



Frequently Asked Questions for Complaints

Scope

Common questions raised in relation to student complaints.

To be read in conjunction with *the Student Complaints Policy, Student Complaints flowchart, and Complaint form*

Click on the red question mark to go directly to the answer

- **When should I complain?**
- **How and where do I submit a complaint?**
- **I think I have a complaint about a member of staff but don't want to talk to them directly - what should I do?**
- **What sort of evidence do I need to submit?**
- **If I make a complaint, will it influence other decisions about me?**
- **What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?**
- **I don't understand the advice I have been given about my complaint. What do I do?**
- **What is the OIA?**

When should I complain?

You should seek to resolve your complaint at a local level in the first instance. Speak to the staff directly involved and ask to be referred to a more senior member of staff if you are not happy with the outcome. The senior member of staff will normally arrange a meeting with you and confirm with you in writing the outcome of your discussion. At this point you can make a (Stage 2) formal complaint within 2 months using the University's complaint procedures.

How and where do I submit a complaint?

Where possible, direct your complaint to the member of staff most directly involved in the event leading to your complaint. If the complaint can't be dealt with at that level you should be referred to a more senior member of staff who will normally arrange a meeting to try and reach a resolution you are happy with. At this stage you should be provided with a written response detailing the proposed resolution, or why resolution isn't possible.

If you are not happy with the outcome at the informal stage you can submit a formal complaint using the form. Send the completed form and enclosures to your School/ Programme Office marked for the attention of the SCHOOL OFFICER/ COMPLAINTS.

I think I have a complaint about a member of staff but don't want to talk to them directly - what should I do?

Speak to your personal tutor, programme director or head of department. If you are still not sure speak to a Student Adviser in the Union Support Service.

What sort of evidence do I need to submit?

In order for your complaint to be investigated you must include evidence to support your argument. There is no limit as to how much evidence you can submit. If you have been given a deadline but the evidence is not yet available be sure to submit your complaint anyway, explain why your evidence is delayed and submit your evidence as soon as possible.

If I make a complaint, will it influence other decisions about me?

If you make a complaint it will have no bearing on other decisions made about you or your future progression and achievement at the University. The only exception is where a complaint is pursued inappropriately (e.g. where it is not made in good faith), in such cases disciplinary action may be taken against you.

What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

An appeal is made against a decision of an Assessment Board regarding a student's assessment, progression or award (for taught students) or against a decision relating to progression or examination results (for research students). A complaint can be made about any aspect of the student experience or the wider University, including educational aspects, with which the student has a grievance (excepting those things covered by appeals). A complaint can be made on any grounds whilst the grounds on which a student can appeal are limited to those set out in the Appeal Regulations.

If you aren't sure, speak to your personal tutor, a member of staff in your School Administration Office or the Union Support Service.

I don't understand the advice I have been given about my complaint. What do I do?

Speak to the person who responded to your complaint in the first instance to seek clarification. You may also wish to contact the Union Support Service who will be able to advise you and help you get the clarification you need.

What is the OIA?

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent scheme which reviews student complaints against Universities. The Scheme is free for students to use. You can only apply to the OIA once you have exhausted the University's procedures and received a Completion of Procedures letter. Information on the OIA and the types of cases they will consider can be found at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.