



College

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Owner	Vice Principal Academic
Approved by	Policies and Procedures Committee
Date approved	May 2026
To be reviewed	Annually
Publication	MYUSP, USP College Website

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 USP College welcomes suggestions and comments aimed at improving its provision.
- 1.2 Complaints will be investigated impartially and addressed promptly.
- 1.3 Compliments will be shared with a view to prompting best practice and instilling a culture of continual development.
- 1.4 No person will experience discrimination as a result of raising a compliment or complaint.
- 1.5 Discrimination against a person who has made a complaint will be subject to Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.6 Students will be given the appropriate support to lodge a compliment or complaint. Students may request the support of their Progress Coach/Personal Tutor or another member of college staff to make a complaint. Reasonable adjustments will be made to support individuals with disabilities, learning needs, language barriers, or other circumstances to access the complaints procedure.
- 1.7 The Vice Principal, Academic will monitor compliments and complaints received, the outcomes and any trends.
- 1.8 A summary of the compliments and complaints received by the college will be presented to the Quality Committee and Corporation annually.

2. Introduction and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to highlight and share good practice and enables shortcomings in the performance of the college to be identified more easily. It is aimed at improving our clients' satisfaction by dealing promptly and efficiently with the complaints received.

3. Related Policies and Procedures

- a. Staff Grievance Policy
- b. Staff Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- c. Positive Behaviour Policy
- d. Staff Disciplinary Policy
- e. Whistleblowing Policy
- f. Student Protection Plan
- g. Fees and Refund policy
- h. Freedom of Information Act
- i. Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- j. Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy
- k. Health and Safety Policy

4. Procedures

4.1 Compliments

- a. Anyone that wishes to submit a compliment to the college should email feedbackmatters@uspcollege.ac.uk
- b. The compliment will be logged by the SMT Support team and shared with the relevant parties

- c. The compliment will be shared with relevant member(s) of staff and will be used to continue to improve our service.

4.2 Non-formal Complaints

- a. Anyone wishing to raise a complaint should raise this, in the first instance, with a member of staff to resolve internally. If this is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction it should be escalated to feedbackmatters@uspcollege.ac.uk where it will be dealt with by the Vice Principal, Academic and relevant managers.
- b. Any member of staff who receives a non-formal complaint will:
 - a. Explain any concern relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, or potential criminal behaviour will be managed under the appropriate procedure and may not be suitable for informal resolution
 - b. Immediately discuss the issue with the complainant with the aim of reaching a satisfactory conclusion there and then or;
 - c. Explain what action they will take to investigate and resolve;
 - d. Notify their Manager or Vice Principal, Academic of the nature of the non-formal complaint and their course of action as a result. The Manager or Vice Principal, Academic should email the details of the complaint SMT support team.
 - e. However, where the recipient judges the nature of the complaint to be serious or immediately un-resolvable, they must encourage the complainant to put their complaint in writing to feedbackmatters@uspcollege.ac.uk
 - f. Anyone who is not satisfied that the informal complaint has been dealt with fairly or effectively and within 10 working days may lodge a "Formal Complaint" in writing.

4.3 Formal Complaints

- a. Any written complaint in the form of a letter or email to the Principal or CEO will be regarded as a Formal Complaint if the complaints process has been followed.
- b. The SMT Support Team will keep a log of all formal complaints received. If provided, the ethnicity, gender, age, health or learning needs of the complainant (or the person about which the complaint relates) will be logged to monitor for possible discrimination. All logs are maintained in line with the GDPR standards.
- c. Complaints against the Principal which cannot be resolved will be referred to the Chair of Governors for attention of the Corporation.
- d. Complaints addressed to the Principal or CEO will be acknowledged by the college in writing within 5 working days and a copy of the complaint will be passed to the Vice Principal, Academic. The Vice Principal, Academic will pass the complaint to the relevant manager to instigate investigation.
- e. The Feedback Matters inbox will be reviewed regularly, and complaints will be allocated to the appropriate manager for investigation within 3 working days of receipt (term time only).
- f. The inbox is monitored during term time only; an out-of-office message will be in place outside of these periods, and response/processing timescales exclude non-term time.
- g. The senior manager receiving the "Formal Complaint" should immediately start an investigation. The SMT Support Team will be kept informed of progress.

