

External Complaints Procedure

Date:2026-2029

Accessibility Statement

If you have any learning difficulty, disability or health problem, that means you are unable to use the complaints procedure in the way laid out in this document, or you may require additional support to help you with the process, please contact the College Complaints Officer at:

complaintsAdvice@hca.ac.uk to discuss how the process can be adjusted to support your needs.

Should you require this guide in an alternative format please contact the College Complaints Office.

Document Control

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hereford College of Arts ('the College'), welcomes constructive feedback on its activities, both positive and negative, and recognises that the public, or external organisations may feel their expectations have not been met by the College, its staff or its students.
- 1.2 The College endeavours to address these incidents and learn from these occurrences when appropriate. This procedure intends to make the process of dealing with external complaints simple and result in a response being sent to the complainant in a timely manner.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The College will:
- a) Consider external complaints impartially and professionally within a reasonable timeframe;
 - b) Give fair and full consideration to complaints made in good faith;
 - c) Respect the privacy of complainants and disclose only the information necessary in order to process the complaint.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This procedure may be used by anyone not employed or enrolled by the College (where other College policies may apply) who has been affected by the College's activities, except where the matter falls within one of the categories listed under 3.2 below.
- 3.2 This procedure does not apply to:
- a) Complaints made anonymously;
 - b) Complaints where more than 28 days has elapsed between the incident and the date the complaint is made, unless in exceptional circumstances as judged by the Principal or their nominee;
 - c) Complaints which would be more appropriately addressed under another College Policy or Procedure, including but not limited to:
 - Release of information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information Acts;
 - Complaints by registered students of the College or parents/carers of such students on their behalf;

- Contracts, insurance claims and other commercial and financial transactions.
- 3.3 The College will consider complaints which are made in good faith and reserves the right to decline to consider any complaints it considers frivolous or vexatious, or to enter into continuing correspondence about such complaints, and reserves its rights to take any further action which it regards as appropriate in respect of such complaints.
- 3.4 In the event that the College receives a group complaint, or a complaint from a member of a group, then the College requires that one person be appointed to act as correspondent for that group for the purposes of this procedure.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 Complaints can usually be resolved quickly and satisfactorily on an informal basis. If, when a complaint arises, a member of College staff is present, the complainant should initially raise the issue with the staff member:
- a) If the complaint can be resolved in that moment, the member of staff will resolve.;
 - b) If the complaint cannot be resolved in that moment, the staff member will forward the complaint to the College Complaints Officer (complaintsadvise@hca.ac.uk) to log the complaint and direct to senior staff as appropriate.
- 4.2 Should the concern arise when there are no College staff present, complainants should contact the College Complaints Officer at complaintsadvise@hca.ac.uk. The College Complaints Officer will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and direct the complaint to the Principal or their nominee.
- 4.3 Complaints should normally be communicated as soon as possible after becoming aware of the concern and in any event normally within 28 days of the situation arising. The aim is to resolve the problem directly, informally and as quickly as possible.
- 4.4 A response to the complaint will be communicated to the complainant in writing normally within 10 working days either from the College Complaints Officer, or the member of staff appointed to investigate and resolve the complaint
- 4.5 Should the complaint be more serious, the Principal or their nominee may formally carry out an investigation

- a) The staff member investigating the complaint is responsible for determining the actions needed to investigate and bring the complaint to a satisfactory conclusion. These may include interviewing witnesses.
- b) They will provide a written response to the complaint, normally within 15 working days. Where the investigation cannot be completed within that time for good reason (such as staff unavailability, or because the matter is complex), the complainant will be provided with a revised timescale.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 5.1 The nature, incidence and outcomes of complaints will be regularly monitored by the College Complaints Officer presenting and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team. This will also form part of the College's Annual Report to Board Committee.

6. Related Policies

- 6.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedure
- 6.2 Short Course Complaints Policy
- 6.3 Admissions Policy and Procedure
- 6.4 Freedom of Information Policy
- 6.5 Data Protection Policy
- 6.6 Complaints Against the Corporation
- 6.7 Staff Grievance Procedures (available to staff via College Staffnet)