

Action to take following receipt of a complaint

1. Acknowledge quickly
 - let the student know you're taking it seriously, say what you will be doing and when you will contact them again (max. 21 days)
2. Investigate
 - find out all the details of the complaint – this may involve meeting with the student (if this happens take a note of the meeting)
 - investigate the complaint (don't rely on your knowledge) – try to ensure that material you will rely on is written down
3. Respond
 - Respond proportionately to a complaint, preferably in writing (email) and within 21 days –sooner for simpler matters. In the response, inform the student about:
 - * the investigation that has been conducted
 - * the findings of the investigation
 - * any action that will take place
 - * the next stage of the Procedure
 - * seeking independent advice from their College or the Students' Unions' Advice Service

The following text can be used to inform students of the next stage of the Procedure:

If you are dissatisfied with my response then you can raise a formal complaint with the University by submitting the form available on this webpage: www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints along with any evidence to: studentcomplaints@admin.cam.ac.uk within 28 days, by [date in 4 weeks]. Please include a copy of this letter with your complaint.

www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk

Departments/institutions/services:

In summary, all departments, institutions and services are expected to:

- advertise the Student Complaints Procedure
- nominate a Responsible Officer to investigate and consider complaints
- respond to local complaints within 21 days
- inform students of the 'Formal Resolution stage' of the Student Complaints Procedure

For further advice on student procedures or complex cases, please contact OSCCA

This leaflet was accurate at the time of printing (March 2018) for up-to-date information, please check the website at www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk

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Email: studentcomplaints@admin.cam.ac.uk
www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk

Complaints

Preventing and handling complaints at a local level

Office of Student Conduct, Complaints & Appeals



What is a complaint?

According to the Student Complaint Procedure, a complaint is 'dissatisfaction, either about the University's action or lack of action, or the standard or service provided by or on behalf of the University'.

Sources of complaint might include:

- academic provision - course content; resources; facilities; or information provided about the course
- standards of service from the University or an institution within the University – postgraduate supervision, university tuition, standard of support offered by IT, careers, Disability Resource Centre, counselling etc
- the behaviour of University staff (investigation might be conducted under HR procedures)

Students cannot use the Student Complaint Procedure to complain about College matters or matters covered by other procedures, including: examination results, examination allowances, fitness to study or student misconduct.

Principles of the Student Complaint Procedure

The Student Complaint Procedure provides a transparent and consistent way of considering a student's dissatisfaction.

Students are expected to:

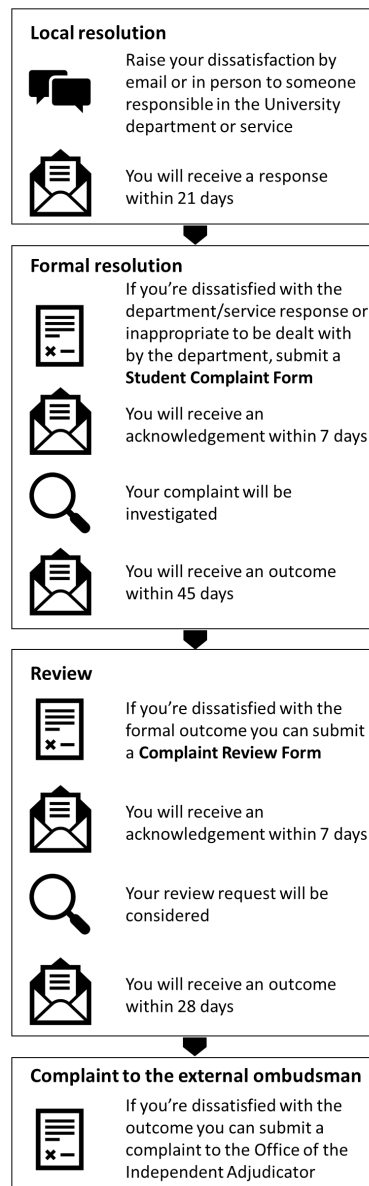
- raise concerns in a timely way & within 28 days
- communicate respectfully
- seek advice

The University is expected to:

- investigate & provide a remedy if appropriate
- Not disadvantage students for raising concerns

Student Complaint Procedure flow chart

The University's complaint procedure is a 3 stage process, enabling students to have matters investigated independently by appropriate, trained staff.



Preventing complaints

Preventing complaints is about ensuring that students expectations are reasonable and met by the University. Departments and services take the following actions:

- write important things down - in handbooks, on Moodle, on the website, in email
- follow the written information
- appropriate justifications for not following written documentation:
 - * students would be disadvantaged
 - * it is not possible for reasons beyond the University's control
- if written information isn't being followed, record the justification/reason why not and communicate this to students (where appropriate)
- if no written information is available then justify why this is reasonable and act reasonably.

Helping students to raise complaints

Make it easy for students to raise concerns:

- dealing thoroughly with an emerging concern is the best opportunity to improve the student's dissatisfaction
- handling concerns using the Procedure provides parameters for you to require students to raise their concern elsewhere if they remain dissatisfied
- advertise how to raise concerns or complaints within the Student Handbook, on Moodle and link to the University webpage: <https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints>
- identify a 'Responsible Officer' within your department or service to handle local complaints and inform/remind staff and students of this person