



**PCI College**

— Established 1991 —

## **Procedure for Complaints by Persons External to the College**

Revision v2.0

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### Revision history and approval

Revision	Nature of change	Approval	Date
v2.0	First Issue	Gael Kilduff	July 2022

PCI College aims to provide a quality service which meets the highest expectations of its staff. It welcomes all constructive feedback on its activities, whether positive or negative and understands that, from time to time, people or organisations external to the College may be dissatisfied or concerned with how the College, its staff or students have acted. The College will respond positively, where necessary, by improving procedures, correcting mistakes and learning from experience. This procedure aims to provide a mechanism to deal with genuine complaints of impropriety, irregularity, misconduct, poor performance or ineffectiveness against PCI College in a timely and open way.

**1. Principles underpinning this procedure are that the College will**

- Deal impartially with your complaint within a 6 week time frame (this may be exceeded when dealing with complex complaints) in a polite and straightforward way.
- Encourage informal early conciliation where possible.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process, revealing information to others only to the extent necessary to complete a proper investigation and make a considered response and keeping the record of your complaint separate from other records.
- Ensure that no complaint made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in future.

**2. Scope**

- Any person or organisation external to the College who is affected by the activities of the College including those receiving or seeking a service or who have been subject to a decision of the College and who feel that their expectations may not have been met.
- The College reserves the right not to investigate or take any action in relation to a complaint received anonymously or received on behalf of an anonymous complainant through a third party.
- It is required that, where possible, the complainant provide evidence to support the College in investigating the matter.

**3. Before you complain**

Consider whether there are more appropriate procedures to make your point such as suggestion schemes or other feedback mechanisms.

**4. What information should your complaint contain?**

- The background to the complaint including dates and times of any particular incidents and the names of any people against whom you are complaining or who can provide evidence in support of your complaint.
- Any specific issues which you want to be addressed.
- What outcome(s) you hope to achieve from the complaints process.
- Complaints should not contain offensive or abusive language – please always try to be polite. Vexatious and malicious complaints (i.e. repeated or persistent complaints which are trivial or untrue, made purposely to abuse this complaints procedure) or those accompanied by abusive or aggressive behaviour will be excluded.

## **5. Stage 1 - Making an initial complaint (informal stage)**

5.1 Complaints can often be resolved satisfactorily and dealt with quickly on an informal basis. If possible, talk informally to the person most directly involved in the situation you wish to complain about and as soon as possible after the situation arises. You should, in any event, make your complaint within one calendar month of the event. If the complaint is received any later, we will exercise discretion as to whether or not to investigate the matter. If your complaint relates to the counselling service you should direct it to

[CounsellingService.Complaints@pcicollege.ie](mailto:CounsellingService.Complaints@pcicollege.ie)

If you are unsure of who should deal with your complaint you may direct it to [studentservices@pcicollege.ie](mailto:studentservices@pcicollege.ie), who will direct to the most appropriate person on your behalf.

5.2 The staff member will attempt to resolve the complaint and will write to you with one of the following outcomes:

- The complaint has been resolved
- The complaint requires more time to investigate the matter(s) raised
- The complaint can be resolved (in a specified time, if possible)
- The complaint cannot be resolved in the way you require and you can pursue a formal complaint if you wish. See point 6 below

A response will be made within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed in that time for good reason (such as staff unavailability due to leave) or the matter is complex, you will be advised of a revised timescale.

We will maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process, revealing information to others only to the extent necessary to complete a proper investigation and make a considered response. You should be aware that in some cases, this may involve identifying you as the complainant.

If the complaint relates to the conduct of a student or a member of staff, this may be investigated under the Fitness to Practice Policy or Code of Conduct Policy. In common with many other organisations and in line with data protection law, it is unlikely to be possible to provide details of the outcomes of any such disciplinary procedure to external parties. However, we are committed to learning broader lessons from such processes, and will amend our policies and procedures in light of relevant findings.

## **6. Stage 2 - Formal Complaint**

In the event that you remain dissatisfied following receipt of our response, you may request that the matter be referred to the Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy for review using the form set out at appendix 1.

6.1 Completed forms will be passed to the appropriate member of staff, who will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. They will then undertake a full investigation.

6.2 A full and considered response will be made within 20 working days from acknowledgment of your formal complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed in that time for good

reason (such as staff unavailability due to holidays) or the matter is complex, you will be advised of a revised timescale.

- 6.3 If your complaint relates to a member of staff and you have been unable to resolve the matter informally the complaint response will be reviewed by a staff member that has not been involved in the process from another department.
- 6.4 The decision made at the end of this stage is final and there will be no further avenue of review in the College.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Complaint form**

This form is to be completed under Stage 2 of the procedure for complaints by external persons.

**PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE**

**Personal Details**

Title: ..... Name:.....

**Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint:**

.....  
.....  
.....

Postcode:.....Telephone/Mobile number:.....

**Outline of complaint, including dates of actions (please use additional sheets if necessary):**

**Please explain here what steps you have taken, together with dates, to resolve your complaint locally (as per the informal procedure):**

**Please explain why you are unsatisfied with the response you have received:**

**Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:**

**As part of the investigation of your complaint any members of staff or students mentioned will be made aware of the complaint, as will the Director of the Academic or Service Department involved.**

**Declaration**

I declare that the information given in this form is true, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed:..... Date:.....

**Returning the form**

Please return this form to the address below:



- **Complaints relating to Faculties:** Academic Director: [jlawless@pcicollege.ie](mailto:jlawless@pcicollege.ie)
- **Complaints relating to Students:** Student Services dept: [studentservices@pcicollege.ie](mailto:studentservices@pcicollege.ie)
- **Complaints related to Counselling Service:** [CounsellingService.Complaints@pcicollege.ie](mailto:CounsellingService.Complaints@pcicollege.ie)

If you are unsure to whom the form should be returned, please send it to Student Services, who will ensure it reaches the appropriate recipient.

**Email:** [studentservices@pcicollege.ie](mailto:studentservices@pcicollege.ie)