

Scotland's Colleges Complaints Policy and Procedure

It is Scotland's policy that Scotland's Colleges will deal with any complaints about members of staff, the services we provide or administration of the Unit quickly and efficiently avoiding the need for a written complaint wherever possible. However, should the matter necessitate a written complaint, the procedures detailed below will be followed.

Separate guidelines are available should Scotland's Colleges staff have a complaint or grievance (see Staff Handbook).

Procedure

1. The complainant should fill out a Scotland's Colleges complaints form (copy attached) identifying both the nature of the complaint and, if appropriate, the individual against whom the complaint is being made. Any complaint against an individual should be dealt in a confidential manner. This should be addressed to the Company Secretary* in the first instance.
2. The complaint will be formally acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
3. The Company Secretary* will:
 - a. log all complaints and provide responses to the complainant
 - b. in cases where the complaint is against Scotland's Colleges or administration of Scotland's Colleges, copy the complaint to the Chief Executive who will undertake to review the circumstances of the complaint with the Company Secretary and make a decision on the course of action to be taken.
 - c. in cases where the complaint is against a particular individual, forward the complaint to the individual's line manager to review and progress. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the Company Secretary for approval and response to the complainant.

In either instance, Scotland's Colleges may seek further information from the complainant regarding the circumstances of the incident.

4. A decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming - usually within a further 15 working days.
5. If the complainant is satisfied with the Scotland's Colleges explanation or proposed action, the matter will be considered to have been closed. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the explanation or course of action, and, he/she will have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive*.
6. The Chief Executive* will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision that may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may require that further or different action be taken.
7. The outcome of the decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming - usually within a further 15 working days.

Procedures 5, 6 & 7 apply only if the complaint is in respect of an individual whose line manager is not the Chief Executive. In all other instances, the Chief Executive will be involved in resolving the complaint from the outset and cannot be part of the appeal process - in such cases, the appeal process should resume with procedure 8.

8. If the complainant is satisfied with the Scotland's Colleges explanation or proposed action, the matter will be considered to have been closed. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the explanation or course of action he/she will have the right to appeal to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

9. The Chair of the Board of Directors will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision that may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may require that further or different action be taken.
10. The outcome of the decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming - usually within a further 15 working days.
11. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with this decision, he/she will have the right to appeal to an independent, third party arbitrator. All arbitration fees will be met by Scotland's Colleges.
12. The independent, third party arbitrator, will be determined under advice from the Law Society of Scotland.
13. The independent arbitrator will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision, which may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may recommend that further or different action be taken.
14. The outcome of the decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant, and the Company Secretary.
15. The decision of the independent arbitrator will be final.

The complaints procedure is regularly reviewed by the Board of Directors or at a shorter interval should legislation or good practice require it.

**** In the event that the complaint is against the Company Secretary, the complaint should be forwarded to the Chief Executive, or if against the Chief Executive to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The same principle applies for the appeal process.***

COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete the form below if you wish to make a formal, written complaint in respect of Scotland's Colleges:

- *Members of staff*
- *Provision of service*
- *Administration*

Date:

Complainants Details

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

E Mail Address:

Complaint

If the complaint is in regard to an Individual:

Name of individual:

Job title:

Details of Complaint

Please provide details of individuals involved, dates, times etc.

Please attach accompanying sheet if further space is required

I wish this to be treated as my formal complaint against Scotland's Colleges.

Signed:

Received by Scotland's Colleges:

Signed:

Date:

Completed forms should be returned to:

Gayle Shotton
Scotland's Colleges
Argyll Court
Castle Business Park
Stirling
FK9 4TY

Please note: in accordance with our complaints procedures, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 5 working days. Scotland's Colleges response regarding will be communicated within 15 working days. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to you outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and a statement of when a response is likely to be available - usually within a further 15 working days.