



ABERDEEN COLLEGE®

Clients' **CHARTER**

our commitment to you



Introduction

Aberdeen College is dedicated to strengthening links with our clients, and to a programme of continuous improvement in our services.

The College provides a wide range of education and training services to the people, businesses and communities of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and the surrounding area. This Charter offers clients of the College a statement of the quality of service they can expect from the College as a right.

Aberdeen College is committed to promoting and embedding equality and diversity and preventing discrimination in all areas of our work.

Our commitment is to providing both an effective and an efficient service which recognises the central role of the client. The College has held the Charter Mark continuously since 1994, and subsequently the Customer Service Excellence award, attesting to that commitment. We intend to continue developing our customer services thereby strengthening our resolve to keep the client at the centre of all our activities.

As one of Scotland's largest further education colleges, it is not possible, here in this publication, to identify all the College's services or its plans for the future, but detailed information is readily available in our marketing literature, and website. (Clients wishing to know more about the College should refer to page 7.)

Our Approach to YOU

Although Aberdeen College is large, we believe that every client should be treated as an individual.

Therefore, in your dealings with the College, you:

- Will be treated with courtesy
- Will have access to accurate and impartial information, advice, guidance and support to ensure that your educational and training needs are met and your choices are informed ones
- Can expect to learn in safe, clean and well equipped surroundings appropriate to your course
- Will be offered the maximum choice of services, within reason, available to you
- Will be given as much responsibility and control over your learning as is reasonable
- Will have access to senior staff of the College should you have reason to complain about the services offered to you.

The College takes its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 seriously.

The College respects the privacy of its students and staff and adopts such measures as it deems reasonable to ensure that all data is processed in accordance with the regulations. Any individual may apply for a copy of information about them held by the College (a small fee may be charged) or to have corrections or amendments made to the information at any time if appropriate. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that the information held about them is accurate and up to date.

In accordance with Freedom of Information legislation the College maintains a Publication Scheme, setting out the classes of information it publishes, the manner in which the information is published and details of any related charges. The Publication Scheme is accessible on the College website and can also be viewed at College libraries. Information not listed in the Publication Scheme can be requested; however certain exemptions under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 may apply.

The staff are here to assist you but please note that students who wish to discuss matters of a confidential nature will be referred to the appropriate person within the Colleges Learner Service team.



Standards of Service

Aberdeen College will:

- Require each member of staff to wear a name badge showing his/her role in the College and the team to which he/she belongs
- Deal with a personal enquiry at the College's Information and Booking Centre within 10 minutes, except during periods of high demand
- Provide an impartial pre-entry guidance interview normally within 5 working days except during periods of high demand
- Deliver College courses in line with the requirements of Education Scotland:
 - (a) There will be systematic planning of courses
 - (b) Courses will be managed through Course Committees (where this is applicable) incorporating student representatives
 - (c) Students' opinions will be surveyed for each course
 - (d) There will be an annual review of each course (where this is applicable)
- Reply to written correspondence including e-communications within 5 working days, or acknowledge correspondence to which an answer is not readily available within 5 working days
- Acknowledge applications for full time courses by letter or e-mail within 7 working days
- Ensure that all letters are signed by a named person
- Where such a prior undertaking has been given, provide as much information as necessary to a student (or, where relevant, a sponsoring employer or agency) to gauge his/her progress.

In our financial dealings with clients and suppliers, Aberdeen College will:

- Pay agreed accounts or approved repayments (e.g. fees) within 30 days of receipt
- When payment in full cannot be made, notify a client or supplier within 10 days of receipt, giving reasons for this course of action.

customer care

To care for its clients as effectively as possible, Aberdeen College has established a Customer Care policy. Student support teams provide a variety of services to meet the needs of clients. The College also actively recruits the best qualified and most experienced staff available. We continue to develop our staff to ensure that their skills match the developing needs of our customers. The College also provides help to meet the specific curricular needs of our students, including those with additional support needs or disabilities.

telephone response times

Most of the College is connected to a direct-dialling telephone system, and this arrangement makes it difficult to set standard telephone response times (not every telephone can be manned all the time). When calls are made to the College's main switchboard number, they will be answered within normally within one minute during working hours. Exceptions to this rule include emergencies and peak enrolment times; at these times the College will make every effort to respond to telephone calls as rapidly as possible.

