SUGGESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

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<th>Responsible Senior Manager:</th>
<th>Vice Principal – Business Services &amp; People</th>
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<td>Approved by:</td>
<td>Corporation</td>
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HAVANT & SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE
SUGGESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to advise students, parents and customers on the service they can expect to receive and how the College deals, monitors, reports and reviews Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints (SCC).

Definition of a Suggestion is a proposal, proposition or recommendation made by a student or external customer

Definition of a Compliment is an expression of praise, commendation or admiration made about the college or a member of its staff by a student or external customer

Definition of a Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service or product delivered by the college made by a student or external customer

Summary of the Policy

The Policy will clearly define the processes used to monitor, report and review SCC’s and will conclude with the SCC Procedure. It will report on who is responsible and the delivery of timescales. The policy will lay out the key stages and how the SCC’s are reported on.

The key stages are set out as below
A – Making a Suggestion, Giving a Compliment and Making a Complaint
B – The Complaints Handling Process
C – Outcomes and Resolutions
D – Appeals
E – Recording SCC
F – Monitoring SCC
G – Feedback
H – Conclusion
I – Equality Impact Analysis

Section A: Making a Suggestion, Giving a Compliment and Making a Complaint

1.1 Students or external customers can contact the College either by face to face contact, email, or post to offer a suggestion, compliment or complaint. A form is available for this purpose. The College will acknowledge the suggestion, compliment or complaint within 2 working days and will be put forward to the SLT team for consideration by the Senior Customer Services Adviser. The student or external customer may be contacted with the outcome of the discussion if necessary.

1.2 A student or external customer may raise a complaint with the College via face to face, email or post. The complainant will be given a reference number and an explanation of the procedure.

1.3 Wherever possible complaints are to be handled by the Senior Customer Services Adviser and/or the Director of Curriculum/Head of Department/Manager in the first instance. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this early stage the complainant will be advised to use the second stage of the procedures and if unsuccessful will be advised on how to appeal.
1.4 The second stage of the complaints procedure is to be used when the matter deemed too serious to be dealt with in the early stage.

1.5 In exceptional circumstances a complainant may wish to make an anonymous suggestion, compliment or complaint. The College will make every effort to support a request of this nature where possible, although it should be noted that this may restrict the level of investigation possible to resolve the situation. It should be noted that where complaints are related to safeguarding or other legal duties the College may have a duty to refer the matter onwards to the Police or other statutory bodies and therefore anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

1.6 In accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the College also operates a Whistleblowing procedure which is applicable to all staff including agency staff, students, volunteers, contractors and suppliers operating under contract to the College.

Section B: The Complaints Handling Process

2.1 The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days, the Senior Customer Services Adviser will endeavour to resolve the complaint at this stage and will log the interaction.

2.2 If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be given a reference number and contact details of whom to get back to if unhappy. The complaint will be sent to the appropriate Director of Curriculum or Learning Manager/Head of Department/Manager to fully investigate the complaint. They will have up to 10 working days to investigate the matter, but will endeavour to propose a resolution which we hope will meet with the satisfaction of the complainant as quickly as possible.

2.3 All complaints will be treated appropriately through dialogue and mutual understanding. The College will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and resolved and such issues will be treated in confidence with impartiality. If the complainant is required to attend in person as part of an investigation into a complaint, they are entitled to bring a friend, relative or advocate with them.

2.4 All complaints will be dealt with as promptly as possible within the clearly defined timescales. Where it is not possible to meet these timescales, the complainant will be informed of progress.

2.5 If the complaint cannot be resolved or the complaint deemed too serious, the complainant will be advised of the next stage of the complaints procedure.

2.6 At the second stage, the complaint should be made in writing or by email to the Principal’s Executive Assistant, Havant & South Downs College, College Road, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8AA. Complaints will also be accepted via a member of our Customer Services team on 023 9387 9999 or in person to have scribed by a member of the Customer Services team.

2.7 The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days and the matter will be looked into as soon as possible by the Deputy Principal, Vice Principal Business Services & People, Vice Principal Finance & Facilities or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, dependent on the complaint.

2.8 A full and considered response to the complaint will be given within 10 working days and any actions that need to be implemented taken as soon as possible.

2.9 In exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to give a final response within 10 working days, in such cases the complainant will be kept fully informed of the reasons for the delay and progress towards the resolution of the complaint.
2.10 If complainant is dissatisfied with the decision reached regarding the complaint they can appeal in writing to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and the decision will be final.

