Richmond & Hillcroft Adult & Community College

Complaints Procedure

1. Aim

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

1.2 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:

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

1.3 It is the College's expectation that most complaints will be resolved informally and promptly and without the need to the need to follow the Complaints Procedure.

2. Making a Complaint

2.1 The College will look into all complaints made within 3 months of the incident.

2.2 Complaints made after this time will not usually be looked into 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.

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

2.4 Complaints can be made by:

2.4.1 **Writing** to the college, senior or specific staff members.
2.4.2 **In person**
2.4.3 **Phoning** Feedback on 020 8891 5907 Ext 5030
2.4.4 **Completing a feedback card**
2.4.5 **emailing** feedback@rhacc.ac.uk
2.4.6 **Completing the website feedback form**: https://www.rhacc.ac.uk/contact/feedback

3. Procedure for Investigating Complaints

3.1 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.

3.2 The relevant Executive member is responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints within business support services and academic areas respectively.

Owner:	Head of Quality	Approved by:	Board
Review interval:	3 Years	Approved on:	July 2026
Date of next review:	July 2029	Post to website:	Yes

3.3 The Head of Quality 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.

3.4 Feedback will contact the complainant to tell them who is investigating their complaint.

3.5 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.

3.6 In the case of complaints about teaching and learning quality the Investigating Manager will carry out an observation of the class or tutorial concerned.

3.7 The Investigating Manager will evaluate all relevant information and provide a report with recommendations to Feedback and the Head of Quality. In the case of a complaint about teaching and learning quality, the Investigating Manager will complete an Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment and, within the associated report, will clearly state whether there is evidence to uphold the complaint or not or whether further investigation is required.

3.8 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 Feedback Team, in liaison with the Investigating Manager, 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.

3.9 The Head of Quality will review the Investigation Manager's recommendation as to whether the complaint should be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld and confirm the outcome. The Feedback Team will consider how the learner feedback and information provided can inform improvements to College services.

3.10 A complaint made about a manager will be investigated by their manager and will follow the same timescale and process as other complaints.

3.11 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.

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

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4. The Right to Appeal

4.1 Complainants who are unhappy with the outcome of their complaint have the right to appeal against the outcome if:

4.1.1 They have reason to believe that the investigation did not take into account all relevant and available information

4.1.2 New information has come to light

4.2 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. The Feedback Team makes a recommendation to the Principal as to whether an appeal should be heard, in the light of the above criteria.

4.3 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.

4.4 The complainant may be invited to attend an appeal meeting to discuss their concerns.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

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

4.7.1 The complaint decision is upheld and the appeal is rejected

4.7.2 The complaint decision is not upheld and the original decision is overturned

4.7.3 The complaint decision is partially upheld

4.7.4 The decision of the Principal, or Executive team member, is final.

4.8 If the appeal concerns a complaint made about a senior manager, 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.

4.9 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.

5. **External Avenues**

5.1 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:

5.2 If the course has been funded by:

Greater London Authority
Email: skillscomplaints@london.gov.uk

Skills and Employment Unit
169 Union Street
London SE1 0LL

The link here sets out the procedure:

Guidance for learner complaints | London City Hall

5.3 If the course has been funded by:

Department for Education (DfE)
Email: complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk

Use DfE's customer help portal to make a complaint, or write to:

Customer Service Team,
Department for Education
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

The link here sets out the procedure:

