

A14 Student Complaints Policy

- A14.1 We aim to enhance the careers of legal professionals through innovative, practice-focused legal education and training. We recognise that there may be occasions when our service does not meet your reasonable expectations, leading to dissatisfaction.
- A14.2 You have the right to inform us about any problems with our services. We assure you that no student will face prejudice for submitting a genuine complaint. However, we will not consider complaints we deem frivolous or vexatious.
- A14.3 We will not hold any prejudice against you for submitting a genuine complaint. If evidence suggests a complaint is frivolous or vexatious, we reserve the right to refuse to consider it.
- A14.4 Should you wish to pursue a complaint, both your responsibilities and those of the College are outlined in this policy. For guidance, you can contact the Student Services Team at studentsupport@collegalpractice.com, who can support you through the process.
- A14.5 We reserve the right to adjust the complaints procedure in the interests of fairness, health and safety, or to accommodate reasonable adjustments as required by relevant equality legislation.

Definition and Scope

- A14.6 We adopt the definition of complaints as provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator: an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students regarding something the provider has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider (OIA, 2022).
- A14.7 Examples of complaints that fall within this policy include:
- Failure to meet obligations outlined in the Programme documentation.
 - Misleading or incorrect information in promotional materials.
 - Concerns about the delivery of a programme, including teaching, administration, or supervision.
 - Poor quality of facilities, learning resources, or services.
 - Significant disruptions to programme delivery due to unforeseen events (e.g., industrial action, public health emergencies).
 - Concerns about policies or procedures relating to financial or welfare support.
- A14.8 Matters not typically addressed through this complaints policy include issues related to assessment, dissatisfaction with the outcomes of academic misconduct or disciplinary processes, or decisions made under specific regulations. These may be eligible for challenge under the Academic Appeals Policy, or at the appeal stage of individual policies.

- A14.9 A student complaint should directly impact the student making it. For general concerns about policies, you can speak with your student representative, who will bring it to the Student Staff Liaison Committee.
- A14.10 Complaints regarding matters of 'academic judgment' are not grounds for a complaint or appeal. Academic judgment refers to decisions requiring the opinion of an academic expert, such as assessment marks, professional suitability, or research methodology.

Informal Stage

- A14.11 Before filing a formal complaint, you are encouraged to use local channels to raise concerns, such as speaking with your supervisor, student representatives, or administrative staff. The Student Services Team can guide you on whom to contact if you are unsure.
- A14.12 If local channels do not resolve your concern, you may submit an informal complaint to a staff member closest to the issue, such as a supervisor or module leader. We encourage early resolution and expect most concerns to be addressed informally.
- A14.13 Informal complaints should be raised as soon as possible, within three months of the incident. Complaints raised after this period will not be considered unless you provide a good reason supported by evidence that you were unable to complain earlier.
- A14.14 We understand that exceptional circumstances may prevent you from contacting the relevant staff member. In such cases, please consult the Student Services Team for assistance.
- A14.15 If the concern remains unresolved after the informal stage, you should submit a formal complaint to the Student Services Team.

Formal Stage

- A14.16 To proceed with a formal complaint, you must email the Student Services Team detailing your complaint and the steps taken to resolve it informally, within three months of the incident. The Student Services Manager or their nominee will be your point of contact throughout the process.
- A14.17 The Student Services Manager or their nominee will advise you on whether your complaint will be considered. You will receive acknowledgment of receipt within five working days.
- A14.18 The Student Services Manager may refuse to consider your complaint if:
- It is submitted three months after the incident without a compelling reason supported by evidence.
 - You have not exhausted the informal resolution routes.
 - There is evidence of a frivolous or vexatious claim.
- A14.19 If your formal complaint is considered, the Student Services Manager will gather evidence by reviewing documentation, correspondence, and relevant policies or conducting interviews to determine whether to uphold or reject the complaint.

- A14.20 In exceptional cases, an alternative person may be appointed to investigate the complaint. This person will have sufficient seniority and impartiality to ensure a fair process.
- A14.21 Complaints will not typically be accepted from third parties, such as relatives or solicitors.
- A14.22 If your complaint is rejected, you will receive details of the review process.
- A14.23 If your complaint is upheld, the Student Services Manager will determine an appropriate remedy. You will receive a formal written outcome letter detailing the remedy within 60 days of the acknowledgment letter. If the investigation takes longer, you will be updated on the progress and provided with a revised timeline.
- A14.24 The Formal Stage concludes once you receive the written outcome letter, which will include information on your right to request a review of the decision.

Review Process

- A14.25 You may request a review if you are dissatisfied with the Formal Stage outcome. Grounds for review include:
- Material procedural irregularity or clear breach of due process affecting the outcome.
 - An unreasonable outcome given the facts of the case.
 - New material evidence that you could not provide during the formal complaint process for valid reasons.
- A14.26 Your complaint must be concluded at the formal stage before it can proceed to review. The review will not typically revisit the case afresh.
- A14.27 To initiate the Review Process, you must do so within 10 working days of receiving the formal outcome letter by emailing the Registrar at registry@collegalpractice.com. Include the grounds for review, an explanation of why you feel the grounds have been met, and supporting evidence.
- A14.28 If you fail to submit your review request within 10 working days, it may be dismissed unless you provide a good reason supported by evidence that you were unable to submit on time.
- A14.29 Upon receiving a valid review request, the Registrar will acknowledge receipt within five days and forward the documentation to the Chief Operations Director (or nominee) for consideration.
- A14.30 The review process and notification of the outcome will typically be completed within 14 days of the review request submission.
- A14.31 The review will determine whether the grounds for review are valid and what action is necessary. Possible actions include:
- Upholding the earlier decision and maintaining the remedy offered.
 - Upholding the decision and varying the remedy.

- Overturning the decision and proposing a new decision or remedy.
- Overturning the decision and referring it back to the Student Services Manager for further investigation, with potential new decisions or remedies.

A14.32 When you are notified of the review outcome, the process concludes. You will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter, confirming that our internal complaints procedure is exhausted.

External Review

A14.33 We participate in the independent scheme for reviewing student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may apply for a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) after our internal process concludes. Further information about the OIA is available on their website: [OIA Website](#).

A14.34 To apply to the OIA, you will need a Completion of Procedures Letter to demonstrate that our internal processes have been exhausted. This letter is automatically provided at the end of the Review Process.

A14.35 For additional guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA, please visit their website: [How to Complain](#).

Reporting

A14.36 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that all institutions should have fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals that are accessible to students. To achieve this objective, the Academic Committee and Board will receive an annual report regarding the operation of this policy, including recommendations for improvements.