



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Version	Last revised	Next review date	Policy Owner	Notes
Version 1.0	May 2021	May 2022	CEO	Version 1.0 is the revised former policy and procedure
Version 1.1	Sept 2022			Slight amends to text; temp removal of flow chart ; temp removal of list of " reference to" policies
Version 2.0	Mar 2022	Mar 2024		Slight amends to text but full reformat with current house style template

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Policy

1.1 National Extension College (NEC) places a significant emphasis on customer feedback and views the complaints process as a valuable tool for contributing to ongoing improvements to the quality of our services. The policy of NEC is to respond to all suggestions, whether positive or negative, in a prompt and courteous manner. All complaints will be treated seriously.

1.2 The objective in this policy is to:

- ensure NEC customers know how to provide both positive and negative feedback and how this information will be handled by NEC.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently and fairly within specified time frames.
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are used to monitor and improve our products and services.

1.3 Definitions of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer, whether justified or not. Anyone may make a complaint if they feel NEC, NEC tutors or employees have:

- failed to provide a service to an acceptable standard;
- delayed in providing a service;
- made a mistake;
- failed to act in a professional way.

2. Minimum Expectations

2.1 All complaints will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt.

2.2 We will try to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all parties within ten working days of receipt.

2.3 We will ensure that we will:

- Listen to all feedback and treat all complaints as confidential, sharing information only with NEC staff or tutors whose input is essential to resolve the complaint.
- Investigate complaints fully, fairly and within stated time frames.
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any rights of appeal.
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be taken as a result of their complaint.
- Record compliments and complaints received, and report on these monthly to internal management and annually to the Board of Trustees.

3. Protocol for Responding to Complaints

- 3.1 Formal acknowledgement of the complaint, with, where relevant, a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedures, will be confirmed within two working days of receiving the complaint. This communication will inform the complainant that they will receive a full response within ten working days. Should it be likely that the ten working day response time will not be met, the complainant will be kept informed and advised when a response will be made.
- 3.2 All complaints will be treated as confidential and will be handled with sensitivity.
- 3.3 All communications, either from the complainant or from NEC to the complainant, will be securely logged on NEC internal systems.
- 3.4 The Education and Quality Manager will ensure that a full response to the complaint is provided within ten working days, wherever possible. When this is not possible, explanation will be given to the complainant within ten working days, this will include a proposed schedule for response.
- 3.5 The final response should include an explanation to the complainant of how to take their complaint further, (if necessary).
- 3.6 On receipt of a complaint made directly to the Trustees or the Governance Executive, the Governance Executive will inform the CEO and ensure that a full investigation of the complaint takes place, including how it has been handled. An acknowledgement will be confirmed within two working days and a full response will be given within ten working days.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Education and Quality Manager is ultimately responsible for responding to the complainant, but will work closely with members of NEC departments to investigate and prepare a proposed resolution.
- 4.2 The CEO will be responsible for monitoring the timely and effective implementation of the complaints policy and procedure.
- 4.4 The Education and Quality Manager will be responsible for recording the nature and number of complaints and making an annual report to the College's Board of Trustees, typically in November.

5. Protocol for Complainants

- 5.1 If you wish to make a complaint, you should email student.support@nec.ac.uk. This is because all complaints must be in writing. If your complaint is made via social media, or by methods other than in writing, a member of NEC staff will complete an internal form with the details of the complaint and this will be sent to student.support@nec.ac.uk
- 5.2 If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the response from the Education and Quality Manager, they are able to take it further by contacting the CEO directly. Complainants can escalate further to the Board of Trustees if they remain dissatisfied.
- 5.3 If the complaint is an appeal against grading or assessment, the separate Learner Appeals procedure should be followed. The Learner Appeals policy is available on the NEC's online learning platform, learn@nec or can be requested by emailing student.support@nec.ac.uk

6. Receipt of Complaints

- 6.1 Complaints will be logged centrally and the Education and Quality Manager alerted when a new complaint is received.

7. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- 7.1 The Education and Quality Manager will provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees summarising the complaints during the year. This will be based on an analysis of the complaints by teams, category of complaint, and type of complainant. Analysis will also be provided according to diversity information. The Education and Quality Manager will be responsible for investigating and responding to any queries arising from the annual report to the Board of Governors.

8. Monitoring and Review of The Policy

- 8.1 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.