

# COMPLAINTS POLICY OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

### 1. Introduction

The Open Training College prides itself on the quality and standards of the programmes and services it delivers, and on its relationship with each individual student. As part of Quality Assurance procedures students are regularly asked for their feedback on all aspects of programme and service delivery, which informs the Programme Boards, and subsequently amendments and improvements to programmes and services. The allocation of a personal tutor to all students also provides a safe environment in which students can air any grievances they may have and discuss alternative supports that will work towards resolving their situation at a local level.

However, it is recognised that not all such complaints will be resolved satisfactorily at this level, thus this policy and related procedures are presented to provide students with the opportunity to take any unresolved complaints to the management of the College for further consideration. It is the policy of the College to take all valid complaints seriously and to strive for a speedy, equitable, timely and courteous solution.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide students and staff with a clear understanding of the students right to air a grievance and / or make an informal or formal complaint.

### 3. Scope

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all registered students of OTC.

### 4. Policy Statement

The OTC (the 'College') is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to have an excellent College experience. In order to achieve this all members of staff aspire to a high level of competency, fairness and professionalism. There may be circumstances where College systems, processes, human error or sub-standard performance on a specific occasion result in a student having a genuine grievance. It is the policy of the College to provide resolution mechanisms to address issues that may arise. However, should the student proceed to making a complaint the OTC has adopted complaints procedures and developed guidelines on how to make an informal or formal complaint that are outlined in the Student Handbook.

In making a complaint the complainant can expect:

- **Fairness:** taking into account any relevant or appropriate evidence, factors or circumstances
- **Listening:** in a courteous and professional manner
- **Responsiveness:** respond in a timely and sensitive way
- **Feedback:** keep the complainant informed of how the complaint is being processed
- **Learning:** use the information generated to help us improve our service
- **Confidentiality:** any individual named in a grievance will be provided with the details of the grievance and allowed to respond

The student has the right to seek advice from or to be accompanied by a nominated person or a member of College staff at any stage in the procedure.

All complaints that highlight gaps in College policy and procedures will be reviewed and utilised to develop policy and procedure for introduction in the following academic year. Policy and procedures relating to all College regulations are communicated to students annually through the Student Handbook and on the College website.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Programme Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 days.

The College Director has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of academic policies. The Head of Quality & Academic Affairs has overall delegated responsibility for coordinating the day to day operation of the policies and the development, maintenance and monitoring of supporting procedures. Programme Directors and Tutors are responsible for pursuing the implementation of these policies in relation to the activities of their programmes.

A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Programme Director. This can be sent via letter, e-mail or fax.

## **6. Sanctions**

A student will not be penalised in any way for lodging a grievance in good faith regardless of whether or not then grievance is upheld. However, where a grievance is found to be malicious in nature actions may be taken. No College staff named in a grievance procedure will suffer any unnecessary penalty for being involved in a grievance procedure.

## 7. Definition

### Formal Complaint

A formal complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with service or treatment received while participating in any Open Training College programme, which impacts negatively on the success or wellbeing of the student in question, and which requires the involvement of College management to resolve. Formal complaints relate to matters that cannot be addressed through another procedure, e.g. the appeals procedure in relation to assessment or plagiarism.

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