

Guide to Making a Complaint

1 About this Guide

- 1.1 This guide should be used by anyone looking to make a complaint about CDN.
- 1.2 The Company Secretary is responsible for this policy and should be contacted in the first instance for further information (contact details at 2.3).

2 Organisational Commitment

- 2.1 The organisation takes complaints seriously and values the feedback it receives. The organisation aims to deal with any complaints quickly and efficiently avoiding the need for written complaints wherever possible.

However, should the matter necessitate a written complaint the procedures detailed below should be followed.

2.2 What is a complaint?

A complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers/stakeholders about action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the organisation or on its behalf.

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- a failure to provide a service
- an inadequate quality or standard of service
- a request for information which has not been actioned or answered
- the organisation's policies
- wrong information about programmes or services
- the quality and availability of facilities and learning resources
- accessibility of buildings or services
- the behaviour of a member of staff or contractor/consultant
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor/consultant
- disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (such as an appeal) to resolve the matter
- failure to follow the proper administrative process.

Note: This list is not exhaustive.

A complaint is not (this list intends to act as a guide only, please contact the Company Secretary for further guidance):

- a routine first-time request for a service/activity
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a claim for compensation from the organisation
- issues that are in court/tribunal or have already been heard by a court/tribunal
- disagreement with a decision where a right of appeal exists
- a request for information under Data Protection or Freedom of Information legislation
- a grievance by a member of staff

- an attempt to have the organisation reopen or reconsider a complaint it has concluded or given a final decision on.

2.3 Contact details for complaints

Postal address

Gayle Watson
Company Secretary
College Development Network (CDN)
Airthrey Castle
University of Stirling
Stirling, FK9 4LA

Email address

gayle.watson@cdn.ac.uk

Note: For further information on this guide or the organisation's services please call 01786 272400.

3 **Complaints Procedure – Part A, Making a Complaint**

3.1 General

A complaint can be made in person, by phone, in writing, by email, or by using the complaints form (attached below).

It is easier for the organisation to resolve complaints if they are made quickly and directly to the department/area of work concerned. With this in mind, where possible, the organisation encourages those with complaints to talk to a member of staff working in the department/area the complaint relates to so they can try to resolve any problems/concerns immediately.

When making a complaint the following information should be provided:

- full name, address and email address (if applicable)
- as much information as possible about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how the matter can be resolved.

3.2 Timeline

Complaints should, where possible, be made within:

- six months of the event/incident being complained about
- six months of finding out that there is a reason to complain (as long as this is no longer than 12 months after the event itself).

In exceptional circumstances, the organisation may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit noted above.

4 **Complaints Procedure – Part B, Next Steps**

4.1 The complaints procedure has three stages:

4.1.1 *Stage 1 – frontline resolution*

The organisation aims to resolve complaints quickly and close to where it provided, for example, the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

The organisation aims to give its decision of Stage 1 within five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the organisation cannot resolve the complaint at this stage, it will explain why and state what the person making the complaint can do next. The organisation may suggest that the individual take the complaint to Stage 2.

4.1.2 *Stage 2 – investigation*

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint:

- those that have not been resolved at Stage 1
- those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 the organisation will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days
- discuss the complaint with the individual/s making the complaint to understand why they remain dissatisfied and what outcome they are looking for
- give a full response as soon as possible; certainly within 20 working days.

If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, the organisation will communicate this to the individual/s involved so revised time limits and feedback processes can be agreed.

4.1.3 *Stage 3 – Chair of the Board*

If the individual/s making the complaint remains dissatisfied with the explanation or course of action then the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Chair will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision that may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may require that further/different action be taken.

The outcome of the decision will normally be communicated in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the communication confirming the individual/s remain dissatisfied.

Where a full response within 20 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the individual/s indicating when a response will be forthcoming.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

5 **FAQs**

5.1 *Questions: Why does your guide not refer the matter to SPSO?*

Answer: The organisation is not a public body (it is a private limited company) and it not included on the SPSO's list of bodies:

<https://www.spsorg.org.uk/sites/spsorg/files/2014.05.20BodiesUnderSPSORemmit2013.pdf>

This guide is however, based on 'The Further Education Model Complaints Handling Procedure'



<http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/news/model-chps-for-higher-and-further-education-published>

Complaints Form

This form should be posted/emailed to:

Gayle Watson
Company Secretary
College Development Network (CDN)
Airthrey Castle
University of Stirling
Stirling, FK9 4LA

Email: gayle.watson@cdn.ac.uk

Name	
Address (inc post code)	
Email	
Telephone / Mobile	/
Details of the complaint	
Desired outcome	
Signature	
Date	