

## Chapter 9 Student Complaints Procedure

De Montfort University's Students Complaints Procedure (SCP) has been developed to reflect the framework of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the Higher Education Ombudsman. It is based on "The Good Practice Framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals"<sup>1</sup> and complements the advice and guidance on concerns, complaints and appeals published by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.<sup>2</sup>

The University recognises the importance of effective complaints management as both a tool and a source of information for service improvement. The University recognises the right of current Students and Alumni to raise issues of concern about the services provided by the University.

If you want to understand how we process your personal data, and our legal basis for doing so, please refer to our Privacy Notice, found here: [Your privacy, your rights – data protection at DMU](#)

The Student Complaints Procedure should be read in conjunction with the other University's statements and policies which might apply to the concern the Student wishes to raise; e.g. Academic Appeals, the Dignity & Respect Policy, General Regulations Affecting Students, Student Code of Conduct, Student Disability Policy, No Space For Hate Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy, Research Misconduct and Whistleblowing. Links to these and other related information can be found on the University's webpage at: [The Student Gateway \(dmu.ac.uk\)](#)

### 1 Who can use the Student Complaints Procedure

- 1.1 The Student Complaints Procedure (SCP) can be used by all Students of the University. Students on courses leading to awards of De Montfort University but who are based at the campus of a partner organisation, must first exhaust the student complaint procedure for that organisation. (Students who are temporarily suspended for disciplinary reasons or for the non-payment of fees, do not have access to the SCP)
- 1.2 All complaints must be raised within three months of the problem becoming apparent, see paragraph 11.3.
- 1.3 Alumni can use the SCP to raise complaints once they are de-registered but the matter being raised must have occurred within three months of the complaint being submitted.

### 2 What can be dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more Students, about the lack of action of the University, its Staff or

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<sup>1</sup>The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals – Office of the Independent Adjudicator Revised December 2016 2 UK

<sup>2</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance, Concerns, Complaints and Appeals – Quality Assurance Agency November 2018

representatives, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.

2.2 The SCP can be used by Students or Alumni (identified as Students for the purpose of this chapter) to raise any complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction as outlined in 2.1 above.

2.2.1 A complaint may relate, but is not limited, to:

- the quality and standard of service provided by the University, including teaching and learning provision;
- failure to provide a service as advertised or reasonably expected;
- unsuitable facilities or learning resources;
- failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative or academic process

2.3 Complaints about Staff and Student behaviour may be submitted via the Formal Complaint form or by contacting Security ([security@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:security@dmu.ac.uk)), the No Space For Hate Project ([nsfh@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:nsfh@dmu.ac.uk)) or the Mandala Project ([themandalaproject@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:themandalaproject@dmu.ac.uk)). More information about these projects can be found here: [No Space for Hate \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk/no-space-for-hate), and here: [The Mandala Project: We will listen. We can support you. \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk/the-mandala-project)

### 3 What will not be dealt with under the SCP

3.1 Academic appeals or other matters that relate to Assessment Board decisions. Appeals against Assessment Board decisions are managed by the Academic Support Office and are dealt with under a separate appeals procedure contained within the General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students. Any complaint made under the SCP which appears to be an academic appeal will be referred to the Academic Support Office for consideration. If you require further information about the procedure for academic appeals, please contact [acasupportoffice@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:acasupportoffice@dmu.ac.uk) and the team will assist you.

3.2 A challenge to an admissions decision. This should be raised under the University Admissions Policy found here: <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/dmu-students/academic-support-office/student-admissions-policy.pdf>

3.3 Complaints about matters which have already or are under consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (“OIA”), a court or tribunal.

3.4 **Complaints relating to behaviour by Staff and Students.** Allegations that Students or Staff are in breach of the University’s Dignity & Respect Policy will be dealt with by the University Security Investigation team in matters of Student behaviour and by the University HR department in partnership with Senior Staff in the in matters of Staff behaviour. Complaints about Staff and Student behaviour may be submitted via the

Formal Complaint form or by contacting Security [security@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:security@dmu.ac.uk), the No Space For Hate Project [nsfh@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:nsfh@dmu.ac.uk) or the Mandala Project [themandalaproject@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:themandalaproject@dmu.ac.uk).

