

Complaints Procedure

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy.

1. Step 1 – Early resolution

- 1.1. In the first instance, all complaints should be discussed with the relevant member of staff directly concerned. If the complaint relates to an aspect of a student's course and the student does not feel comfortable approaching the person most directly concerned, they should speak to the Head of Subject or course co-ordinator or personal tutor, or for students studying on-line, their on-line adviser.
- 1.2. If a complainant does not receive a satisfactory response or is unable to conclude discussions within ten (10) working days of raising their issue, Step 1 should be considered to be complete, and the complainant should then escalate any concerns at Step 2 of the procedure, should they wish to do so.
- 1.3. Timescale: Step 1 must be invoked within four (4) weeks of the incident that is the cause for complaint.

2. Step 2 – Formal stage

- 2.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved through informal discussion, it should be submitted on a Student Complaints Form to Student Services, who will direct it to the most appropriate member of staff, for example, the manager of the service or the Director of the academic department, for a response.
- 2.2. The Student Complaints Form should include as much information as possible, in particular, the following:
 - full details of the cause for the complaint, including its impact;
 - the action the student has taken thus far and the date(s) of that action;
 - the response they have received;
 - the reason for their dissatisfaction or disagreement with that response;
 - the remedy that they are seeking.

All sections of the Complaints Form should be completed. If it is not possible to complete a particular section, the reason for this should be noted on the form. Students must also enclose copies of any relevant evidence.

Students should be aware that where there is no evidence of early resolution having been sought, or where there are no compelling reasons as to why early resolution was not possible and/or appropriate, the complaint may be referred back to Step 1 of this procedure. Where this is deemed to be the case, the student will be notified of the decision in writing.

- 2.3. Where a complaint involves alleged misconduct on the part of a staff member, it will be referred to the Head of Employee Relations and Business Partnering by QAE so that they may determine whether any immediate action is required under the School's Disciplinary Policy for Staff. In some instances it may be necessary to make this referral at Step 1, for example, when the allegation is considered to be serious, but the student does not wish to put their complaint in writing.
- 2.4. Students should normally receive a written acknowledgement within five (5) working days. Whilst it is anticipated that the investigation will be completed and a written response sent within ten (10) working days, this period may need to be extended in School vacations and/or depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint.
- 2.5. Timescale: Step 2 must be invoked within five (5) working days of the completion of Step 1.

3. Step 3 – Review

- 3.1. A student may request a review of the procedure undertaken at Step 2 should they so wish. The grounds for requesting such a review are:
 - a material irregularity in the conduct of Step 2 of the Complaints Procedure; or
 - where material new evidence has become available since the commencement of Step 2, which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

Students should make their request for a review by completing a Review Request Form, to be submitted to Student Services

- 3.2. A student can expect to receive an acknowledgement of receipt of the request within five (5) working days. It is normally expected that the review will be completed and a response sent within ten (10) working days. However, this period may need to be extended in School vacations and/or depending on the nature and complexity of the review required.
- 3.3. Timescale: Step 3 must be invoked within five (5) working days of the completion of Step 2.

4. Completion of Procedures Letter

- 4.1. The response from Student Services following the completion of Step 3 will be the conclusion of the School's internal processes and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

Document version control

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