

THE LANCASHIRE COLLEGES

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Scope and purpose

This compliments, complaints and feedback policy and procedure applies to the activities and employees of TLC and to any individual or organisation we whom we work including member colleges, partners, subcontractors and stakeholders.

Its purpose is to provide those we work with the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback to drive continuous improvement. Compliments, complaints and other feedback will be dealt with courteously, fairly and objectively and as described in this policy and procedure.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Director of TLC to:

- ensure that this policy and procedure is up to date and published on the TLC website;
- report all compliments received to the employee(s) involved;
- resolve all complaints by following the procedure described below;
- notify funding bodies about complaints where there is a contractual requirement to do so;
- review all compliments, complaints and other feedback with a view to informing continuous improvement.

It is the responsibility of individual employees, including the Director to:

- report to the Director (or in the Director's case TLC's Chair) any complaints other feedback received;
- contribute fully to any investigations undertaken regarding complaints received.

3. Compliments and feedback

TLC is pleased to receive compliments and our employees like to know that what they do is appreciated and to hear about positive experiences. This helps us to understand how well we perform, to feed-back praise to our employees and to continually improve.

You can provide compliments and feedback directly to the individual employee(s) involved or alternatively to TLC's Director or Chair by emailing info@tlc.ac.uk

4. Complaints Procedure

How to make a complaint

TLC welcomes feedback from any individual or organisation to help us improve the services that we provide and the way that we that work.

Initially, we encourage you to raise complaints informally with the employee in question, this is because in many cases the complaint can be resolved directly by that employee to your satisfaction.

Should you feel unable or unwilling to raise your concerns informally, or should you be dissatisfied with the response you received when you did so, then you can make your complaint formally and in writing to the Director of TLC by emailing info@tlc.ac.uk, or by writing to The Lancashire Colleges, c/o Preston's College, St Vincent's Road, Preston, PR2 8UR; please mark your envelope as confidential. In instances where the Director of TLC is the subject of your complaint then you can alternatively address it to our Chair by emailing w.johnson@lmc.ac.uk.

Your email or letter should include information which clearly identifies the nature of your complaint and who it involves, you should also explain what you have done to-date in an attempt to resolve the complaint, for example if you have raised it informally as outlined above, and what the outcome was.

Our response

We will reply within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt of your complaint. We may also contact you to ask you to provide additional information so that we can fully understand the nature of your complaint and to help ensure we can fully investigate it. If we do this then we will require a response from you within 10 working days of our request.

We will aim to provide you with a formal written response to your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it, or within 10 working days of receiving any additional information we have requested from you. There may be some particularly complex complaints or other exceptional circumstances which mean we are unable to meet this timescale, if that is the case then you will be kept informed of our progress and we will tell you when you can expect to receive our response.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint then you may choose to raise your concerns by making an appeal to the Chair of TLC. You should do this in writing, by emailing w.johnson@lmc.ac.uk and this should be done within 10 working days of your receiving our formal response to your original complaint. Your email should include information which clearly identifies the nature of your concerns and should explain why you are dissatisfied with the response you received.

Our Chair will reply within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt of your appeal and will aim to provide you with a formal written response within 20 working days of receiving it. There may be some particularly complex complaints or other exceptional circumstances which mean our Chair is unable to meet this timescale, if that is the case then you will be kept informed of progress and they will tell you when you can expect to receive their response.

This decision of our Chair is final and no further appeals will be considered.

Anonymity, confidentiality and GDPR

TLC does not normally accept or act upon anonymous complaints, as by their very nature, it is not normally possible to collect all relevant information for an investigation to take place. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where we deem it appropriate to investigate a complaint from an anonymous source, e.g. when the complaint identifies a serious breach or risk.

Where it is reasonable to do so, confidentiality will be observed at all stages of the procedure. Where a complaint relates to a specific employee(s) of TLC, we may seek

permission to share details with them. If this permission is not given, it may not be possible for TLC to fully investigate or resolve the complaint.

Where your complaint relates to a particular project or contract held by TLC we will notify the relevant funding body about your complaint if we have a contractual requirement to do so. We will inform them about your complaint and provide them with details of our response.

If the complainant wishes for someone else to raise concerns with us on their behalf, TLC has a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act 2018 with regard to sharing information with third parties. Therefore, we will require written permission to share this information with them. Before permission is given to share the information with others, the complainant must consider whether our response will include any sensitive information about them. The complainant is required to contact us in advance to tell us which sensitive information we can and cannot share.

Vexatious and malicious complaints

A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is deemed unreasonable or untrue, having been put forward so as to abuse the complaints procedure, or in an attempt to defame the name or character of another person. In cases where a complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious, TLC reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint.

Multi-issue and/or collective complaints

If a complaint identifies a number of issues which fall within the remit of other procedures the content of such complaints will be reviewed. The complainant will then be notified and directed to the relevant policy and procedure.

Collective/group complaints are expected to identify how each individual has been personally affected by the issues which are being brought to the attention of TLC. Each individual named in the collective complaint must agree with the content of the complaint before it is submitted and individually sign to say that they are in agreement of the same. Only the nominated spokesperson will receive communication / correspondence from TLC.

The Lancashire Colleges Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure, April 2020

Approved by: The Lancashire Colleges Directors at their meeting on 30 April 2020

Review due: No later than April 2022