Further support for Students who are survivors or witnesses to misconduct by either Staff or Students is offered through the No Space for Hate Project ([No Space for Hate \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk)) and the Mandala Project ([The Mandala Project: We will listen. We can support you. \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk))

- 3.5 **Complaints about the Students' Union.** Complaints relating to the Students' Union services, facilities, societies and staff are not eligible for consideration through the Student Complaints Procedure. Further details of the Students' Union Complaint Procedure can be found at the following link: [Complaints \(demonfortsu.com\)](http://demonfortsu.com)

#### **4 Focus on Early Resolution**

- 4.1 The University is committed to providing a high-quality service to our Students throughout their courses of study to graduation and beyond as part of the DMU global community. The University actively encourages feedback on all aspects of the teaching and learning experience and other services provided by the University. However, there may be occasions when the level of service received falls short of that which might reasonably be expected.
- 4.2 The aims of the Student Complaints Procedure are:
- to resolve complaints in a timely, effective and fair manner;
  - to resolve complaints in the area in which they arise; and
  - to improve service delivery and the Student experience
- 4.3 Options for early resolution, such as mediation (facilitated discussion) see section 8, should be considered wherever possible. A fair and thorough investigation of formal complaints will be undertaken when necessary.
- 4.4 The University is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities. The policy of the University is that no person (Student, Staff or visitor) shall be unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or natural origin or nationality, gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, disability, economic situation or offending background. No person shall be discriminated against or adversely affected for making a complaint.

#### **5 What Can Students Expect of the Process**

- 5.1 The purpose of the SCP is to provide Students and Alumni with a clear, consistent and transparent method of raising concerns and complaints, to resolve conflict and to bring about change when appropriate. Each stage of the process will be administered by a member of staff who has received

training in managing complaints.

- 5.2 The University will ensure that Students are not disadvantaged either academically or personally if they choose to raise a complaint. The University understands the importance of trust and confidence all parties must have in this process. Any Student raising a complaint may continue their studies whilst the complaints procedure is conducted.
- 5.3 At each stage of the procedure the University will endeavour to find a solution to the issues raised that are mutually acceptable for all parties concerned. This will not always be possible and Students may not agree with the outcome that is offered.
- 5.4 The University offers Students a three stage procedure for raising complaints and there must be clear grounds for escalation at each stage. Students cannot automatically escalate their complaint on the grounds that the outcome is not what was sought.
- 5.5 At each stage the Student will be given an outcome of their complaint. A mutually appropriate resolution may be found, the complaint may be upheld and reparation made, or the complaint will be dismissed. At each stage the Student will be given information on how to escalate their complaint and the grounds on which they can do so.

## **6 What the University asks of Students**

- 6.1 The University expects Students to engage directly with the University when raising complaints. Complaints made by third parties on behalf of a Student will not usually be accepted unless there are valid reasons why a Student is not able to engage themselves, see paragraph 15 of this chapter.
- 6.2 The University actively encourages Students to raise any low-level concerns initially by talking to a member of the University community, see paragraph 9.1 of this chapter.
- 6.3 When submitting a complaint, students are asked to clearly state the issue of their concern and what outcome is being sought as reparation. Students must also supply any supporting evidence that will assist the University in its investigation into matters arising. It is important that Students submit the concerns as clearly and accurately as possible to assist an early outcome. Students are encouraged to seek the support of the DSU Advice team [dsuadvice@dmu.ac.uk] before submitting a complaint.

## **7 The Three Stages of the SCP**

- 7.1 The SCP is intended to provide a streamlined process with a focus on local resolution. Students are expected to complete each stage in the process before escalating to the next, if they have grounds. The SCP has three stages:

- 7.2 **Early Resolution** is the stage where most concerns should be resolved swiftly and effectively, at the point at which a complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible. Early Resolution can be used for difficult interpersonal matters where early resolution strategies such as mediation may be beneficial see paragraph 4 of this chapter.
- 7.3 **Formal Complaint** investigated by the Office of the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer is appropriate where a Student wishes to escalate their complaint formally under the grounds outlined in paragraph 6.6 of this chapter.
- 7.4 **Review** by the Chair of the University Complaints Committee (UCC) which may be referred to a full panel hearing of the UCC. This is the Student's right to appeal the outcome of the Formal Complaint. A Review is an analysis of the Formal Complaint decision, not a rehearing of the original complaint. The UCC can review the procedure under the grounds outlined in paragraph 6.6 of this chapter. The Review stage is the final stage of the University's internal procedure.
- 7.5 While there are three clear stages in the procedure, the people involved in the complaint may resolve matters informally at any point in any Stage, with active engagement by the Student and relevant others (DSU, faculty or directorate) prior to the final complaint outcome for that Stage being communicated to the Student.
- 7.6 **Grounds for Escalation**  
Students may escalate their complaint if they are dissatisfied with the decision made on the grounds stated below:
- The complaint procedure was not followed correctly.
  - New information that was not available earlier in the process, can now be provided by the student.
- 7.7 The University recognises that students will not always be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. The University will always investigate a complaint and will ensure that the procedures are followed correctly and impartially.
- 7.8 All parties involved in investigation and determination of an outcome of a complaint will be offered appropriate support by the University, through services established to enable the University to meet its duty of care towards staff and Students. For Students the support services include:
- De Montfort Students Union
  - The Student Welfare Service
  - The University Senior Tutor
  - Student Advice Centre
  - Personal Tutors
  - The Chaplaincy

