

Complaints

You can make a complaint as an individual or as a group of students and you should normally make your complaint within a month of the action (or lack of action) that prompted the complaint. Issues will not normally be considered if submitted more than three months since the actions (lack of action) concerned.

It is normally expected that you make your complaint personally; however, you are allowed to nominate a third party to act on your behalf.

You **must follow all of the steps below** when making a complaint.

Informal Resolution of Concerns

Before submitting a complaint you must always try to resolve your concerns “informally”; that is by raising it with the person responsible either orally or in writing. We would always recommend that you submit your concerns in writing. For your statement you will need to submit;

1. A statement of concern
2. Any supporting evidence

In your statement you need to cover the following;

- the nature of the concerns (clearly explain the situation)
- the remedy sought (and why you feel this is appropriate)

A response to your concerns should usually be provided from the person responsible within **14 calendar days**. If this is not possible, you should be informed of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.

If you are not satisfied with the response to your concerns, then you should submit it to the most appropriate person above them via Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure.

If you don't feel comfortable raising the complaint directly with the person responsible, for example, you are putting in a complaint about an individual member of staff, then you should submit a written complaint, following Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 1

If you are not satisfied with the response to your concerns or if you feel unable to approach the person responsible directly, then you should submit a complaint to the most appropriate person above them.

The complaint should be submitted in writing and should include:

1. A completed form, available [here](#)
2. A statement detailing anything further you wish to add in addition to the completed form (optional)
3. Any supporting evidence
4. All correspondence (if any) exchanged during the informal process

As a part of the complaints pro-forma, you will be asked to describe the following:

- The nature of the complaint

- Informal steps already taken
- Details of the response received
- An explanation of why you remain dissatisfied
- Remedy sought (and why you feel this is appropriate)

Stage 1 complaints are submitted to a senior member of staff in the relevant department or service. A Guild Adviser can help you make sure that you are raising your complaint with the most appropriate person. They can also help you to put your complaint together and accompany you to investigation meeting(s) for advice and support.

You can expect acknowledgement of receipt within **3 working days**.

The Head of the School/Institute or line manager for the service shall investigate the complaint or appoint an investigator and will send you a written response to your complaint normally within **5 weeks (35 calendar days)**. If this is not possible, you should be informed of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.

In some circumstances, the University may decide to refer your complaint to Stage 2, in which case see below.

As a part of the investigation, you will normally be offered a meeting in person or over the telephone to discuss the complaint. The person about whom the complaint has been made may also be in attendance if appropriate, or a separate meeting will be held between them and the investigator.

If you remain unsatisfied with the response you receive at this stage you can then progress your complaint to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. If you do not receive a response to your complaint within the 5 weeks and do not receive correspondence from the University confirming a delay, you can escalate your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2

If you find the Stage 1 response to your complaint unsatisfactory you can then submit a formal complaint to the Chief Operating Officer of the University. Stage 2 complaints must be received by the University within **14 calendar days** of the written Stage 1 response.

If you wish to submit a formal complaint, contact a Guild Adviser for support and guidance.

For your formal complaint you will need to submit;

1. A completed form, available [here](#)
2. A statement detailing anything further you wish to add in addition to the completed form (optional)
3. Any supporting evidence
4. All correspondence exchanged during the informal procedure

As a part of the complaints pro-forma, you will be asked to describe the following:

- Nature of the complaint (clearly explain the situation)
- Remedy sought (and why you feel this is appropriate)
- Informal steps you have already taken to resolve the situation
- Details of the informal and/or Stage 1 response(s) received
- Why you still feel dissatisfied with the informal and/or Stage 1 response(s)

Reiterate the remedy you are seeking. You can expect acknowledgement of receipt within **5 working days**.

If you have already raised your complaint under Stage 1 of the procedure, you are not expected to raise in a Stage 2 complaint issues which have not been raised before. If you do want new issues to be considered, the Chief Operating

Officer shall consider whether issues can be investigated at Stage 2 or whether you should be asked to raise them as a separate complaint under Stage 1.

If the Chief Operating Officer is satisfied that you have taken the steps to resolve the complaint at Stage 1 an investigator will be chosen to look into the situation. The investigator will be a neutral party, with no material interest in the complaint.

The investigator will make a decision about whether the complaint is justified or not and will submit a written report to the Chief Operating Officer, containing any recommendations for resolution. The Chief Operating Officer will then make a decision about what action (if any) will be taken and will communicate this to you in writing.

This process will normally be completed within **6 weeks (42 calendar days)** after the date you received the email acknowledgment from the Chief Operating Officer that your complaint has been received.

Options for review

You can only request a review based on a complaint which has been referred directly to Stage 2 of the procedure. You can appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint. This appeal must be made within **14 calendar days** of the receipt of the Stage 2 response.

As part of your request, you will be asked to describe the following:

- Nature of the complaint
- All correspondence received with the University under Stage 2
- Details of the Stage 2 response
- A statement of why you remain dissatisfied
- Reiterate the remedy you are seeking

The Vice Chancellor shall appoint a senior independent investigator who will seek to resolve the issue based on the documentation you provide and any additional evidence which may be relevant. Upon completing the investigation the senior investigator will provide a report to the Vice Chancellor stating their findings. The Vice Chancellor shall determine what action shall be taken and shall communicate this in writing to you and any other relevant party normally with **6 weeks (42 calendar days)** after you received acknowledgement that your request had been received.

If you have completed Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure and received a Completion of Procedures letter, you can then request a review of your case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if you remain dissatisfied. Read our [guide to The OIA](#) for information on the review process.