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# Complaints Policy

**2023 - 2024**

For the purposes of this document, the term ‘trainee’ refers to all WMC Associate Teachers.

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

The West Midlands Consortium is committed to monitoring and evaluating its services to enhance their quality and ensure that they meet the highest of standards.

We welcome feedback and comments on the services we provide. We have a trainee course evaluation procedure as well as Associate Teacher representatives from each teacher training programme to allow you to make a contribution to the future development and improvement of the West Midlands Consortium’s services, processes and facilities.

The West Midlands Consortium has in place a variety of mechanisms to ensure that trainees have the opportunity to take part in the decision making processes of the Consortium and expect that trainees will take full advantage of these in making their views known.

We recognise that there may be occasions when these information and feedback mechanisms are not sufficient to deal with problems that may occur from time to time. For this reason we have introduced a formal complaints procedure to ensure that your complaints and comments are dealt with in a prompt and professional way. Every complaint is looked at in a positive manner to help us monitor and improve our services.

The complaints procedure aims to:

* be easily accessible
* resolve complaints informally at an individual level wherever possible
* allows prompt handling
* ensure a full and fair investigation
* respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality wherever possible
* provide an effective response and appropriate redress
* feed back into Consortium systems to ensure that services are improved

### What Is a Complaint?

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction about:

* standards of service
* actions or lack of actions by the West Midlands Consortium or its staff
* provisions of the West Midlands Consortium affecting trainees

The complaints procedure does **NOT** cover:

* requests for new or different services or provision
* review of Award Board decisions (appeals)
* review of extenuating circumstances decisions
* students’ union procedures
* trainee disciplinary procedures

These are covered by separate procedures, details of which can be found by contacting Director of ITT or relevant Course Leader.

### Before You Complain

* please think about using our suggestions of feedback mechanisms
* talk to us informally about levels of service – sometimes we are constrained by external policy decisions or resources in what services we can provide
* if you are in a school placement, consider speaking with your Mentor, Professional Tutor and/or Headteacher if the complaint relates to you school experience

### **If You Decide To Complain**

The West Midlands Consortium will:

* handle your complaint in a quick, polite and straightforward way
* investigate your complaint thoroughly and impartially
* inform you of when you can expect a reply at all stages of the process
* ensure that you are not disadvantaged in any way by reason of raising the complaint.

### How, Where and to Whom to Complain

### Stage 1 (Informal)

We try to resolve any complaint informally at the point at which the problem arose. Many apparent concerns arise from misunderstandings that can quickly be resolved by talking through the matter. If possible you should firstly:

* telephone the appropriate member of staff

Or

* call in and see the appropriate member of staff. An appointment is advised to ensure that you are seen promptly

Or

* write a letter or email to the appropriate member of staff

If you wish to complain about your treatment by a specific individual, you should try to approach this person in the first instance. If you would rather talk informally with a more senior member of staff within the Consortium or Partner School, you should contact the West Midlands Consortium to arrange an appointment.

If the source of your complaint is a matter of West Midlands Consortium policy or practice, please contact the Director of ITT.

### Stage 2 (Formal)

If you feel unable to resolve the complaint or you consider that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, you should complete a Complaints Procedure form available from the West Midlands Consortium Director of ITT or via the VLE. You should complete the form within 15 working days of the incident giving rise to the complaint and should indicate on the form what remedy you are seeking as a result of your complaint.

The completed complaints form should then be forwarded to the Director of ITT who will acknowledge its receipt and will investigate your complaint with the appropriate bodies. The Director of ITT has the right to meet with, and interview, any person referred to in the complaint in reaching their decision. In addition, if the complaint refers to the actions and/or behaviour of an individual, that individual will have the right to be interviewed in order to respond to such allegations or submit a written statement.

If your complaint is about the Director of ITT, please send it to the Assistant Director of ITT who will forward it to the West Midlands Consortium Chairperson.

A response will normally be sent to you within 20 working days. If the complaint is likely to take longer than this to investigate, we will keep you informed of progress on a regular basis. If your complaint is upheld, our response will let you know what action the Consortium intends to take, for example a formal apology, a statement on how systems will be changed in the future, a referral to a school to re-examine their procedures etc.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you will have the opportunity to request an informal meeting with the Director of ITT. You will be given at least 5 working days’ notice of the meeting and may be accompanied by a Staffordshire University Students’ Union representative or fellow trainee. The Assistant Director may also attend the meeting. A brief written summary will be sent to you within 5 working days of the meeting.

### Stage 3

If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint after the informal meeting, you can request that your complaint is considered by the West Midlands Consortium Chairperson. You should submit details in writing of your reasons for wishing to take the complaint to the next stage to the Director of ITT. This should normally be done within 10 days of receipt of the response from Stage 2. The Director of ITT will acknowledge receipt of your request and arrange a meeting with the Consortium Management Chairperson normally within 20 working days of receipt of your request. You are not permitted to introduce new issues at this stage of the procedure.

The Consortium Management Chairperson will have access to all prior correspondence and the results of the initial investigation. They may also wish to meet with all parties involved in the complaint in reaching their decision.

The decision of the Consortium Management Chairperson is the final stage of the Consortium’s complaints procedures.

### Confidentiality

As far as is practicable, confidentiality shall be preserved in the investigation of a complaint. Such an approach is in the interest of both the complainant and any individual members of staff involved. If, however, you name another person in your complaint, we believe that normally they should know what is said about them and who is making the complaint. The Consortium will also take action if a complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious.

### Who to contact for advice

Director of ITT, West Midlands Consortium

Assistant Director of ITT, West Midlands Consortium

Staffordshire University Students’ Union Advice Centre, Stoke campus

Staffordshire University Student Guidance Manager, Stoke campus

**Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.**

**Students can access the ‘Complaints Procedure’ form via the WMC VLE.**