Section C: Outcomes and Resolutions

3.1 At each stage of the complaints process one of the following outcomes will apply:
   a) A complaint is resolved in full and where appropriate some form of action is taken.
   b) A complaint is not resolved; clear reasons will be given to the complainant who will choose to take no further action or will take the complaint to the next stage.

Section D: Final Appeals to external agencies

4.1 In the event of the complaint not being resolved following appeal to the Principal, the complainant may contact the Complaints Adjudicator, Skills Funding Agency, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT.

4.2 If the complaint relates to Higher Education provision, the College may involve the University where the matter cannot be resolved within the College. If after the investigation the complainant is not happy with the outcome, they can request a ‘Completion of Procedures Letter’ informing of the right to bring the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. More information can be found via the website http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx

4.3 Where the University of Portsmouth or the University of Chichester are the awarding organisations, learners are able to utilise the University’s own complaints procedure once they have exhausted Havant & South Downs College’s procedures if they are not happy with the outcome.

4.4 In case of ISTD qualifications learners should contact the Head of the ISTD Customer Services & Quality Assurance Department, Imperial House, 22 - 26 Paul Street, London EC2A 4QE.
4.5 Flow diagram of the process

- Contact College
  - Response – 2 days
- SCC
  - Resolved
- Complaint passed to DoC/HoD/Manager
  - Investigation – 10 working days
- Stage 2
  - Investigation Deputy/Vice Principal
  - 10 working days
- Log Suggestions/Compliments/Complaints
  - Feedback
  - Resolved/NFA Logged
  - Report sent to Vice Principal
  - Monitored for trends etc.
  - Yes:
  - No:
    - Yes:
      - No:
        - Appeal
Section E: Recording SCC

5.1 All SCC’s will be recorded on the SCC Form and will be assigned a reference number.

5.2 All Complaints will be evaluated for impact to the College with regards to:-
Financial
Reputation
Retention
Safeguarding

5.2 All complaints will be categorised by:-
Teaching & Learning
Equality & Diversity
Safeguarding
and by Department
Other

Section F: Monitoring SCC

6.1 The Senior Customer Services Adviser will monitor the Complaints for Impact, Trends and Lessons Learnt.

6.2 A weekly report summarising the complaints will be sent to the Vice Principal who will report back to the Senior Leadership Team through meetings.

6.3 A yearly report will be discussed with the Governors at the end of the academic year.

6.4 A report on Higher Education complaints will be discussed at the HE Quality & Standards Annual Meeting.

Section G: Feedback

7.1 The Customer Services team will randomly contact customers who have made a SCC and gather feedback on the service provided and implement suggestions where possible.

Section H: Conclusion

9.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to send SCC’s to the Senior Customer Services Adviser for recording on the SCC Form.

9.2 The SCC procedures and policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Customer Services Adviser.
### HAVANT & SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

**DATE:** September 2015

**Function:** Equal Opportunities

This policy, plan, procedure, process has been examined for equality impact, i.e., the impact that this function will have on different groups of actual and potential learners, service users and staff taking account of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 *(age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).*

1. **If Equality Impact Analysis is not relevant to this function, give reasons and proceed to section 5 below.** Not applicable

2. **In what ways could this function have a negative impact on any of the groups above? What actions have been taken to eliminate these?** Groups of learners with disabilities may have difficulty in accessing certain methods of providing feedback to the College. This has been addressed by providing a variety of methods, both written and verbal including provision of a scribe if required to provide maximum opportunity to provide feedback. The College will make every effort to provide a member of staff fluent in a relevant language to act as a support for speakers of languages other than English if requested or required.

3. **In what ways could this function have a positive impact on any of the groups above? How will this function be used to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups? Are there plans for the future which will further advance equality?** By ensuring that the Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Policy is followed any incidences of unfair treatment reported can be investigated, ensuring that the college is able to identify and monitor any trends relating to bullying or discrimination.

4. **What evidence supports your judgment e.g. consultations, observations, expert opinions, quantitative or qualitative surveys? If the evidence is in the form of an additional document, where is it stored?** Feedback from disabled students accessing complaints procedure (see complaints log), best practice as identified from collaboration with other FE colleges to review collective approach to Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints

5. **Name and job title of manager responsible:** Becky Abrey, Vice Principal Business Services and People
Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Havant & South Downs College is committed to providing a high quality service. We actively encourage and welcome feedback from everyone using our services. Please contact us when you wish to put forward a suggestion, offer a compliment or make a complaint. We are committed to using the suggestions, compliments and complaints made to review and improve our services.

The College complaints procedure has 3 stages

1. First Stage – resolving complaints through discussion
2. Second Stage – after all other avenues have been exhausted or if the matter deemed too serious to be dealt with in the first stage
3. Appeal – if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation

Aim of the Procedure

1. Respond professionally to suggestions, compliments and complaints in a timely manner.
2. Record and implement, as appropriate, suggestions and compliments and to resolve any complaints.

Havant & South Downs College believes that it is in everyone’s interest to deal with complaints fairly, promptly and effectively. Our aim is to keep you informed of the progress of the complaint and the personnel concerned. No student, parent or customer will be disadvantaged by making a complaint. In order for us to make sure we are providing an excellent service you may be contacted by one of the Customer Service team to see how we did.

How to contact us

Should you wish to contact us with a suggestion, compliment or complaint regarding our services, please inform us by e-mailing customerservices@hsdc.ac.uk, visit/write to us at Customer Services, Havant & South Downs College, South Downs Campus, College Road, Waterlooville, PO7 8AA or call us on 023 9387 9999.

Where English is not your first language, Customer Services hold a database of speakers of other languages who will be able to assist you with a suggestion, compliment or complaint.

Please provide as much of the following information as you can:

- Your name and address
- A telephone number
- A student ID number
- An e-mail address
- A clear reason for your communication
- If known, the service or department your communication should be forwarded to.

What Happens Next?

Complaints Procedure

FIRST STAGE

Once a communication has been received, the College will acknowledge receipt of your communication within 2 working days when you will be given a reference number. An appropriate Director of Curriculum/Head of Department/Manager will be appointed to fully investigate your complaint agreeing with you a method of response. We will propose a resolution which we hope will meet with your satisfaction as early as we can; please allow up to 10 working days for the investigation. We may contact you to further discuss the matter and if it is taking longer than anticipated we will let you know when we expect to reply.

Confidentiality

If requested, every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality. However, where a complaint is against an individual, it is likely that your identity will have to be revealed at some stage in order for there to be a fair investigation. The College will endeavour to inform you of the extent to which your identity is likely to be revealed at each stage of the process. Your confidentiality will be maintained in the publication of all monitoring reports.

What to do if you are still not happy

This may happen occasionally and you may feel that you should contact us again restating the issue and confirming that you have tried to resolve the complaint through the first stage of the procedure. We would then advise you to follow the second stage of the procedure.

SECOND STAGE

The second stage of the complaints procedure should be used when the matter is deemed too serious to be dealt with in the first stage of the procedure, outlined above, or has not resolved the matter at that stage.

A complaint should be made in writing or by email to the Principal’s Executive Assistant, Havant & South Downs College, South Downs Campus, College Road, Waterlooville Hants, PO7 8AA. Complaints will also be accepted via a member of our Customer Services team on 023 9387 9999, or in person, to have scribed by a member of that team.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days and the matter will be looked into as soon as possible by the Deputy Principal or Vice Principal, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, dependent on the complaint. A full and considered response to the complaint will be given within 10 working days and any actions that need to be implemented taken as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to give a final response within 10 working days; you will be kept fully informed of the reasons for the delay and progress towards the resolution of the complaint. If you are required to attend in person as part of an investigation into a complaint, you are entitled to bring a friend, relative or advocate with you.

If the complaint relates to Higher Education provision, the college may involve the University where the matter cannot be resolved within the college. If after the investigation you are not happy with the outcome you can request a ‘Completion of Procedures Letter’ informing you of your right to bring the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. More
information can be found via the website http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx

In case of ISTD qualifications learners should contact the Head of the ISTD Customer Services & Quality Assurance Department, Imperial House, 22-26 Paul Street, London EC2A 4QE.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the decision reached regarding your complaint you can appeal in writing to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and the decision will be final.

In the event that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact the Complaints Adjudicator, Skills Funding Agency, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT.

Where the University of Portsmouth or the University of Chichester are the awarding organisations, students are able to utilise the University’s complaints procedure once they have exhausted Havant & South Downs College’s procedures if they are not happy with the outcome.

Feedback

From time to time a member of the Customer Services Team will contact a complainant to see how the complaint was handled and to find out if there is any more that can be done to improve the service.

The Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Policy, which fully outlines the purpose, procedures and reporting of Suggestions and Complaints, is located on the College Website www.hsdc.ac.uk.