

Student Complaints Procedure (By-Law XX, 32 ff)

1 Introduction:

- 1.1 This document lays out procedures for students who wish the College to consider and, if necessary, respond to serious dissatisfaction with their tuition, or other aspects of College life, in cases that do not involve harassment or appeals against the outcome of a disciplinary procedure (which have their own procedures also set out in this handbook).
- 1.2 The majority of cases will normally be settled by the complainant resolving their grievance directly with a tutor or College staff member or manager. Where this is not possible complainants can adopt an informal procedure but a formal procedure is also available where a complainant wishes to register a written grievance.
- 1.3 Anonymous complainants or complaints made on behalf of someone else will not be allowed.
- 1.4 If a complaint remains unresolved after the College's internal procedures have been exhausted a student may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (see www.oiahe.org.uk for further information). (Please note that complaints relating to academic discipline as set out in By-Law XX are also within the scope of the OIAHE.)

2 Informal Procedure:

- 2.1 Complaints may be discussed with any Fellow and the complainant can be accompanied at any stage by a friend or an adviser (e.g. an officer of the JCR or MCR). Fellows who are not themselves College Officers but who have been contacted by a complainant are encouraged to contact the relevant College Officer as quickly as possible.
- 2.2 The relevant College Officers are as follows:
 - 2.2.1 for academic matters: the Senior Tutor
 - 2.2.2 for issues involving Domestic College staff and services e.g. food and accommodation: the Domestic Bursar
 - 2.2.3 for financial matters: the Bursar
 - 2.2.4 other behavioural and disciplinary matters: the Dean
 - 2.2.5 for complaints about a College Officer: the Principal
- 2.3 To resolve the complaint the relevant Officer will:
 - 2.3.1 seek to offer sympathetic and confidential advice and/or
 - 2.3.2 try to find a remedy, or a reconciliation (in cases where relations have broken down between individuals, and the complainant does not object to this course).
 - 2.3.3 note the withdrawal of a complaint where the complainant decides to do so.
 - 2.3.4 adopt the formal procedure in cases where the informal procedure has not resolved a complainant's grievance and the complainant wishes to take the matter further.

3 Formal Procedure:

It is not an *a priori* condition of using this procedure that an informal approach must be exhausted before a formal approach is adopted. All formal complaints must be made in writing to the relevant College Officer as set out in 2.2 above.

Stages in Formal Procedure:

- 3.1 A written complaint is submitted to the appropriate College Officer.

- 3.2 The relevant College Officer investigates the complaint and sets out in writing whether the complaint is upheld or not giving reasons for the outcome of the investigation. Wherever possible the written report will be produced within fourteen days of the date of the written complaint.
- 3.3 Where the College Officer is unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant the latter must give notice within seven working days of his/her dissatisfaction and also give the reasons why the grievance remains unresolved.
- 3.4 The unresolved grievance will then be considered by the independent members of the appropriate College Committee or body as follows:
 - 3.4.1 for academic, financial, decanal and domestic matters, the General Purposes Committee
 - 3.4.2 for complaints against a College Officer, the Governing Body
- 3.5 The procedure to be adopted in such circumstances will be as follows:
 - 3.5.1 the complainant will be invited to present her/his case to the appropriate committee
 - 3.5.2 the complainant may be accompanied as set out in 2.1 above
 - 3.5.3 the relevant College Officer will present her/his case
 - 3.5.4 both parties will withdraw whilst the relevant Committee or body considers the representations from both sides.
 - 3.5.5 the relevant Committee (except in the case specified in 3.4.5 above) will make a recommendation to the Governing Body
 - 3.5.6 the Governing Body will make its decision and communicate it in writing to both parties
 - 3.5.7 the Governing Body's decision will be final

Monitoring Arrangements

The relevant College Officer will keep a register of the number of complaints made using the formal procedure in an academic year, and a summary of numbers and outcomes will be collected by the Academic Registrar and submitted to the Equality Committee and the Governing Body. The register will indicate how many formal complaints have been registered, and what stage they reached (resolved by the Officer, resolved by Committee recommendation to GB in favour of the complainant, not resolved in favour of the complainant).