suggestions/comments/thank you

The College welcomes your comments and suggestions on our services. Suggestions/comments forms are on display at each College Centre Reception and completed forms should be placed in the box provided. Written comments will be acknowledged by the Quality Manager within 5 working days of receipt. The Quality Manager will also respond to your suggestions and comments within 10 working days. If you have received excellent service we would like to hear from you either by letter/card or through completion of our "Would You Like to Say Thank You?" forms. Students with disabilities have an additional opportunity to comment or provide suggestions on the service the College provides at the Disability Forum. Our Board of Management will be informed of suggestions and comments.

discussion groups

Each year a sample of students within the College are given the opportunity to express their views on the effectiveness of College systems to the Principal and to members of the Senior Management Team, who conduct regular Student Discussion Groups with groups from all curricular areas.

These open forum meetings allow students to raise, directly with College management, any issues which may be of concern to them. These matters are noted and a deadline set for their resolution. Thereafter the issues are investigated by the relevant member of College staff, under the auspices of senior management, and once resolved, the results are fed back to the students by email.

A Register of Actions is maintained to track progress on the issues raised at Student Discussion Groups. This spreadsheet based Register allows easy tracking of the issues. A Register of Positive Feedback is also maintained. The Board of Management is provided with a summary of issues raised at these meetings.

surveys of clients' views

We carry out regular surveys of clients' (students, trainees and employers) views and experiences of our service, and will publish standard measures of our performance. The results of surveys are considered by the Board of Management.

complaints

Aberdeen College is committed to ensuring that all clients and customers receive the best possible service and is anxious to respond to any problems quickly and remedy any defect as soon as possible

We require all staff to be responsive to any difficulties encountered by students and other clients of the College. In particular we require teaching staff to develop a classroom atmosphere in which views can be expressed openly and in which problems can be dealt with directly and immediately.

If you find cause for complaint with any aspect of the service the College offers, please tell us by whatever medium is most convenient, e.g. complaints form, telephone, letter, fax, e-mail, face to face or through the website. Of course, the College will regret the fact that it has been unable to meet your needs fully, but will welcome the opportunity to investigate the problem, responding to you, and remedying any deficiency in College service. As a first stage (if you are a student) you should, if possible, report the problem to your lecturer, curriculum leader or guidance tutor. If he/she cannot help you please complete a complaints form. These forms are available for your use at each College Centre Reception Office and should be left in the box provided.

Complaints will be logged on receipt and will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and will be fully answered within 15 working days of receipt, unless otherwise noted in our initial response. The College will ensure that all complaints are treated in a confidential manner. You will receive a satisfaction questionnaire after an interval of 3 weeks following the closure of their complaint to establish their satisfaction with the response they have received. Progress in dealing with each complaint will be monitored systematically.

Complaints will be administered by the Quality Team within the College. Aberdeen College is an equal opportunities college therefore all complaints are administered in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Information about complaints received is provided routinely to the committees of the Board of Management. Complaints are also vetted, on a sample basis, by an independent panel, composed of representatives of the College Chaplaincy Team.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation into your complaint following both the initial response and the follow up contact you have a right to refer your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman where, as an aggrieved person, you believe you have sustained injustice or hardship as a result of maladministration or service failure.

The ombudsman will normally only consider complaints referred with 12 months but may consider, in exceptional circumstances only, any complaint made more than 12 months after the date on which you found out about the matter.

Contact may be made with the Ombudsman as follows:

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

Telephone: 0870 011 5378
Text: 0790 049 4372
Fax: 0870 011 5379
E-mail: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk

(Using a Freepost address means you will not have to pay for postage)

A complaints form is available on the Ombudsman's website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

An analysis of complaints is included in the College's Annual Review (available free from the College).

The College's approach to handling complaints will be drawn to the attention of students in a range of publications, including the Course Catalogue, StudentNet and the Clients' Charter.

COLLEGE contacts

Principal and Chief Executive

Rob Wallen (01224) 612148 r.wallen@abcol.ac.uk

Vice Principal and Director of Human Resource Management and Development

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Vice Principal and Director of Finance and Administration

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Director of Resources for Learning

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Director of Curriculum and Learning

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Head of Learner Services

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Information & Booking Centre Manager

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Examinations Officer

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Marketing, Media, PR & Events Manager

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Design, Publicity & Advertising Manager

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Clients' CHARTER

Mission Statement

"To deliver, in partnership with other providers, a high quality education and training service, appropriate to the lifelong learning needs and aspirations of its clients, in a diverse range of settings."



THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
2009



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