Information for Students, parents and College Users

Dealing with Complaints

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the teaching or service we are providing we need to know about this. This information sheet tells you how to take forward a complaint and sets out the procedure the college will follow. A summary of this information will be included in Student Handbooks and brought to the attention of students and parents/carers through other methods. This Policy is available in a range of accessible formats on request.

The college will deal with complaints promptly, appropriately and reasonably and seek to resolve these informally wherever possible.

1  You have a complaint: your Programme Co-ordinator or Community Learning Facilitator may be able to help

1.1 Often a person who teaches or supports you will be able to help where you have concerns about teaching or classroom activities. You may find it useful to talk about any concerns with your Programme Co-ordinator or Community Learning Facilitator before you raise them elsewhere.

1.2 If your Programme Co-ordinator or Community Learning Facilitator cannot deal with a complaint personally, they will make sure your complaint or concern is passed to the Curriculum Manager or Principal of The Alexandra Centre who will be able to look into it and give you feedback.

1.3 However, if there is something you are concerned about that your Programme Co-ordinator or Community Learning Facilitator is not able to deal with, or if you prefer not to talk to them, there are other ways in which you can raise your concerns. These are set out below.

2  Other ways of telling us about your concerns

2.1 If you have a concern or complaint that you believe cannot be dealt with through a conversation or meeting with your Community Learning Facilitator or one of your Programme Co-ordinators you can:

- fill out a feedback form. Forms are available from the Senior Administrator at The Alexandra Centre. When you have completed the form give this back to a member of staff in the office. They will make sure your feedback form is sent straight away to the right person.

- Write a letter or send an e-mail to a senior manager in the college. The names of the Senior members of staff are displayed on noticeboards around the College.

- Speak to your key worker about any general issues of concern.

3  How we will deal with complaints that have not been resolved informally

3.1 We will write to you as soon as possible to say your complaint or concern has been received and we are looking into it (and we will try and write to you during term time within 5 working days)

3.2 We will investigate the complaint or concern you have raised and let you have feedback as soon as possible (and we will try and give you this feedback during term time within 10 working days)
Alexandra Centre of Further Education

3.3 We will continue to keep you informed about what we are doing if the complaint or concern you have raised cannot be resolved in the number of days outlined above.

3.4 We will let you know the final outcome of your complaint as soon as possible.

4 What you can do if you do not agree with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with after the above procedure has been followed

4.1 If you do not agree with the outcome of a complaint that we have investigated following the procedure outlined above, and you wish to appeal against the outcome, you may write to the Principal of the Alexandra Centre. You must do so within 10 working days of the date you receive the formal response from the college.

4.2 Your letter must explain why you believe the matter has not been resolved appropriately.

4.3 The Principal of The Alexandra Centre, or the person delegated by the Principal, will review the way in which the complaint has been resolved and make a final decision on behalf of the centre. This may involve further investigations and/or a meeting and/or no further action. In all cases you will be informed in writing of the final decision.

The Principal of the Alexandra Centres contact details are:

Sean Cannon
Ainsworth Way
London NW8 0SR; or
Sean.cannon@MacIntyrecharity.org

5 What you can do if you are not satisfied with the way the centre has dealt with a complaint after all of the above procedures have been followed

5.1 If all of the above procedures have been followed and you wish to appeal against the way in which The Alexandra Centre has finally resolved your complaint you may ask to have your complaint referred to Westminster Kingsway College, as this organisation has responsibility for assuring the Quality of the educational provision at The Alexandra Centre.

You may write to the Principal of Westminster Kingsway College. You must do so within 10 working days of the date you receive the formal response from the centre.

5.2 Your letter must explain why you believe the matter has not been resolved appropriately.

5.3 The Principal, or the person delegated by the Principal (usually the Director of Strategy and Performance), will review the way in which the complaint has been resolved and make a final decision on behalf of the college. This may involve further investigations and/or a meeting and/or no further action. In all cases you will be informed in writing of the college's final decision.

