



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

Academic Related

Situations may arise where students are dissatisfied with an aspect of their academic experience or service at the School. The School welcomes feedback from students – if there is a genuine problem, School officials need to be informed about it in order to respond.

The Complaints Policy: Academic Related applies when a student has a complaint or concern about an academic matter or academic services not related to a specific grade or set of grades for a course or programme.

There are many informal routes by which a student may voice a concern. A student should speak to their student representative, their advisor or tutor give comments in the course evaluations or speak to a member of the School that they are comfortable approaching. If these routes still do not help, then a student may wish to initiate a complaint.

The information in this document outlines the procedure to follow if there is a complaint. This document does not override the wider legal obligations of the School or to employees under contract, or the obligations of students and employees to the School.

All complaints will be treated in strict confidence and the School confirms that bringing a complaint or raising an issue will not have a negative impact on academic treatment.

If a student's complaint involves more than one department or academic support office, then one person will be designated to respond to the complaint with consultation from the relevant parties. If it is found that the complaint involves an appeal, the student will be pointed to the relevant appeals policy.

Any student using the complaint process to bring frivolous or vexatious matters to the School's attention will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any student found to have provided fraudulent evidence or falsified a claim will be subject to disciplinary action.

Academic related complaints may include, but are not limited to:

- Issues or complaints related to the design, content, or organisation of a specific class or programme;

- Issues or complaints related to course or programme delivery, such as lack of professionalism, including lateness or absence; late return of work; inadequate or insufficient academic support; inappropriate behaviour; poor classroom conduct; lack of attendance at established office hours etc.;

- Issues or complaints related to academic resources, including: classrooms, academic facilities, library resources, IT learning resources;

- Issues or complaints related to academic advising and/or personal tutoring;

- Issues or complaints related to official School academic policies or procedures in general and not deriving from issues related to an individual case;

- Issues or complaints related to the School academic support offices, including Registrar, Library Services, the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Academic Departments.

Stage I: Informal Resolution

Students wishing to make an academic related complaint need to first raise it with the relevant lecturer or support person, who will attempt an informal resolution.

If the student is uncomfortable raising the complaint with the relevant lecturer/support person they should arrange to meet with the relevant line manager.

The student is also encouraged to contact the Registrar who will advise on the School's complaints procedures.

Stage II: Formal Resolution

If the student is not satisfied with the result or proposed solution, they may make a formal complaint to the Head of Operations using the Formal Complaint Form.

The complaint must provide a detailed description of the issues and, where possible, provide evidence to support the complaint. It should also indicate what outcome the student is looking for by making a complaint.

The Head of Operations will provide a response and solution within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, though there may be a delay if further investigation is required. The solutions will vary depending on the nature of the complaint and the outcome sought by the student.

If a meeting is deemed necessary by the Head of Operations, it should be held within 15 working days upon receiving the complaint. At this meeting, the student and relevant member of staff may offer explanations of the situation. A student may be accompanied to the meeting by a supporter. The supporter may prompt or provide advice to the student.

The Head of Operations will prepare a written report of the decision after the meeting and circulate this report to the relevant parties.

If the complaint concerns the Head of Operations, it will be referred to the CEO.

Stage III: Further Review of the Complaint

If the student is not satisfied with the result or proposed solution by the line manager, they may request a review of the decision of their complaint to the CEO using the Further Review of Complaint form.

The grounds for Further Review are:

New evidence exists that could not have been reasonably presented in the previous stage;

A procedural irregularity occurred in the conduct of the complaints process.

A decision was manifestly unreasonable or influenced by prejudice or bias, or perception thereof, on the part of the decision-maker(s).

The CEO will review the complaint and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action within 10 working days of receiving the request.

Should a significant or cross-institutional issue be identified, it may need to be referred to the relevant committee.

At this point the School's institutional procedures for complaints have been completed. A Completion of Procedures letter will outline for the student the role of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

If, upon the conclusion the School's institutional procedures the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may take their complaint to the Awarding Body/University Partner or Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>). Students must first have exhausted all appropriate internal procedures at the School before

approaching the OIA.