4.4 Investigation

- a. The complaint will be investigated and, if necessary, appropriate action will be taken to improve provision. The Manager will report the outcome of the investigation within 10 working days from the day of allocation to the appropriate SMT member (usually Vice Principal, Academic who (with the agreement of the Principal) will notify the complainant in writing within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. The SMT member will also inform the complainant of their right of appeal to the Principal or CEO.
- b. In the event of complaints requiring a liaison with an Exam Board or other bodies for their solution, the complainant will be informed of possible delays in the notification of the outcome.
- c. In the event that students, who have paid for their course, are seeking compensation, this will be presented to the academic board for investigation. The board will convene immediately and make recommendations.
- d. All correspondence relating to the complaint must be retained within the SMT support team.

4.5 Appeal and Escalation

- a. Where appropriate, the Chair of Governors (or a nominated governor panel) may review the process followed in response to a complaint to provide assurance of procedural fairness.
- b. Complaints relating to Further Education learners, apprentices, parents/carers, or members of the public may be escalated to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of the college's internal procedures.
- c. Complaints relating to Higher Education provision may be referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in line with its rules and eligibility criteria.

4.6 External Support

- a. The college may promote the services of a professional arbitration service should the complainant remain dissatisfied after the appeals procedure as an alternative to legal action being taken. Both the college and the complainant must agree that the arbitration will be binding and that no further action of any kind will be taken subsequently.
- b. The college will seek advice, where necessary, from the college's solicitors relating to legal and insurance issues.

4.8 Internal Support

- a. The Vice Principal, Academic will review all complaints received and will seek to identify potential areas for improvement in the college. The Vice Principal, Academic will present these, together with any recommendations, to SMT when appropriate.
- b. The Vice Principal, Academic will present an annual report on Compliments and Complaints to the Governors where recommendations for actions will be included.

4.9 Reference to External Policies and procedures

- a. Other complaints may be appropriately referred to specific awarding bodies or examining boards. Copies of complaints policies from relevant external institutions are available on request from the Exams department or directly via the relevant institutions.

Appendix 1

Complaints Process

feedbackmatters@uspcollege.ac.uk

Have you received a satisfactory response within 10 working days?

YES

Complaint solved

NO

Submit formal complaint to Principal in writing to:
The Principal, USP College, Seovic Campus,
Runnymede Chase, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 1TW

Have you received a satisfactory response within 15 working days?

YES

Complaint solved

NO

Appeal to the Principal in writing within 7 days of response.

Have you received a satisfactory response within 10 working days?

YES

Complaint solved

NO

Further Education

Refer your complaint to Education Skills Funding Agency complaints:

ESFA@education.gov.uk

Higher Education

Refer your complaint to the office of the independent adjudicator:

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>

USP College is committed to equality of opportunity. The aim is to create an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect, regardless of: age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

This form should be used by managers and policy owners within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments (EDIAs) in relation to protected characteristics including, but not limited to: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation. The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; both formal and informal, internal and external.

1. Name of Policy

Compliments & Complaints Policy

2. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy?

(Tick all that apply)

Students	✓ yes
Staff	✓ yes
Wider Community	✓ yes

3. Complaints

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided? If yes then please give details.

NA

4. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

- Positive Impact** - Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
- None or Little Impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics
- Some Impact** – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.
- Substantial Impact** – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Thought-provoking questions, which might help come to a decision about the impact of a policy on individuals with protected characteristics:

- Does policy outcomes and service take up differ between people with different protected characteristics?
- What key information do we have? Does data or engagement with people with protected characteristics give insights into areas of disadvantage, which relate to the policy area?
- If the policy is likely to have a negative impact on individuals, sharing particular characteristics what steps can be taken to mitigate these effects?
- Will the policy deliver practical benefits for certain groups?
- Does the policy miss opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good understanding/relationships between groups?
- Do other policies need to change to make this policy more effective?
- Is there any elements of the policy that could be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

Use the guidance provided above and complete the following table: **(Please Tick ✓ yes)**

Gender/Age	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Gender		✓ yes		
Age		✓ yes		
Disability	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Visually Impaired		✓ yes		
Hearing impaired		✓ yes		
Physical Disability		✓ yes		
Specific Learning Difficulties		✓ yes		
Global Learning Difficulties		✓ yes		
Autistic Spectrum Disorder		✓ yes		
Any other disability – Various		✓ yes		
Other Factors	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Race		✓ yes		
Culture		✓ yes		
Religious Belief		✓ yes		
Sexual Orientation		✓ yes		
Gender Reassignment		✓ yes		
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓ yes		
Pregnancy /Maternity /Paternity		✓ yes		

Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the below action plan.

5. Is there anything that cannot be changed?

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
Not applicable		
E.g., Disabled people can be treated more favorably under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. If a policy appears to treat disabled people more favorably than other equality groups, the disadvantage may be justifiable		

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility. (Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

Action Plan:
