

Student Complaints Policy

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1.0	06/07/2022	General update to the Policy.	Matthew Clark (Senior Registry Officer)	Approved

Student Complaints Policy

1. Principle and Definitions

- 1.1 The University recognises that there will inevitably be occasions where students are dissatisfied with the service we provide. We are committed to ensuring that people can voice their concerns in order to help us identify where we can take action to rectify the situation. This policy explains how students can raise a concern or complaint, what the University will do about them and when, and what a student may do if, after the response, they remain dissatisfied.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all current students and past students until three months after graduating.
- 1.3 This policy does not apply to individual or groups of students with concerns about:
- A. The Student Union;
 - B. Admission to any course;
 - C. Public interest disclosure by students or staff;
 - D. A student's performance in any assessment and other matters of academic judgement;
 - E. Matters that are subject to criminal investigation or proceedings until the proceedings end; or
 - F. Matters that have been or should more appropriately be raised under another University regulation or policy.
- 1.4 'Concern' means a single student or group of students informs the University about a matter that they wish to request clarification on.
- 1.5 'Complaint' means a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by a single student or a group of students about the provision of their course or related service provided by the University. This must be submitted on the prescribed form.
- 1.6 The University seeks and welcomes the views of student in formal decision-making at all levels by encouraging regular feedback through the student forums and processes.
- 1.7 The University encourages all members of its community to raise genuine concerns about its activities as soon as they can. The University expects that most concerns will be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis and close to the point of origin.
- 1.8 Before a student escalates a matter, the University expects that as soon as possible the student will try to resolve the matter informally by raising it with those members of staff or other students closest to the point at which it arose.
- 1.9 In dealing with any concern or complaint, staff are expected to:
- A. Treat anyone raising a concern with trust and respect.
 - B. Treat the matter seriously, in good faith and with due confidentiality.
 - C. Recognise that other members of the University may need to be consulted to resolve the matter.
 - D. Ensure that stakeholders are fully informed of any remedy and its consequences.
 - E. Seek as swift and as full a remedy as reasonably practicable.
- 1.10 The University will not normally consider concerns or complaints that:

- A. Are made anonymously or by a third-party including parents, guardians or friends of registered students.
- B. Have already been investigated and disposed of.
- C. Are outside of the scope of the policy.
- D. Are made without disclosing adequate reasons.
- E. Are made outside the time limit.
- F. Are malicious, vexatious, or frivolous.

2. Group Concerns or Complaints

- 2.1 Concerns or complaints may be raised individually or collectively. In the case of a group concern or complaint, each student must write a separate letter (or if it is a complaint, a form), although these may refer to a common statement of the matters. Students who have not joined in the concern or complaint at that point will not normally be permitted to do so later.
- 2.2 If several students have raised a concern or complaint, the University may deal with it as one collective matter in the following applies:
 - A. The names of all students affected by the matter are disclosed; and
 - B. The case is conducted through a lead contact (who is one of the complainants); and
 - C. All the students sign an agreement that the student named as lead will act on their behalf.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 The policy has the following stages:
 - A. Stage 1: Informal Concern
 - B. Stage 2: Formal Complaint
 - C. Stage 3: Review Stage

Stage 1 - The Informal Concern

- 3.2 If a student has a concern, they should contact the staff member who is responsible for dealing with the matter on a day-to-day basis with the matter. The staff member should notify and inform studentcomplaints@regents.ac.uk in order to log the matter.
- 3.3 A concern should be raised by the student within 20 working days of the event or circumstances that are its cause.
- 3.4 Only in exceptional circumstances should the staff member consider extending the time limit. The staff member should liaise with the Student Support team before responding to the student.
- 3.5 The process of informal resolution will depend on the nature of the concern. However, the University aims to resolve issues as quickly and fully as possible. The staff member must inform the student in writing of the outcome. This will usually be within 15 working days of the student contacting the member of staff.