Advice and Support

A student may ask for informal advice and support at any time, on a range of issues, academic and non-academic. If you would like more information, contact the Student Liaison Officer, your academic advisor, the Student Representative, or Registrar.

Non academic related

Situations may arise where students are dissatisfied with a non-academic related aspect of their experience or service at the School. The School welcomes input from students as this enables us to develop and improve our non-academic offerings and support we provide to students.

The Complaints Policy for Non Academic Related Matters applies when a student has a complaint or concern about School functions which include but are not limited to:

Admissions, Marketing and Recruitment

Estates and Facilities

Financial matters

Computing and information technology

Student Affairs

Issues or complaints related to official School policies or procedures

Other matters

There are many informal routes by which a student may voice a concern. A student should speak to their student representative, their lecturer, or their advisor, give comments in the course evaluations, or speak to a member of the School that they are comfortable approaching. If these routes still do not help, then a student may wish to initiate a complaint.

The information in this document outlines the procedure to follow if there is a complaint. This document does not override the wider legal obligations of the School or to employees under contract, or the obligations of students and employees to the School.

All complaints will be treated in strict confidence and the School confirms that bringing a complaint or raising an issue will not have a negative impact on academic treatment.

The School is often required to work with a range of external bodies, and delays or problems may arise beyond the School's control. A student complaint will only be considered where responsibility lies within the School.

If a student wishes to raise a complaint about the service of an external body with which the School conducts business, the student should contact the relevant organisation directly.

Where appropriate, the School will provide advice and support to students where errors arise on behalf of external bodies, but it will not actively participate in a complaint procedure in such circumstances.

If a student's complaint involves more than one department or non-academic support office, then one person will be designated to respond to the complaint with consultation from the relevant parties. If it is found that the complaint involves an appeal, the student will be pointed to the relevant appeals policy.

Any student using the complaint process to bring frivolous or vexatious matters to the School's attention will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any student found to have provided fraudulent evidence or falsified a claim will be subject to disciplinary action.

Complaint Resolution Process

The School offers a Three-Stage Resolution Process to resolve complaints made against a given School function/department.

Stage I: Informal Resolution

An informal complaint should be raised in writing with a member of the relevant team who will attempt an informal resolution of the issue.

The student is also encouraged to contact the Registrar who will advise on the School's complaints procedure.

Stage II: Formal Resolution

A formal complaint should be raised in writing with the Head of the relevant team using the Formal Complaint Form. The complaint should include:

A detailed description of the issue and valid evidence to support the claim;
An indication of desired outcomes i.e. a short statement of what you hope your complaint to achieve.

The Head of the relevant team will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, normally in five working days, and provide a provisional response to the issues you raise. This response may also indicate what formal action, if any, the Department will take.

If the complaint concerns the Head of the relevant team, it should be referred to a designee.

Stage III: Further Review of Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the decision received from the Head of the relevant team, you should submit a Further Review of Complaint form, along with the response of the Head, within five working days of receipt, to the CEO. The CEO will review the complaint and, where necessary, make recommendations for further action at the relevant School committee or board.

The grounds for Further Review are:

New evidence exists that could not have been reasonably presented in the previous stage;

A procedural irregularity occurred in the conduct of the complaints process;

A decision was manifestly unreasonable or influenced by prejudice or bias, or perception thereof, on the part of the decision-maker(s).

In line with OIA expectations, once a student has finished the School's internal complaints or appeals procedures and that of the awarding body, the School will promptly send a Completion of Procedures Letter. This Letter will set out clearly what issues have been considered and the School's final decision.

Should an error, an example of bad practice, or failing be identified the School will take timely action to resolve the issue.

Advice and Support

Students may also raise issues at the Student Staff Liaison Committee, as well as ask for informal advice and support at any time, from the Student Support Officer, Academic Advisors, the Student Representative, and/ or Head of School.