Complaints about post-16 education and training provision funded by DfE - GOV.UK

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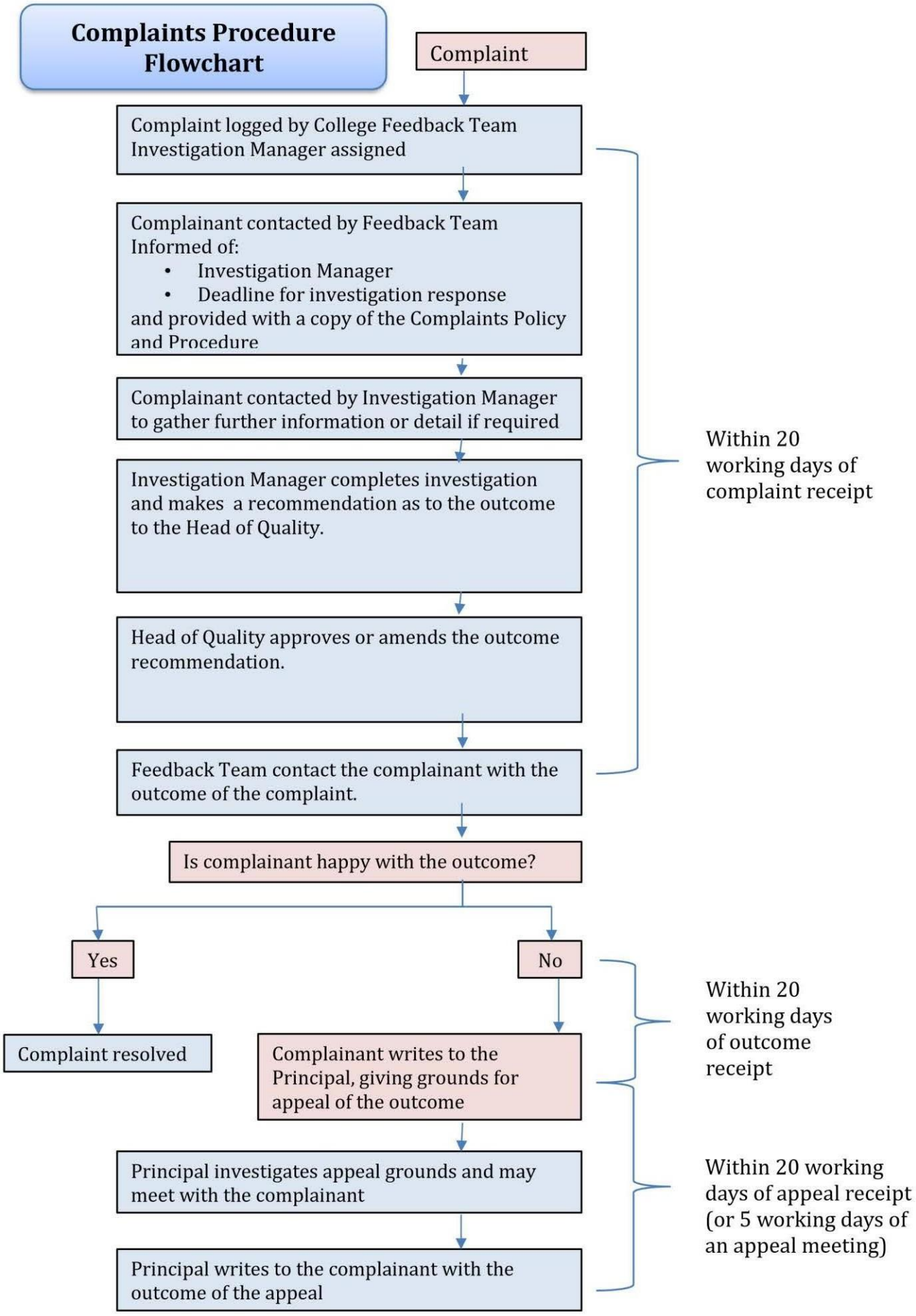
Complaints Procedure Flowchart
Complaint
Complaint logged by College Feedback Team Investigation Manager assigned
Complainant contacted by Feedback Team Informed of:
• Investigation Manager
• Deadline for investigation response
and provided with a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure
Complainant contacted by Investigation Manager to gather further information or detail if required
Investigation Manager completes investigation and makes a recommendation as to the outcome to the Head of Quality.
Head of Quality approves or amends the outcome recommendation.
Feedback Team contact the complainant with the outcome of the complaint.
Within 20 working days of complaint receipt
Is complainant happy with the outcome?
Yes
No
Complaint resolved
Complainant writes to the Principal, giving grounds for appeal of the outcome
Within 20 working days of outcome receipt
Principal investigates appeal grounds and may meet with the complainant
Principal writes to the complainant with the outcome of the appeal
Within 20 working days of appeal receipt (or 5 working days of an appeal meeting)