- 7.9 Management and Human Resources will be able to direct Staff members to the appropriate support available including the Employee Assistance Programme and their trade union representative.

## 8 Mediation

- 8.1 Mediation can be undertaken at the Early Resolution and Formal Complaint stages of the SCP. This is a voluntary process where an impartial, independent third party helps to try and reach an agreement. The parties to mediation follow a series of agreed steps. In mediation, the parties to the dispute, not the mediator, decide whether they can resolve the complaint and on what basis. Where all parties agree to mediation at the Formal Complaint stage of the SCP, revised timescales for the Formal Complaint will be agreed. If the resolution at the Formal Complaint stage is not acceptable to the Student on the grounds listed in paragraph 7.6 of this chapter, they can go to the Review stage.

## 9 Making a Complaint

- 9.1 The University actively encourages Students to raise any low level concerns initially by talking to a member of the University community. That could be their Programme team, Personal Tutor or another appropriate member of staff, or the Student Course Representative or they may seek independent advice from the Students' Union ([dsuadvice@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:dsuadvice@dmu.ac.uk)). Low level concerns could be:
- Access to a workspace
  - Confirmation of deadlines
  - Options available in the canteen
  - Securing letters for Council Tax purposes
- 9.2 Students are encouraged to try and resolve their concerns independently utilising the support services that the University can offer, see paragraph 6.8.
- 9.3 If concerns are not resolved satisfactorily or it is not appropriate to try and resolve the issue informally Students can submit an Early Resolution Form found on the following webpage: [Student complaints procedure \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk)
- 9.4 Students will be expected to engage personally with the University when raising a complaint (see the University's Communications with Third Parties Policy), using their University email account.
- 9.5 The **burden of proof** shall always be on the Student, and the **standard of proof** will be the balance of probability. This means the Student must provide evidence to support the complaint they are making. The decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint will be on the grounds of which party is most likely to be correct based on the evidence provided.

## 10 Stage 1 - Early Resolution

- 10.1 The Early Resolution Form will be automatically emailed to the appropriate Early Resolution Officer (ERO) located in the University's academic schools and professional services departments. If the concern relates to multiple issues, the school ERO will refer the complaint to the appropriate area and will ensure all communication with the Student is collated by the school ERO.
- 10.2 Early Resolution is designed to address straightforward concerns informally, locally and expediently. The ERO may talk to the Student to determine more details about their case or may ask a relevant member staff to work with the Student directly.
- 10.3 Any response given to the Student must be supported by a written outcome which will be sent by the ERO. If mediation is required at the Early Resolution stage, the ERO will facilitate this with the Academic Support Office.
- 10.4 The aim is to come to a mutually agreeable outcome before the concern escalates into a Formal Complaint. Mediation can be requested by either the University or the Student at this stage. Examples of how the University may deal with Student concerns at Early Resolution could be:
- Being empathetic and understanding
  - Apologising where it is appropriate to do so
  - Actively listening to the Student voice
  - Clarifying reasons why decisions have been made
  - Suggesting solutions
  - Referral to mediation
- 10.5 In exceptional circumstances, complaints may be dealt with at the Formal Complaint stage without going through Early Resolution. A panel of senior members of the University will decide on a case by case basis whether it is appropriate to start a complaint at the Formal Complaint stage. This panel will consist of a PVC Dean (or nominee), an Associate Professor (Student Experience) (or nominee), and the Executive Director of Student and Academic Services (or nominee). The decision of this panel is final.
- 10.6 The University is committed to trying to resolve concerns to a mutually beneficial outcome. The University acknowledges that sometimes the outcome for the Student may not always be the outcome anticipated but the University will endeavour to provide a rationale to its decision making. A Student may progress their complaint if they believe:
- the Early Resolution process has not been followed correctly,
  - or there is evidence now available that was not available previously.
- Students can escalate the complaint to a Formal Complaint using the form found on the following webpage: [Student complaints procedure \(dmu.ac.uk\)](https://www.dmu.ac.uk/student-complaints-procedure)

