

IBCM Student Feedback and Complaints Policy

1.0 Purpose

IBCM is committed to providing all students with a positive and welcoming environment which is fully inclusive and where each student is able to fulfil their potential, both educationally and personally. The College has a number of policies and procedures in place to ensure that all students are treated fairly and have equal opportunity to succeed in their chosen course.

The College seeks to involve students in all aspects of their experience, seeking to engage with them by both formal and informal means. We welcome and encourage feedback from students and will use this feedback as part of the commitment to continuous improvement of the services provided.

This policy is designed to:

- Confirm the commitment of IBCM to welcoming and encouraging student feedback and highlighting the ways that learners can provide this feedback
- Recognise that there will be occasions when mistakes will be made or the service provided will not meet an individual's expectations and they wish to make a formal complaint. This document sets out the procedure to follow in these instances.

2.0 Scope

- This policy applies to all students on IBCM programmes – whether participating in face to face learning, blended delivery or distance learning. It applies across all programmes including accredited qualifications, professional programmes and in-house courses.
- Complaints in relation to assessment decisions are covered by the IBCM Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures.
- This policy does not cover staff complaints which are covered in the staff handbook.

3.0 Responsibilities

- **All College Staff** have a responsibility for receiving feedback and complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure set out below.

- **Programme leaders** have a responsibility for dealing with feedback and complaints and trying to resolve these informally, or processing them through the formal means detailed below.
- **The Principal (Managing Director when appropriate)** is responsible for processing complaints which have not been resolved during the previous stage. In conjunction with the Quality Manager he/she is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy and procedure are operating effectively and reviewing as required.
- The **Board of Governors** may become directly involved if the complaint cannot be resolved through the earlier stages and/or if the complaint is directed against a member of staff. The board of Governors comprises Senior Managers together with external independent representatives. The Board decision will be final except in instances below.

4.0 Feedback and Complaints procedures

4.1 Informal Feedback

- Students are encouraged to discuss concerns around their programme or student experience with their tutors and/or their programme leader or the centre manager (who also acts as the Welfare Officer) depending on the nature of their concerns. The college operates an “Open Door” policy and students are able to approach members of staff and talk through issues with them.
- Each tutor will conduct tutorials with their students and this will also provide the opportunity for the student to feedback any areas of concern. The Programme Leader will conduct Learner Progress Reviews termly with students – these are two way meetings enabling the student to be informed of their progress towards their qualification and giving them an opportunity to express concerns, request support, raise any issues or make suggestions.
- Students may be interviewed as part of the Internal Quality Assurance process which will also provide opportunity to share their views.
- When there are sufficient numbers of students, a student forum will be in place and this provides an ideal place for students to discuss their programmes and identify issues to take forward or make positive suggestions as to how their experience could be improved.
- As above, all student feedback is taken seriously and will be followed up at staff, management and/or Governing Body meetings. Any resulting actions, changes etc will be documented and fed back to students using the most appropriate method (this could be one to one meetings, or staff/student meetings, or in writing)

4.2 Formal feedback and complaints

When it has not been possible for an issue to be resolved via the informal mechanisms above, or the student is not satisfied with the response received, they are able to take their complaint further using the official complaints process detailed below.

- The College usually expects complaints to be made by the person concerned, although it will consider complaints made by a learner's representative.
- Anonymous complaints cannot be investigated.

Stage One – Programme Leader

- The student should complete an official IBCM Complaints Form. This should be passed to their Programme Leader who will acknowledge receipt of this in writing.
- The Programme Leader will respond in writing within one working week explaining what has happened as a result of the complaint. If the complaint involves a member of staff, specific detail of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that our employees are afforded appropriate dignity at work.
- If the complaint requires further investigation, the Programme Leader will advise the complainant of the actions that are to be taken and the timescale for a response to be provided.

Stage Two – Senior Manager

- If the complaint is not resolved at the above stage, it will go to an appropriate manager, for example the Academic & Quality Manager, the Principal or Managing Director.
- The Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within ten working days and a final reply will be completed within 4 working weeks to allow time for any formal investigations to take place.

Stage Three – Board of Governors

- If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the response then the matter will go to the full Board of Governors which has representation from external personnel (including the Chairperson) who are independent to IBCM. The student will be advised of the date of the Governors meeting and that they will receive a response no later than one week after the meeting (no more than three weeks in total).

- It is expected that the decision of the Board of Governors is final, although for some issues, and on some programmes, students can then take their complaint to the next stage which would be the relevant Awarding Body for their qualification.

Stage Four – external

- As above, there may be issues where the complainant has cause to take their complaint to the relevant awarding body. Students will have been given full programme information and contact details at their induction.
- All students have a final recourse to the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)** and will be provided with contact details if they wish to pursue this option.
- It is envisaged that the total comments/complaints procedure should be finalised in no more than 13 working weeks unless (a) there are exceptional circumstances in which case the complainant will be kept informed of progress and/or (b) that the student has decided to pursue their complaint externally to the Awarding Body and/or to the OIA.
- ***No complainant bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably by any member of staff. If there is evidence to the contrary, the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.***

5.0 Legislation

The Human Rights Act 1998 applies to the operation of this policy.

6.0 Monitoring & Evaluation

- The administrator/Programme Leader should maintain a confidential record of complaints dealt with and produce reports for analysis at Management and Governors meetings. These will then feed into the College's quality improvement processes.

7.0 Reference Points

The following policy and procedure documents support the information in this policy:

- IBCM Learning and Teaching Policy
- IBCM Assessment and IQA Policy
- IBCM Disciplinary Policy
- IBCM Student Welfare Policy
- Student Handbook
- Complaints Form

10.0 Version History

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