

Fact Sheet 3

How to make a complaint



THE ADAM SMITH COLLEGE, FIFE
INSPIRING LEARNING

The Adam Smith College, Fife always aims to provide learners and customers with the highest quality education and services. However, we recognise that, from time to time, problems might arise which need to be dealt with if our normal high standards are to be maintained. The Complaints Procedure enables matters of concern to be brought to our attention so that they can be investigated and resolved. This provides us with welcome feedback to help us continuously improve the quality of our services to all.

Stage 1 – The Informal Stage

The College believes that problems are best dealt with quickly and informally with the member of staff concerned.

So, in the first instance, you're strongly encouraged to raise any issues as soon as possible with either the person responsible or your Curriculum Head.

You should not feel anxious about raising a concern with a member of staff. All complaints are taken seriously and you will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making a complaint.

Remember, many issues arise from misunderstandings which can often be resolved quickly and easily by talking through the matter.



Stage 2 – The Formal Stage

We recognise that, at times, there might be problems which either haven't been resolved or which you feel are too serious to be dealt with informally. There might also be occasions when you feel unable to raise a concern directly with the member of staff involved. In these circumstances, you should use the formal complaints procedure.

A formal complaint should be submitted on a C³ Form, available from Reception at any College campus or from Student Association offices. Completed forms may be returned either via Reception, Student Association offices or directly to the Quality Unit, The Adam Smith College, St Brycedale Avenue, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1EX.

If you have any difficulty completing the C³ Form, advice and assistance is available from Learner Services.

We aim to acknowledge formal complaints within 24 hours and investigate and resolve them within 20 working days of receipt of the C³ Form.



Stage 3 – The Appeal Stage

The vast majority of complaints are satisfactorily resolved at either Stage 1 or 2. In the rare cases where this hasn't happened, the complaint may be taken to Stage 3.

A copy of the complaint, together with any documentary evidence (the College's response to your complaint, details of witnesses, etc.), should be sent to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality) with 14 days of receiving a Stage 2 response.

The complaint and how it has been dealt with so far will be reviewed and a written response given stating whether or not the complaint has been upheld.

The decision of the Assistant Principal is final.

This exhausts the College's internal complaints procedures.



Stage 4 – The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Having reached the end of the College's internal procedures for dealing with complaints, if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome you can take your complaint further to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The SPSO offers all members of the public an open, accountable and accessible complaints system, providing an independent, free and fair response to complaints about the College.

The SPSO has the authority to investigate a complaint by any person aggrieved about one or more of the following: maladministration; any failure in a service provided; and any failure to provide a service which it was a function of the listed authority to provide.

The SPSO will not investigate matters of academic judgement, personnel matters or commercial transactions.

A complaint to the SPSO must be submitted within 12 months after the day on which the person aggrieved first had notice of the matter complained of unless the SPSO is satisfied that there are special circumstances which make it appropriate to consider a complaint outwith that period.

Complaints to the SPSO should be submitted in writing or electronically (a complaints form can be filled in or downloaded from the SPSO website. However, the SPSO has discretion to accept oral complaints in special circumstances.

Full details of the services of the SPSO and how to make a complaint are available on the SPSO website at www.scottishombudsman.org.uk