## **11 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint investigated by the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee)**

- 11.1 Each complaint that is escalated by a Student to a Formal Complaint will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The assessment will involve checking that the complaint has been submitted within the published timelines, using the right procedure, and in the correct format. This will result in one of the following outcomes:
- Referral to a different procedure (for example to the Academic Appeals process)
  - Rejection of the complaint (for example due to lateness of submission or the grounds for escalation have not been met)
  - Referral to Early Resolution (for example if this stage has not been attempted)
  - Referral to mediation (for example where this will more likely result in swift and mutual agreement) and can be requested by the Student or the University
  - Referral to formal investigation by the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee)
- 11.2 The Formal Complaint does not allow for additional complaints to be added that have not previously been raised at the Early Resolution Stage.
- 11.3 If the University decides that a complaint is out of time or otherwise ineligible (see paragraph 10.6) to be dealt with at the Formal Complaint stage of the SCP, the University will inform the Student in writing within one calendar month of its decision with a clear explanation of the reasons for the decision. The University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter and the matter will be deemed closed. The University will also give the Student information about the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 11.4 If a complaint is deemed to be eligible for further investigation as a Formal Complaint, it will be allocated to a member of Staff who has had no previous involvement in the matter to investigate. The Staff member who has been allocated the complaint may contact the Student, either face to face or by telephone, MS Teams or other remote method, to confirm the purpose and scope of their investigation in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes.
- 11.5 The Staff member may talk to Staff and other Students and consider documents and other relevant evidence. The outcome of this investigation will be communicated to the Student normally no later than one calendar month from receiving the complaint in the form of a report which outlines the process followed, the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any other recommendations.
- 11.6 There may be times when this timescale cannot be met, for example due to the complexity of the complaint, and the Staff member will inform the

Student of the reason for the delay and the revised timescale. However, the University will make every effort to adhere to the stated timescale.

- 11.7 The University will write to the Student with the outcome of the Formal Complaint, explaining the reasons for the outcome and providing evidence used in the decision making process.
- 11.8 If a Student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Formal Complaint but does not have grounds on which to escalate their complaint to the Review Stage (see paragraph 12.1 below), the Student may request a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Should a Student wish to take their case to the OIA, they must request a Completion of Procedures letter within one calendar month from the date of the outcome letter.

## **12 Stage 3 – Review by the University Complaints Committee (UCC)**

- 12.1 If a Student believes:
  - the Formal Complaint process has not been followed correctly,
  - or there is evidence now available that was not available previously, they can escalate the complaint for Review by the University Complaints Committee (UCC) using the form found on the following webpage: [Student complaints procedure \(dmu.ac.uk\)](http://dmu.ac.uk)
- 12.2 The Review form must be received by the University within 10 University working days of the Student receiving the Formal Complaint outcome.
- 12.3 The Review Stage does not allow for additional complaints to be added for review that have not previously been raised at the Early Resolution Stage.
- 12.4 The University will formally close the complaint at the Formal Complaint stage if the Student does not take the complaint to Review within 10 University working of the notice of the outcome at Formal Complaint stage. Due notice will be deemed to have been given if the notice and any supporting information was sent securely using an encrypted and password protected document to the Students University email and any personal email addresses provided by the Student.
- 12.5 The Chair of the UCC may decline the request for a Review without bringing the matter to the full Complaints Committee if, in their reasonable opinion, it appears that the grounds of appeal are not made out or are so lacking in substance that further consideration would not be justified. The decision of the Chair is final and not subject to review by any other University body.
- 12.6 If the Chair of the UCC decides the complaint should be reviewed in full the Student will be offered one of the following options:
  - the Review to be conducted on paper by the Chair of the UCC; or
  - the opportunity to present their case to the UCC in person

