

# Complaint Procedure for Students

## Introduction

Sometimes, despite its best endeavours, the University does not get things right for you, and this Complaint Procedure is one of the ways the University can correct mistakes when the University needs to. Most complaints can be resolved easily and quickly when the University knows something has not been done in the way it should and, when this happens, the University welcomes the opportunity to put things right.

You can take your complaint straight to your College, academic department, or support service to explain what has gone wrong (see section 21). If you are not satisfied with the outcome or if you do not want to contact your College, academic department, or support service, you can still go on to make a written complaint under this Procedure (see section 22) about a matter (College) to be dealt with.

Every complaint that the Student Conduct Office receives is given to a named Case Manager, who will be in contact with you and keep you informed of the way your Complaint is being dealt with. You can ask your Case Manager questions and ask for updates.

investigator to look at (see section 23).

The Student Conduct Office will send your complaint directly to the department of the University you are complaining about. (This is called 'The Early Resolution Stage'.) The department will have 21 days to try and resolve the matter (section 24). If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can then ask for your complaint to be investigated formally by an investigator. In exceptional cases, your complaint may be sent to an investigator without going through the Early Resolution Stage.

Your investigator will have 42 days to write a report into your complaint. Occasionally in the case of complicated complaints, it may take longer than 42 days to get the report to you - but investigators do try very hard to keep to the deadline. We will let you know if there is likely to be a delay and we will give you an estimate of how long we think the delay will be.

4. Complainants are expected to adhere to the University's Code of Practice on [Student Behaviour in Appeals and Complaints](#)

**Whom is this Procedure for?**

(1) This Procedure may be used by

(a) Individual *Students*; or

(b) Groups of *Students* who wish to complain about the same matter and who jointly submit a complaint.

(2) When a group of *Students* submits a complaint, the University will ask the group to nominate one of the *Complainants* to act as a group representative. The University will communicate only with the group representative and expects the group representative to liaise with the other *Complainants* in the group.

**What is this Procedure for?**

(3) Complaints may be about

(a) The University's *°* (or lack of *°*) in relation to a matter concerning the *Student*; or

(b) The *Student's* experience of the standard of *Service* provided by or on behalf of the University

(c) An academic department, college, finance service, or professional support service

(d) The adequacy of supervision, the arrangements for teaching, or the arrangements for summative assessments.

**What is this Procedure not for?**

(4) This Procedure does not cover the following (for which other University procedures exist, as shown in the links below):

(a) Appeals relating to Board of Examiners or other relevant committee or officers' decisions relating to examinations, assessments, or academic progress or against expulsion or exclusion on academic grounds (including decisions about Academic Progress Notices [Academic Appeals Procedure](#))

(b) Complaints involving an allegation of *Misconduct* by a *Student* [Student Discipline Procedure](#)

(c) [Complaints](#) relating to the behaviour of an individual

(d) Complaints involving an allegation of [sexual violence](#)

(e) Complaints about admissions decisions

(6)

(18) *Complainants* will not be disadvantaged, penalised, or vicimised for making a complaint.

(f) Take such other action which, in the opinion of the Student Conduct Office, is helpful or reasonable for addressing the complaint;

(g) Initiate an investigation of the complaint.

### Early Resolution Stage

(24) Where the *Complaint Form* is sent to an appropriate person (or, if the complaint is about more than one issue, to appropriate people) in the college, academic department, administrative or support service which is the subject of the complaint (see 23 (e) above):

(a) An investigation of the complaint is to be conducted with the aim of seeking a resolution of the complaint;

(b) The *Complainant* may be invited to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation;

(c) Within 21 Days, the college academic department, or administrative support service will by email notify the *Complainant* and the Student Conduct Office ([student.cases@durham.ac.uk](mailto:student.cases@durham.ac.uk)) of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons for the outcome.

(25) On completion of the investigation if *Complainants* are dissatisfied with the outcome, *Complainants* may inform the Student Conduct Office ([student.cases@durham.ac.uk](mailto:student.cases@durham.ac.uk)) that they would like their complaints to be investigated under the 7<sup>th</sup> investigation of this Procedure.

(26) The Student Conduct Office will not usually initiate an investigation of a complaint under the 7<sup>th</sup> investigation of this Procedure unless the investigation has been completed.

### Formal Stage

(27) When the Student Conduct Office initiates the investigation of a complaint under the *Formal* investigation of this Procedure, the Student Conduct Office will:

(a) Appoint and then refer the complaint to an @ who is independent of the *Complainant* and the subject-matter of the complaint; or

(b) Refer the complaint to a hearing @ whose members shall be independent of the *Complainant* and the subject-matter of the complaint.

(28) The @ or hearing @ or (on behalf of the @ or Panel of @ the Student Conduct Office may:

(a) Ask to interview the *Complainant* and other relevant parties as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> investigation

(b) Take other appropriate action to investigate the complaint expeditiously and fairly, taking into consideration the nature of the complaint.

(29) The Student Conduct Office will use its best endeavours to ensure that the *Complainant* receives an @ within 42 Days of the Student Conduct Office initiating a *Formal* investigation under paragraph 27 of this Procedure. If there is likely to be a delay, the *Complainant* will be informed of the reason and a revised timescale given.

(30) Possible outcome recommended in the @ include:

(a) The complaint (or part of it) is upheld or dismissed;

(b) A resolution reached in co-operation with the department, college, finance or professional support service which is the subject of the complaint;

(c) Compensation may be recommended;

(d)

(40) If a *Reviewer* upholds one or more aspects of a *k* the

- 'Review Report' is a *Reviewer's* report of a *Review*.
- 'Service' is a *Student's* experience of the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.
- 'Student' means a currently registered student or student who has left the University within the preceding 28 *Days*. Students on programme validated by the University have the right to request a *Review* under this Procedure, provided they have first completed the informal and formal procedures for complaints in their home institutions.
- 'Third Party' is any party who is not a *Student* or a member of the University community.

[Student Complaints Procedure Flow Chart](#)