The Principal's contact details are:

Kim Caplin, Principal
Westminster Kingsway College
Victoria Centre, Vincent Square
London SW1P 2PD; or
Principals.office@westking.ac.uk

6 What you can do if you are not satisfied with the way the college has dealt with a complaint after all of the above procedures have been followed
Alexandra Centre of Further Education

6.1 If all of the above procedures have been followed and you wish to appeal against the way in which the college has finally resolved your complaint you may ask to have your complaint referred to the Governing Body. The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee is delegated to consider appeals against the college’s final decision in relation to a complaint.

6.2 The Governing Body will take no action in relation to a complaint until such time as all college procedures have been exhausted.

7 Appealing against the college’s final decision in relation to a complaint

7.1 An appeal against the college’s final decision in relation to a complaint must be made within 10 working days of the date of the written communication setting out the college’s decision. Your letter must be addressed to:

Gillian Winward, Clerk
Westminster Kingsway College
Vincent Square London SW1P 2PD
Or Gill.winward@westking.ac.uk

7.2 The appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:

a) that there is additional evidence that could not have been made available at the time the original complaint was considered;
b) proper procedures were not followed;
c) the response is considered by the complainant to be unreasonable in relation to the complaint.

8 Procedure to be followed in an appeal against the outcome of the college’s investigation into a formal complaint

8.1 The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your letter of appeal. They will refer your letter to the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee. The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee will consider your letter and determine whether it falls into one of the three grounds for appeal noted above. If there are valid grounds for appeal, the Chair of the Quality and Standards will review all relevant correspondence and/or documentation relating to the complaint.

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee may:

- Make a decision on the basis of this documentation only in which case s/he will write to you noting whether she has upheld, amended or overturned the original decision of the college.
- Decide that it is necessary to convene an appeals meeting to consider the matter further.

8.2 If the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee determines that an appeals meeting should be convened the meeting will be convened by the Clerk whenever possible within 20 working days of the date of the letter of appeal

8.3 The meeting will be chaired by the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee and clerked by the Clerk. A senior manager from the college will also be invited to attend.

8.4 You will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied to the appeal meeting by a parent, carer or friend, (who may not be a practising solicitor or barrister).

8.5 Any documentation to be considered at the meeting in addition to your letter of appeal will be sent to all parties in advance of the meeting.
Alexandra Centre of Further Education

8.6 At the meeting, the Chair of the Quality and Standard Committee will consider the matters identified in your letter setting out the grounds for appeal and may uphold, amend or overturn the original decision of the college. The record of the decision of the appeal panel will be provided within 10 working days of the panel meeting.

8.7 There is no further right of appeal within the college’s procedures.

If you do not believe the college has handled your complaint properly you may refer the matter to the (London) Skills Funding Agency (SFA) whose contact details are:

Skills Funding Agency
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

9 General

9.1 We reserve the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or habitual. We will not generally deal with any complaint that is judged to be out of time. Out of time in relation to a complaint is generally defined as:

- a period of nine months (one academic year) having elapsed – in cases where a complaint is brought to the attention of the college for the first time;
- a period of three months having elapsed - from the date at which the college sent a final letter outlining the findings of its investigations into a complaint;
- a period of three months having elapsed - with no further communication from a complainant to the college’s first written response to his/her complaint.

**Flow chart – dealing with complaints**

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<th>Step</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student/college user or parent/carer makes complaint in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaint forwarded to relevant senior member of Alexandra Centre staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student/college user or parent/carer is sent holding letter pending investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student/college user or parent/carer is advised of outcome of investigation and decision re resolution of complaint</td>
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<tr>
<td>If student/college user or parent/carer is not satisfied with the decision, student/college user or parent/carer may refer the complaint to the Principal of The Alexandra Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>If student/college user or parent/carer is not satisfied with Principal of the Alexandra Centres final response, student/college user or parent/guardian may appeal to the Principal of Westminster Kingsway College</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The decision of the Governing Body is final</td>
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