complaints from individuals about the awarding of grades, qualifications and results

- 5.1 If you believe that your externally marked assignments or examination results are wrong or inaccurate, you should inform your tutor and the College's Examinations Department. The College will then arrange for an Enquiry About Results (E.A.R.). In most cases, this would involve a re-mark. Once the result

of this is received you may wish to appeal against the decision. There is always a fee for an E.A.R. Students cannot appeal directly to an Awarding Body.

- 5.2 If you believe that your internally assessed assignments are inaccurate, you have the right to appeal against the awarded grade. In order to do this, you should follow the procedure below:

Section B.1: Appealing against an internally assessed grading decision

Stage 1: Informal review

- 1.1 Make an appointment to see the tutor/s who graded the work. They will go through the relevant materials with you. You should ask for full verbal feedback against the exam board criteria. The feedback should clearly illustrate the standard you have reached when measured against the grading criteria.
- 1.2 This meeting may help you to understand and accept your grade and it will give the grading staff an opportunity to hear your concerns and you can re-consider your grade in the light of this.
- 1.3 As part of this discussion, the grading tutor should indicate whether the original grade should stand or whether there are grounds for an internal re-mark and a possible change in the grade awarded.
- 1.4 The grading tutor, should inform the Lead Internal Verifier or Curriculum Manager for the provision, who will arrange for any re-mark to be carried out by another member of the assessment team.

Stage 2: Formal review

- 2.1 If you are unhappy with the tutor's judgement that a re-grading will result in no change to the grade, or with the result of an internal remark supervised by the Lead IV or Curriculum Manager, you may decide to launch a formal appeal and put your concerns in writing to the Head of Standards.
- 2.2 The Head of Standards, or their nominee, will review the grading decisions reached and decide whether a further re-mark is justified. Head of Standards will notify you in writing of this decision within 10 working days of receipt of your letter of appeal.
- 2.4 If a re-mark is deemed justifiable by the Head of Standards, this will be carried out and the result notified to you within 20 working days of receipt of your letter of appeal.

Stage 3: Final grading decision

- 3.1 Where one re-mark has been carried out, and it is within 5% tolerance of the original mark or grade, the original mark should stand. If the re-mark is outside

5% tolerance of the original mark, the Lead IV or Curriculum Manager will arrange for a further re-mark.

- 3.2 Where two re-marks have been carried out, the higher of two marks within 5% tolerance of each other will be awarded as the final grade. If none of the three marks are within 5% of the others, the middle of the three marks should be awarded as the final grade.
- 3.3 The decision of the re-grading procedure will be final. It is important to remember that a re-grade will not necessarily result in a higher grade and could result in a lower one.

If you are unhappy with the final grading decision, you are invited to take your concerns to the Deputy Principal, who will appoint a nominee to review the procedure and to determine whether the final grade is fair. Such a review will take place within 10 days of receipt of your appeal to the Deputy Principal and you will be contacted in writing to tell you if the Final Grading Decision is upheld by the Deputy Principal. If it is upheld, the Final Grading Decision will stand. If it is not upheld, an external verifier will be asked to grade the work and this grade will be final in all cases.

Section C: Making a complaint about a Higher Education course or service

The term Higher Education course or service within the context of this policy refers to the following types of qualifications:

- HND's awarded by Pearson
- Foundation Degrees (FdA, FdSc) validated by a University
- Degrees (BA, BSc) validated by a University
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education 14+ (PGCE) validated by a University
- Certificate in Education 14+ validated by a University

Students individually, or in the case of a group of students, the nominated Student Representative, should follow the procedures as described in Stages 1 - 4 above.

If the student is studying on a HE course which is validated by a University, the next step once stages 1 - 4 have been completed without resolution is to follow the procedures of the relevant University:

The complaints procedure for programmes awarded by the University of Bolton is available via the following link:

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/studentinformation-policyzone/Home.aspx>

The complaints procedure for programmes awarded by the University of Cumbria is available via the following link:

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/AboutUs/Services/AQD/AcademicReg.aspx>

The complaints procedure for programmes awarded by the University of Salford is available via the following link:

http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/academic_handbook

If the University complaints procedure is exhausted without resolution the University will issue the student, or in the case of a group of students, the Nominated Student Representative, a Completion of Procedures Letter which is required for any review of the complaint by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

If the student is studying on a Higher Education programme validated by Pearson (BTEC), the next step once stages 1 - 4 have been exhausted without resolution is for Bury College to issue the student, or in the case of a group of students, the Nominated Student Representative, with a Completion of Procedures Letter by the Head of Standards which is a required for any review of the complaint by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

Referrals to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator must be within three months.

Appeals against Academic Board Decisions

The Appeals procedure for programmes awarded by a university are available via the following links:

University of Bolton:

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/studentinformation-policyzone/Home.aspx>

University of Cumbria:

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/AboutUs/Services/AQD/AcademicReg.aspx>

University of Salford:

http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/academic_handbook

Student studying on HNC/HND programmes awarded by Pearson may submit an Academic Appeal regarding the decision of the Assessment Board on the following grounds:

- That circumstances affected the student's performance which the Assessment board had not been aware of when the decision was taken and which might have material effect on the decision
- That there was an administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process
- That there was evidence of prejudice, bias or improper assessment on the part of the examiners.

Appeals will be ruled as invalid on the following grounds:

- Disagreement with any unit grade awarded will not constitute grounds for appeal. An appeal which disputes the academic or professional judgement of the examiner and or the Assessment Board will not be considered
- Appeals for reconsidering or remarking of any component of assessment unless a case of irregularity is being claimed
- Appeals outside the specified time will not be considered

- Appeals by a third party will be considered unless the student, or recent graduate, is incapacitated

All appeals will be dealt with confidentially, unless disclosure is necessary to process the appeal. In this event the student will be notified in advance of the disclosure

Students will not be disadvantaged in any way as a result of making an appeal, whatever the outcome, if that appeal has been made in good faith. Requests for appeals must be in writing and state the ground(s) for the appeal. Documentary evidence must be provided. Appeals should be made to

The Head of Standards
Bury College
Millennium Centre
Market Street
Bury
BL9 0BG

An appeal may be made by any student who is enrolled onto a BTEC HNC or HND programme or is a recent graduate within 10 working days of the official publication date of the results

The Head of Standards, or their nominee, will review the decision of the examiner and the Assessment Board and decide whether or not the claim for appeal is valid. The Head of Standards will notify the student in writing of the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the letter of appeal

If the claim for appeal is deemed valid, the Head of Standards will consult with the Chair of the Assessment Board to achieve an appropriate adjustment to the original decision. This will be carried out within 20 working days of receipt of the letter of appeal

If the appeal is not satisfactory approved, the student may take the appeal to the Deputy Principal, who will appoint a nominee to review the claim and to determine whether or not the final grade is fair.

The review by the Deputy Principal will take place within 10 days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The student will be contacted in writing to inform them of the decision

If the claim for appeal is deemed to be valid, appropriate adjustments will be made to the original decision

If the claim for appeal is deemed invalid. The student may make an appeal in writing to Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team. Further information on this process can be found via the following link:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf

This document can be made available in large print or in an alternative format to meet your needs. Please contact

- Sally McCullagh, Head of Standards
Tel: 0161 280 8425

