

The Complaint Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy.

All College staff, including those in variable hours and business support roles, are responsible for providing excellent customer service to everyone who uses RHACC services. This involves ensuring that all complaints are:

- Taken seriously
- Treated with sensitivity and professionalism
- Dealt with promptly
- Dealt with objectively and fairly
- Logged and evaluated so that they can be used to further improve the learner experience

### **Making a Complaint**

The College will look in to all complaints made within 3 months of the incident.

Complaints made after this time will not usually be looked in to unless information is received that the individual was not able to make a complaint sooner due to e.g. serious and long term ill health that is evidenced by a doctor's letter or certificate.

All complaints made within three months of the incident will be logged, investigated and acknowledged within 5 working days.

Complaints can be made by:

- **Writing** to the college, senior or specific staff members.
- **In person**
- **Phoning** Feedback on 0208 4395030
- **Completing a feedback card**
- **emailing** [feedback@rhacc.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@rhacc.ac.uk).
- **Completing the website feedback form:** <https://www.rhacc.ac.uk/contact-racc/feedback>

### **Procedure for Investigating Complaints**

1. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective systems are in place to deal with complaints. The Principal will not look in to complaints directly but will hear appeals and will carry out regular reviews of the College Complaints Policy and Procedures.
2. The Director of Finance and Resources and the Vice Principal – Teaching and Learning are responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints within business support services and academic areas respectively.
3. They will assign complaints to the relevant manager to investigate the complaint. This will usually be the manager responsible for the service that is the subject of the complaint. An independent manager/Head of School may be asked to conduct the investigation if appropriate.
4. Feedback will contact the complainant to tell them who is investigating their complaint.

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5. The Investigating Manager will contact the complainant to check that they have all relevant information, to ask any questions or to seek clarification, as appropriate.
6. The Investigating Manager will evaluate all relevant information and provide a report with recommendations to Feedback and the Director of Finance and Resources or the Vice Principal – Teaching and Learning as appropriate.
7. The Investigating Manager will ensure that their recommendations are made in a timely manner so that the complainant will receive an outcome within 20 working days. If, in exceptional circumstances, the Investigating Manager becomes aware of a reason why the investigation cannot be concluded within working 20 days they will notify Feedback immediately. The Principal will make the decision as to whether the response period will be extended. If the decision is made to extend the response period Feedback will notify the complainant and inform them of the date that they will receive an outcome.
8. The Director of Finance and Resources or the Vice Principal – Teaching and Learning will decide whether the complaint should be upheld or not upheld and how the learner feedback and information provided can inform improvements to College services.
9. A complaint made about the Director of Finance and Resources or the Vice Principal-Teaching and Learning will be investigated by the Principal and will follow the same timescale and process as other complaints.
10. A complaint made about the Principal will be investigated by a governor nominated by the Chair of the Governing Body and will follow the same process and timescales as other complaints.

**Feedback will notify the complainant of the outcome of their complaint within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint.**

### **The Right to Appeal**

11. Complainants who are unhappy with the outcome of their complaint have the right to appeal against the outcome if:
  - They have reason to believe that the investigation did not take into account all relevant and available information
  - New information has come to light

The complainant must contact Feedback within 20 working days of the date on the response letter stating reasons for the appeal and any action the complainant is seeking.

12. The Principal will investigate the appeal or delegate the responsibility to a member of the executive team providing they have not previously been involved with the case.  
The complainant may be invited to attend an appeal meeting to discuss their concerns.

The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or family member. An accompanying person cannot take active part in the proceedings but can provide support to the complainant.

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13. The complainant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 20 working days of the College receiving the appeal, or within five working days of an appeal hearing.

