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**Avon College**

**Student Complaints Policy**

**2025–2028**

**1. Introduction**

Avon College values and encourages feedback from students, staff, and visitors as an essential component of maintaining high standards of education and student experience. This policy outlines how students and other relevant parties can raise concerns, seek resolution, and contribute to the continuous enhancement of Avon College’s services.

Avon College adheres to the expectations of its awarding partners and the guidance set by the UK Quality Code, particularly in relation to **Concerns, Complaints and Appeals**.

**2. Scope**

**Who May Submit a Complaint?**

The procedure is open to:

* Current students
* Recent graduates (within six months of course completion)
* Groups of students submitting a collective complaint (led by one nominated individual)
* Authorised representatives acting on a student’s behalf (under exceptional, evidenced circumstances)

**What This Procedure Covers**

This policy applies to complaints relating to:

* Delivery or content of programmes
* Quality and availability of facilities or services
* Actions or inactions by academic or administrative staff

**What This Procedure Does Not Cover**

This procedure does **not** apply to:

* Admissions outcomes (see Admissions Policy)
* Academic decisions (see Academic Appeals Policy)
* Disciplinary matters (see Student Code of Conduct)
* Employment-related concerns (student or staff)
* Issues already adjudicated by a court or tribunal unless formally stayed

**3. Making a Complaint**

Complaints should be raised as early as possible—normally within **four weeks** of the issue occurring or becoming known. Delays beyond this period may only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

**Informal Resolution (Stage One)**

Where possible, complaints should be addressed informally in the first instance by raising concerns directly with the relevant tutor, department, or administrative team. Most matters are resolved quickly and effectively through local resolution.

Examples of whom to contact:

* **Course content or teaching**: Speak to your module tutor or Programme Leader
* **Timetabling or registration**: Contact the Academic Registry
* **Finance or fees**: Contact the Finance Officer
* **Facilities or estates**: Contact Campus Services
* **Welfare or support**: Speak to the Student Support Team

Staff will aim to respond and resolve issues within **10 working days**.

**4. Formal Complaint (Stage Two)**

If informal resolution proves unsatisfactory, a formal complaint may be submitted using the **Avon College Student Complaint Form**, available from Student Services or the College website.

The complaint should include:

* A summary of the issue and actions taken to resolve it
* Names of individuals or departments involved
* Desired outcome or resolution sought
* Any relevant supporting documents

Formal complaints must be submitted **within 10 working days** of receiving the Stage One outcome.

An independent member of staff, with no prior involvement in the matter, will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within **20 working days**.

**5. Request for Review (Stage Three)**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they may request a review. This must be submitted in writing to the Programme Director or nominee within **10 working days** of receiving the formal outcome.

Grounds for requesting a review must relate to:

* A procedural error
* New evidence unavailable at the time
* The outcome being unreasonable based on the evidence

A review is not a re-investigation of the complaint but a consideration of whether proper procedures were followed and whether the outcome was fair.

**6. External Review – Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)**

Once the internal complaints process is fully exhausted, students may refer their complaint to the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)**, an impartial body established to consider student complaints in higher education in England and Wales.

OIA contact details:

[www.oiahe.org.uk](https://www.oiahe.org.uk)
Tel: 0118 959 9813

Address: Second Floor, Abbey Wharf, 57-75 King's Rd, Reading RG1 3AB

A Completion of Procedures letter is required before approaching the OIA, which Avon College will provide upon conclusion of Stage Three.

**7. Support and Advice**

Students are encouraged to seek guidance from:

* **Student Services** – student.support@avoncollege.ac.uk
* **Personal Tutors or Programme Leaders**
* **Students’ Union Representatives** (where applicable)

All complaints are handled sensitively and in accordance with the College’s **confidentiality policy**.

**8. Monitoring and Review**

Avon College records and monitors all complaints to identify themes, inform service improvements, and ensure policy compliance. This policy will be reviewed **biennially** or in response to regulatory changes.