



## **Grievance and Complaints Procedures for the Student Body**

It occasionally happens that students or staff believe themselves to have been treated unfairly. Where this relates to examination results and the academic process there are grievance procedures established by the validating University. These may be obtained from the Director of Studies.

The present document is concerned with other areas where there may be cause for grievance, including those covered by the College's diversity and equal opportunities statement. It is the College's policy to ensure that grievances are resolved swiftly and fairly and that justice is done to all concerned. These grievances may be in the nature of complaints about staff by students, or about students by other students, or about students by staff.

### ***Part I Informal Procedures***

In accordance with the ethos of the College, it is expected that complaints can normally be dealt with informally by discussion between the parties involved, and in the case of matters arising from the structures and practices of the College, between the students and the appropriate College authorities. It is the policy of the College to exhaust all forms of informal resolution before formal procedures are employed. To seek an agreeable outcome the following guidelines should be observed:

- Feedback mechanisms are in place as part of the College's quality control systems and general comments can be made in writing, and anonymously if desired, concerning the content and style of units and courses. These are reviewed by tutors and by the Quality Assurance Committee of the Academic Board. The College is required as good practice to give evidence of responding to such comments through reports to the staff-student liaison committee which meets on a termly basis.
- Grievances may be raised more directly through the elected representatives of the student body who liaise with the Principal and are the formal conduit for grievances that affect the student body as a whole. They may also choose to raise grievances with the Director of Studies or their nominee. Such grievances or complaints will be considered and dealt with swiftly wherever this is feasible.
- Student representatives attend to relationships within the student body or between students and staff. The student body also appoints diversity and equal opportunities representatives who are available to be consulted. Conversations with them are confidential up to the point at which there is agreement to take further action.
- Where resolution proves difficult, external mediators may be mutually identified who are available to bring independent expertise to bear. This process can be accessed through student representatives in consultation with the Director of Studies or their nominee.

Where these do not bring resolution the following pathway is available:

## **Part II Formal Procedures**

- Students should approach the student representatives, and in the event of a grievance or complaint based on the diversity and equal opportunities policy an equal opportunities representative.
- The representatives will inform the Director of Studies or their nominee and seek guidance as to further steps. Likewise, staff members who wish to lodge a formal grievance may approach the Director of Studies or their nominee. In the case of a complaint against the Director of Studies or their nominee another member of the Leadership Team may be approached.
- The grievance shall be presented in written form, in a clear, relevant and detailed way. This should then be shared with the Director of Studies or their nominee or, in his or her absence, with a member of the Leadership Team. If the grievance concerns a staff member the Director of Studies or their nominee will share the written complaint with the person concerned directly. In the case of a student this will be done by a student representative, with the Director of Studies or their nominee in attendance if desired.
- In the event of the complaint being about a staff member the Director of Studies or their nominee will convene a meeting at which the complainant, accompanied by a student representative and the staff member, accompanied if desired by a colleague, will be present. The Director of Studies or their nominee will attend and an external mediator agreeable to both the complainant and the person complained against will facilitate the meeting. A mutually acceptable outcome will be sought and recorded.
- In the event of the complaint concerning a student the Director of Studies or their nominee will convene and facilitate a meeting at which the complainant, accompanied by a friend or colleague, and the person complained against, also accompanied by a friend or colleague, will meet. A mutually acceptable outcome will be sought and recorded. In the event of no outcome being mutually acceptable an appeal may be made to the College Principal for adjudication by external consultants agreed by both sides. This will be considered the final point of the process.
- In the case of a formal complaint against the College Principal the chair of Governors will convene a panel of inquiry to investigate and adjudicate.

The procedures laid down here should be considered as normative and may with consultation be varied if this is deemed to be more effective in individual cases.

<b>Document control box</b>			
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