- 3.6 If there is significant delay in concluding the enquiries the student must be kept informed of the progress. Students who are concerned about a lack of progress in resolving their concern at stage 1 should contact the Head of Student Support.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

- 3.7 If a concern is not resolved informally, the student can submit a formal complaint. This must be in writing on the prescribed form and within 20 working days of the stage 1 response or alleged incident if the matter is escalated directly to stage 2.
- 3.8 The complaint form must include:
- A. A clear statement of the nature of the complaint.
 - B. All relevant evidence or details of events in support of the complaint, including the informal steps taken to resolve the matter and why the student is dissatisfied with this response.
 - C. A list of any person who is known to have relevant information.
 - D. The outcome or resolution the student would like to resolve the matter.
- 3.9 The University will normally only consider a complaint that is made out of time if the student proves that there are exceptional circumstances why they were unable to submit within the necessary time period.
- 3.10 Within 5 working days the student will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint. The acknowledgement will also include whether the University accepts that the information presents a matter that satisfies the conditions for a valid complaint. The student will be informed that they can request a review of the decision.
- 3.11 Once the complaint has been accepted the matter will be referred to an appropriate investigating officer. The investigating officer has the discretion to decide how to conduct the investigation, within the relevant guidance.
- 3.12 The investigating officer must normally seek to complete the investigation and give their conclusions and recommendations in writing to the student and the University (Head of Student Support) within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. Any delay in this timescale will be communicated to all parties before the deadline, with reasons for the delay.
- 3.13 The investigating officer will provide a written report and must find either than the complaint is:
- A. Upheld, in whole or in part; or
 - B. Dismissed.
- 3.14 The Investigating Officer can seek support and advice from the Student Support team and provide the investigation outcome and documentation.

Stage 3 - Review Stage

- 3.15 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 2, they may request a review by the University's Complaint Review Panel at stage 3.

- 3.16 Stage 3 may be used only after stage 2 has been completed. A student may not introduce new areas of concern to the complaint at stage 3, and only in exceptional circumstance may new evidence be submitted as part of the review.
- 3.17 The grounds for requesting a review are:
- A. There was an irregularity in the way the process was carried out at stages 1 or 2 or both, that would have changed the result of the investigation;
 - B. The decision at stage 2 is clearly unreasonable. This means that the decision could not have been reached by a rational person based on the evidence;
 - C. Evidence is available that was not available when the complaint was originally made. The student will need to provide exceptional circumstances that prevented earlier disclosure.
- 3.18 The request for review should be made by the student on the prescribed form, within 10 working days of when the stage 2 outcome was communicated.
- 3.19 The request must include:
- A. A clear statement of the nature of the complaint.
 - B. A clear statement of the grounds.
 - C. All relevant evidence or details of events in support of the request, including all the steps taken to resolve the matter at stage 1 and 2.
 - D. A list of any person who is known to have relevant information.
 - E. The outcome or resolution the student would like to resolve the matter.
- 3.20 Within 5 working days the student will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint. The acknowledgement will also include whether the University accepts that the information presents a matter that satisfies the conditions for a valid complaint. The student will be informed that they can request a review of the decision.
- 3.21 If the matter is deemed valid to proceed to the Complaint Review Panel, the panel have full discretion to decide how to conduct the review of the stage 2 decision. The Panel has the right to investigate the student's statements and make other such enquiries as they see fit.
- 3.22 The Complaint Review Panel will comprise of 3 members of staff from either academic or professional services, none of which who have been involved in the matter at an earlier stage.
- 3.23 The Complaint Review Panel may conduct the review by hearing and invite the student to attend.
- 3.24 The panel must normally seek to complete the investigation and give conclusions and recommendations in writing to the student and the University within 20 working days of receiving the request for review. Any delay in this timescale will be communicated to all parties before the deadline, with reasons for the delay.
- 3.25 The Complaint Review Panel will either:
- A. Partly or fully uphold the complaint and recommend that the University take specific actions; or
 - B. Dismiss the complaint.

3.26 After stage 3 the Student Support team will issue a completion of procedures letter confirming the decision and will provide the next steps and the students right to proceed to request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.