- 12.7 Should the Student opt for the appeal to be conducted on paper by the Chair of the UCC, the Student will receive formal written communication of the outcome and any recommendations made by the Chair. The decision of the Chair is final and not subject to review by any other University body.
- 12.8 Should the Student opt to present their case to the UCC in person, the University will ensure that 15 University working notice of the meeting is given to the Student, as well as advice on where and how to access support, who can accompany them to the committee hearing and what role their Student's Companion can play in the hearing, as set out in the glossary of these regulations.
- 12.9 If the Student fails to attend the UCC hearing despite all reasonable attempts by the University to accommodate their attendance, the UCC will hear the appeal in the Student's absence and notify the Student of this in writing.
- 12.10 If the complaint is dismissed by the UCC, the University will write to the Student confirming the outcome, the reasons why and the next stage that the Student can take. The University will also issue a Completion of Procedures letter within one calendar month of this outcome.
- 12.11 If the complaint is upheld by the UCC the University will write to the Student confirming the outcome, and how and when it will implement any remedy. The University will also issue a Completion of Procedures letter at this stage.
- 12.12 Should the Student remain unhappy with the outcome upon completion of this final stage of the University's complaints process, the Student is entitled to submit their complaint to the OIA for review, details of which can be found on this webpage: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## **13 Protocols**

- 13.1 In making decisions under the SCP the University takes into account guidance issued by relevant ombudsman services and other external bodies. It is recognised that any complaints procedure needs to be flexible as well as consistent, to respond to the many different issues which arise. That said, the following protocols have been developed.

## **14 Third party complaints**

- 14.1 The University expects Students to engage directly with the University when raising complaints. Complaints made by third parties on behalf of a Student will not usually be accepted unless there are valid reasons why a Student is not able to engage themselves. The University will make reasonable adjustments to ensure Students with a disability have an equitable opportunity to engage with University processes. [See the University's Communication with Third Parties Policy.](#)

## 15 Anonymous and confidential complaints

15.1 The Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee) will not respond to anonymous complaints but issues raised in anonymous complaints may be investigated if in the University's discretion, it is felt that such investigations would be justified. The University may also use anonymous complaints to help inform its practice. The University does however recognise that Students may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In such cases the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee) will try to resolve the issue without disclosing the Student's identity. It must be borne in mind that:

- It may be difficult to investigate complaints without revealing the identity of the Student.
- It may be possible to make preliminary investigations without revealing the identity of the Student but if the allegations are serious or the case is complex, the Student may need to be identified if the case is to be pursued further. In such instances the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee) will discuss the situation with the Student before the case proceeds.
- The person or department which is the subject of a complaint may recognise the Student because of the issues or allegations raised.
- No Student will suffer reprisals, academic or otherwise, for making a complaint.

## 16 Group complaints

16.1 Should a group of Students have a complaint, the Students can submit a collective complaint and nominate one Student as their representative in resolving the complaint, provided that all Students provide their personal consent under the requirements of the Data Protection Act and confirm the accuracy of any evidence and information submitted to support their complaint. If a Student does not provide personal consent, they will not be included in the collective complaint resolution. When a complaint is submitted and investigated collectively, the group will receive a collective response.

16.2 In line with guidance from the OIA the University does not accept petitions or complaints posted on Social Media as complaints under the Student Complaint Procedure. All concerns must be submitted via the complaints process as outlined in these regulations. See the Social Media policy for guidelines on sharing views on Social Media: [Student social media policy](#)

16.3 When investigating certain types of complaints, it may be that investigation can only be progressed if the Student or Students, and not solely their representative, participate in an investigatory meeting.

- 16.4 Complaints submitted by a group will receive a group response. Outcomes for group complaints cannot be tailored for individual Students. If a Student seeks an individual outcome, an individual complaint must be submitted.

## **17 Frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints**

- 17.1 The University reserves the right to decline to investigate a complaint at the Early Resolution or Formal Complaint stage if it considers it to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious. In such instances the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee) will write to the Student explaining why they are terminating consideration of the matter. In such circumstances the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee)'s decision is final and not subject to review by any other University body.
- 17.2 Should the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their designated nominee) determine that a complaint is frivolous, malicious or vexatious, the complaint will be closed and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken if the Student is found to have breached the Disciplinary Code set out in Chapter 2.

