

Complaints and Grievances Procedure

1. Introduction

GC Academy values the feedback of its students, staff, and stakeholders, and is committed to addressing all concerns in a fair, consistent, and timely manner. This Complaints and Grievances Procedure outlines the steps available to individuals who feel they have been treated unfairly, discriminated against, or subjected to unsatisfactory academic, administrative, or service experiences.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all students and staff who wish to raise concerns related to academic, administrative, or behavioral issues. It covers complaints about staff conduct, course delivery, academic fairness, harassment, discrimination, and institutional processes.

3. Guiding Principles

The complaints process is guided by the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Timeliness and responsiveness
- Protection against retaliation
- Right to representation and support

4. Informal Resolution

Complainants are encouraged to seek informal resolution in the first instance. This can involve a direct conversation or written communication with the individual or department involved. Informal resolution should occur within 10 working days of the incident, where possible.

5. Formal Complaint Procedure

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the following steps apply:

1. Step 1: Submission

The complainant completes the official Complaint Form and submits it to the Quality Assurance (QA) Office. The complaint must be lodged within 20 working days of the relevant incident.

2. Step 2: Acknowledgement

The QA Office will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and assign a Case Officer to handle the matter.

3. Step 3: Investigation

The Case Officer will gather evidence, conduct interviews (if necessary), and ensure that both the complainant and respondent are heard. The investigation should be completed within 15 working days.

4. Step 4: Outcome

A written decision, including findings and any corrective actions, will be issued within 5 working days after the investigation concludes.

5. Step 5: Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may submit an appeal within 10 working days. The appeal will be reviewed by a senior member of staff not previously involved.

6. Record Keeping

All complaints and outcomes are recorded and stored securely by the QA Office. Anonymised data may be used for institutional quality improvement and reporting.

7. Support and Representation

Complainants may be accompanied by a trusted representative, such as a student union member or colleague, during any formal meetings. Emotional and academic support is also available through the Student Support Office.

8. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

GC Academy reserves the right to take disciplinary action if a complaint is found to be deliberately false, misleading, or intended to cause harm.

9. Policy Review

This procedure is reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation or institutional policy. Any updates will be published on the Academy's website and communicated via email.

