

# STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Condé Nast College is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to study and provides academic and support services to facilitate the achievement of your target award. However, we recognise that from time to time students may wish to raise issues regarding the academic, administrative, support or other services provided by the College.

Condé Nast College is committed to managing complaints in a way that:

- Is timely and efficient, to facilitate a speedy resolution
- Is fair and transparent to all parties
- Promotes informal conciliation such as mediation, where appropriate
- Promotes feedback and best practice to inform staff and enhance the student experience

## PRINCIPLES

All complaints are taken seriously and students are not penalised for making a genuine complaint. The College expects that students will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints. Students who do submit such complaints may be subject to Student Disciplinary proceedings.

The complaints procedure operates on the principles of natural justice:

- All the parties involved in a complaint have the right to be accompanied by a friend
- There are two sides to every dispute
- All parties are given the opportunity to provide evidence to substantiate their version of the issue/ incident
- Full disclosure of any allegations or evidence will be made to those parties involved in the complaint

Students are expected to have met their obligations and responsibilities as member of the College with regard to:

- Meeting their academic commitments
- Acting in accordance with College regulations
- Behaving with reasonable consideration for other students and staff

All information provided regarding a complaint will remain confidential for use within the complaints process and is subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Only staff directly involved with the complaint will be given access to confidential information.

Anonymous or third-party complaints will not be accepted

## STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

- Students are expected to try and resolve any complaints locally with the relevant staff member/Department, in the first instance.
- All complaints should normally be made within 21 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern. Staff can be contacted in writing or by email and should normally respond to your complaint within 21 days or where this is not possible, advise you of the anticipated timescale.

- Students should keep a record of their action taken to resolve the complaint and keep copies of any relevant correspondence.
- If you are unsure of who you need to contact regarding your complaint, then the Director of Operations will be able to advise you.
- If it is not possible to resolve your complaint locally then you can submit your complaint under Stage 2 of the Student Complaints procedure.

## STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION

- Where the complaint has not been resolved or satisfactorily dealt with locally, then a student can submit a formal complaint. Students will be expected to provide details of their attempt to resolve the matter locally.
- All formal complaints should be made to the Director of Operations within 21 days of the last verifiable attempt at local resolution. Where it is not appropriate for a complaint to be submitted for local resolution a formal complaint should normally be made within 21 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern.
- If a complaint is submitted outside the advertised deadlines then the complaint will be deemed out of time and the College reserves the right not to progress the complaint.
- Students should complete a complaint form and provide appropriate evidence to support any allegations they make [evidence may include signed witness statements, letters, emails and any other relevant information]. Where a student fails to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate their allegations, the College reserves the right not to progress the complaint further.
- Students are required to specify the remedy they seek and/or the desired outcome to their complaint.
- Completed Student Complaints Forms and relevant evidence should be submitted to the Director of Operations.
- Students will receive a formal acknowledgement within 5 working days of submitting a complaint form to the Director of Operations.

There are a number of ways in which the complaint may be progressed at this stage, depending upon the nature of the complaint. Students will be notified of this in writing.

Such action may include:

- A meeting with an adviser to clarify matters of procedure
- Forwarding the complaint to a named person in the relevant Department who will investigate the matter locally and provide a written response to the complaint
- Mediation facilitated by the adviser[s]
- Where the complaint is complex and/or contains serious allegations against staff or students, the Director of Operations will either:
  - appoint an independent Investigating Officer to investigate the circumstances of the complaint

or

- arrange a Formal Hearing of the complaint.
- Wherever possible the College will seek to facilitate an early resolution of the complaint. The College aims to provide a response within 30 working days of submission of the complaint. Should this not be the case, the student will be kept informed of any likely delay and the reasons for the delay, at the earliest opportunity.
- Students will receive written notification of the outcome of their complaint from the Director of Operations. This will include whether the complaint is upheld or not and any further action to be taken.

### STAGE 3 – APPEALS

Where a student believes that the student complaint procedures have not been followed correctly or their complaint has not been appropriately addressed or the decision regarding the outcome of their complaint is unreasonable, they have the right to appeal within 21 days of the date of the notification letter.

- The grounds for the appeal should be clearly stated in writing and sent with full supporting evidence, in the first instance
- The appeal will not consider new evidence.
- The student will be formally notified in writing of the decision, normally within 30 days.
- Certificate and Foundation students, who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal and believe that the College has failed to follow this procedure correctly, may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- BA and MA students, who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal and believe that the College has failed to follow this procedure correctly, may take their case to the validating partner the University of Buckingham. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome from the University of Buckingham they may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.