## **18 Timescales for making complaints**

- 18.1 All stages of the process have a timeline and deadlines, but with the flexibility for the Student or the University to request an extension to those deadlines where there is good reason to do so, for example changes in workload for either party that could not have previously been foreseen.
- 18.2 Complaints should be raised at the Early Resolution stage within three months of the problem becoming apparent.
- 18.3 The University will endeavour to respond to the Early Resolution complaint within 15 University working days. Once an outcome has been provided at the Early Resolution stage, a Student or their representative, in the case of Students who exceptionally cannot present their case themselves, has 10 University working days to escalate their complaint to a Formal Complaint, together with supporting evidence, on the grounds as outlined in paragraph 6.6.
- 18.4 The University will endeavour to respond to the Formal complaint within 15 University working days. Following the communication of the written outcome from the Formal Complaint, the Student or their representative, in the case of Students who exceptionally cannot present their case themselves, has 10 University working days to escalate their complaint for a Review, stating the grounds for progressing to a Review.
- 18.5 International Students must make themselves aware of immigration implications should consideration of their complaint extend beyond their permission to stay. A Student would not typically be required to be present at the University for a complaint to be investigated, though participation in

an investigatory online interview or other means may be necessary.

## **19 Independent External Review**

- 19.1 Once the Review by the University Complaints Committee has been completed and an outcome issued to the Student, or it is determined there are no grounds for the complaint to be considered at Review, the University's procedure will be concluded, and therefore will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter.
- 19.2 The Student may then refer the complaint to the OIA should they remain dissatisfied. The OIA considers complaints from Students only at the conclusion of the University's internal complaints handling procedures and only if the complaint meets the OIA's eligibility requirements.
- 19.3 The complaint must be received by the OIA within twelve months of the Completion of Procedures Letter being issued by the University. It typically takes a number of months for the OIA to consider a complaint and issue an outcome. Further information about escalating a complaint to the OIA is available on here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>.

## Appendix 1

\* The University will endeavour to adhere to the published timelines but there may be occasions that this is not possible. The University will inform Students of any delays in the process.

### Stage 1: Early Resolution

University Response Timeline	Considerations made	Outcome
<p>Outcome sent to student within 15 University working days from the date of receipt. *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specifically is the complaint about and which area(s) of the University are involved?</li> <li>• What outcome is the Student hoping to achieve?</li> <li>• Is the complaint straightforward and likely to be resolved or responded to with minimal investigation or by using an existing University policy?</li> <li>• Can another member of Staff assist in seeking informal resolution if I am not in a position to do so?</li> <li>• What assistance or support can be provided to the Student in taking this forward?</li> <li>• Should the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their nominee) be asked if mediation might be appropriate in this case?</li> </ul>	<p>Either:</p> <p>Complaint upheld/partially upheld and remedy offered</p> <p>or</p> <p>Complaint dismissed with an explanation why</p> <p>The Student will be informed of the outcome in writing via email (including how to escalate to the Formal Complaint stage and on what permissible grounds)</p>
<p><b>Student Response timeline – 10 University working days from receipt of outcome in writing; after this time the complaint will be closed by the University</b></p>		

**Stage 2: Formal Complaint and Investigation by the Office of the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer**

<b>University Response Timeline</b>	<b>Considerations made</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<p>Outcome sent to student within 15 University working days from the date of receipt. *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the specific, key elements to the complaint?</li> <li>• Why was Local Resolution at Stage 1 unsuccessful? Was any potential resolution offered?</li> <li>• What does the Student seek to achieve by escalating the complaint to Stage 2?</li> <li>• Do the Student’s expectations appear to be reasonable and achievable?</li> <li>• Should the Office of the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer be asked if mediation might be appropriate in this case?</li> </ul>	<p>Either:</p> <p>Complaint upheld/partially upheld and remedy offered or Complaint dismissed with an explanation why</p> <p>The Student will be informed of the outcome in writing via email (including how to escalate to the Review stage and on what permissible grounds)</p>
<p><b>Student Response timeline – 10 University working days from receipt of outcome in writing; after this time the complaint will be closed by the University</b></p>		

### Stage 3: Review by the University Complaints Committee

University Response Timeline	Consideration made	Outcome
<p>Outcome sent to student within 15 University working days from the date of receipt. *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there evidence of procedural irregularity at stage 2?</li> <li>• What new evidence is available that was not available at stage 2?</li> <li>• Would mediation be appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p>Explanation and evidence to the Student made in writing via email (including right to proceed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator)</p> <p>Upheld/partially upheld and remedy made</p> <p>or</p> <p>Dismissed</p>
<p><b>Student has 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator as detailed here: <a href="http://www.oiahe.org.uk">www.oiahe.org.uk</a></b></p>		