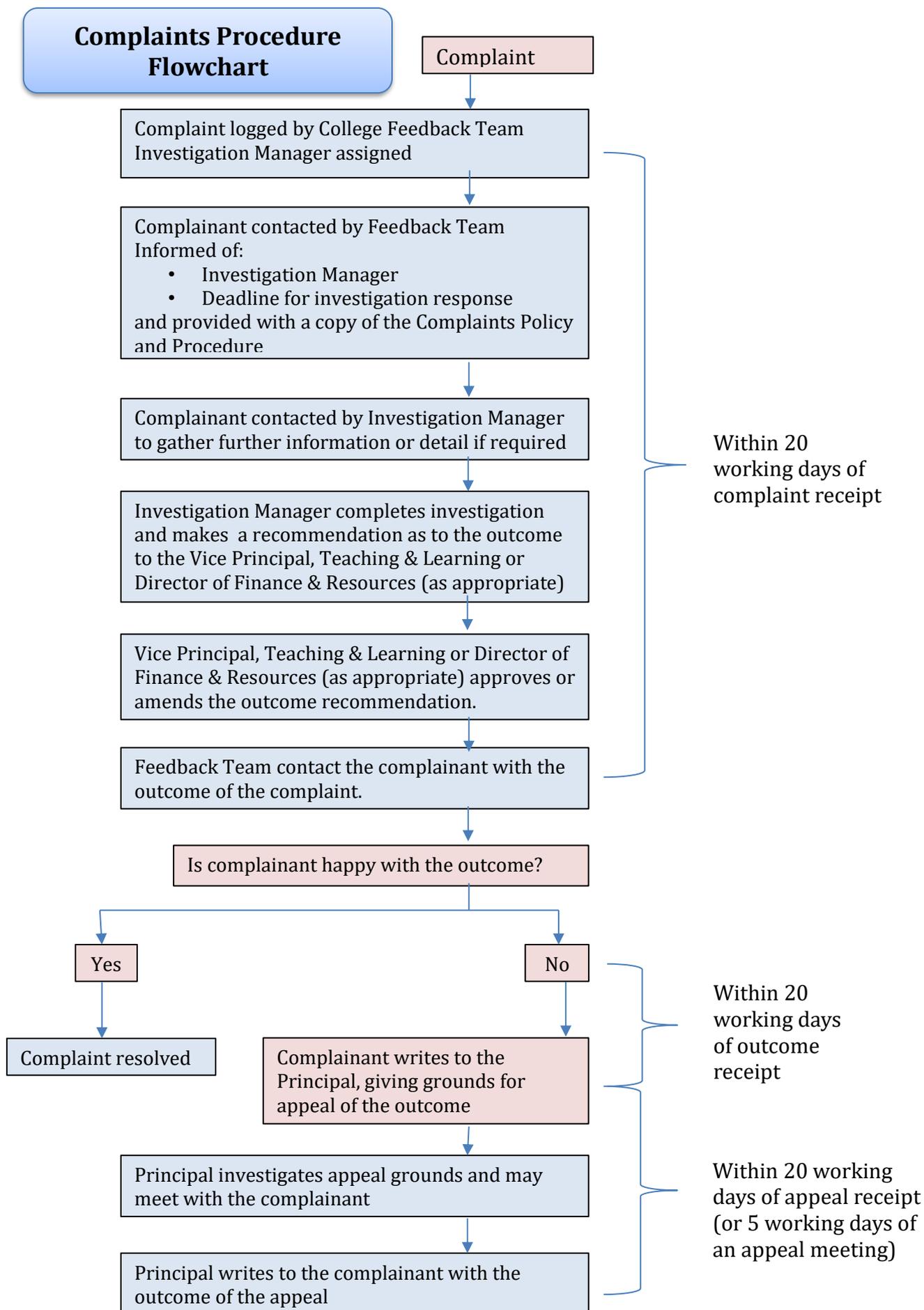
**The following outcomes can result from an appeal:**

- The complaint decision is upheld and the appeal is rejected
- The complaint decision is not upheld and the original decision is overturned
- The complaint decision is partially upheld

The decision of the Principal is final.

14. If the appeal concerns a complaint made about the Director of Finance and Resources or the Vice Principal-Teaching and Learning that has been investigated by the Principal the appeal will be heard by the Chair of the Governing Body or a governor nominated by them.
15. If the appeal concerns the outcome of a complaint made about the Principal, investigated by a governor nominated by the Chair of the Governing Body the appeal will be heard by the Chair of the Governing Body.

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### External Avenues

If, following the outcome of their complaint and after the appeal has concluded, the complainant remains dissatisfied they can take the matter further by contacting one of the following:

If you are a learner resident in the GLA area:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/contacting-city-hall-and-mayor-5/complaints>

If you are a learner resident outside of the GLA area:

The Education & Skills Funding Agency      Email: [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk)  
The Complaints Team  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

The link here sets out the procedure:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

### For Higher Education Learners

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) exists to review individual complaints by learners against higher education providers. In cases where a complaint has not arrived at a satisfactory resolution through internal processes, learners on certain HE Courses may take complaints to the OIA.

Learners may only complain to the OIA if they are studying on a higher education (HE) course. According to Rule 16.2 of the OIA, the following are considered to be HE courses, for this purpose:

- a Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- a Higher National Diploma (HND)
- a Foundation Degree
- a first degree, eg BA, BSc or B.Ed
- CertEd (teaching qualification in the FE sector)
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
- a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
- Initial Teacher Training courses which lead to Qualified Teacher Status (in the school sector) or the Diploma in Education and Training in the FE sector
- Postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates, including doctoral degrees

Learners may also complaint to The Office for Students (OFS).

Before bringing a complaint to the OIA or OFS, a learner must normally have completed the HE provider's internal complaints or appeals procedures to give the HE provider the chance to resolve the issue internally. This will mean that the student is unhappy with the outcome of their appeal or complaint and there is no further internal recourse available. RHACC will issue

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the learner a 'Completion of Procedures' letter to show that the internal complaints procedure is concluded.

For information on how to complain to the OIA, refer to this OIA leaflet:

[http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia\\_intro\\_leaflet\\_16pp.pdf](http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia_intro_leaflet_16pp.pdf)

For information on how to complain to the OFS contact:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/notifications-and-complaints/complaints-by-students-or-staff/>