



SCHOLARS
• **S C H O O L S Y S T E M**

Student Complaints Policy

• **November 2023**

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1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. Scholars School System is committed to providing high-quality education and services to all our students. The College recognises, however, that there may be instances where registered students have legitimate complaints regarding their course, the services or facilities provided by the College. The College takes all such complaints seriously and deals with them in confidence and without fear of recrimination or disadvantage.
- 1.2. The associated procedure is designed to ensure that all legitimate student complaints are heard and responded to in a manner that is fair, transparent, timely and based on the consideration of relevant evidence.
- 1.3. This procedure has been developed in accordance with the QAA Quality Code, Advice and Guidance for Concerns, Complaints and Appeals, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's 'Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals.'
- 1.4. This policy and associated procedure are distinct from the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure but recognise that in exceptional circumstances there may be some overlap with an academic appeal. Where appropriate the College may defer the investigation of a complaint until the academic appeal has been resolved. Applicants to the College should follow the Applicant Feedback and Complaints Procedure.
- 1.5. Where a complaint concerns a College employee and where appropriate, the Executive Dean and/or Registrar will notify the Head of HR and Administration. Following due consideration, the complaint may be dealt with under the College's employment policies and procedures which may include the Protection of Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. List of key terminology:
 - 2.1.1. **The College** - Scholars School System
 - 2.1.2. **Students** - Scholars School System registered students to include apprentices, student police officers and students studying at our partner institutions.
 - 2.1.3. **Complaint** - the College applies the Office for the Independent Adjudicator definition of a complaint: "An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the College."
 - 2.1.4. **Complaint Procedures - the step-by-step guide to raising a complaint available Complaints - Scholars School System**
 - 2.1.5. **OIA** - Office of the Independent Adjudicator

3. Scope

- 3.1. **This policy applies to Scholars School System registered students.** Recently withdrawn or recently graduated students of the College may also use these procedures provided the complaint is initiated within three months of withdrawal or graduation.
- 3.2. **Students may use the associated procedures to raise complaints about:** the standard of academic provision, including library and learning resources or training provided by external institutions contracted by the College; a Scholars School System service; the College's buildings and facilities including matters covered by the residential accommodation agreement; the behaviour of or

treatment by a member of staff; the failure of the College to follow an appropriate administrative or academic process.

- 3.3. **The College does not consider complaints from third parties made on behalf of registered students (or recently withdrawn or recently graduated students) unless they are acting as a student's representative and in written agreement with the student.**
- 3.4. **Anonymous complaints will not be handled under this policy and associated procedures.**
- 3.5. The College will accept a collective complaint from a group of students. In such instances, the group should identify a single spokesperson. Each member of the group must provide their student ID number and consent to participate in the group complaint. They must also be able to demonstrate that they have been personally affected by the matter.
- 3.6. The policy and associated procedures do not cover complaints which have already or are currently being considered by Leeds Trinity University, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the Police or the British legal system.

4. Principles

- 4.1. The following principles will apply:
 - 4.1.1. The College takes complaints seriously and no complaint will be dismissed without due consideration of the facts, testimonies and basis for concern. This does not mean that students are allowed to raise frivolous, vexatious, or malicious complaints, or request unreasonable outcomes.
 - 4.1.2. All information submitted in relation to complaints will be dealt with confidentially, and only disclosed as necessary to progress the complaint. All parties (including students) are expected to honour the confidentiality of complaints. All personal information shall be handled in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.
 - 4.1.3. Complaints should be raised as soon as practicable in order to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution. Students who wish to make a complaint should raise this at Stage 1: Early/Informal Resolution within 20 working days of the incident that has given rise to the complaint. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with supporting evidence, will complaints be considered outside these timescales.
 - 4.1.4. Formal complaints (Stages 2 and 3) will be completed within 90 calendar days of receipt of a Stage 2: Formal Complaint by the Student Support Caseworker. The College may make a reasonable extension to this timescale during student vacation periods and to ensure availability of staff as required.
 - 4.1.5. Students may be accompanied to meetings at all stages of the complaint process by a fellow SSS student or a Student Representative.
 - 4.1.6. Students may seek guidance on the applicability and operation of the complaints procedures from the LTSU or from the Student Support team (Student Support and Engagement Coordinator or Student Support Advice Officer) in the first instance.
 - 4.1.7. Students raising complaints should not act unreasonably or harass members of staff dealing with their complaint.
 - 4.1.8. The College may suspend a complaint for a reasonable period where the student's complaint overlaps with other College regulations or policies or where there are ongoing legal proceedings connected to the student's complaint.
 - 4.1.9. The College may, in exceptional circumstances, terminate a complaint at any stage where a student's behaviour in relation to the complaint or investigation is deemed unacceptable or disruptive, or where a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or

malicious. In such cases, the College may also invoke the disciplinary procedures in the Student Conduct and Discipline Code. If the student has not provided adequate information to investigate the complaint, and they fail to engage with the Investigating Officer, then a complaint investigation may be terminated. A complaint may be terminated where a complainant:

- 4.1.9.1. Persists in pursuing a complaint which has already been investigated and provides no new or material information;
- 4.1.9.2. Seeks to prolong contact by continually changing the substance of a complaint;
- 4.1.9.3. Fails to clearly identify the substance of a complaint, or the precise issues which may need to be investigated despite reasonable efforts to assist them;
- 4.1.9.4. Makes excessive contact or seeks to impose unreasonable demands or expectations on resources, such as responses being provided more urgently than is reasonable;
- 4.1.9.5. Uses/displays threatening or abusive language or behaviour.

5. Procedure

- 5.1. The policy is affected by Student Complaints Procedure and guidance which are reviewed and signed off by the relevant policyholder annually.

Control Panel

Document Control Box	
Policy/Procedure Title:	Student Complaint Policy
Date Approved:	tbc
Approving Body:	Academic Board
Version:	1
Supersedes:	n/a
Previous Review Dates:	n/a
Next Review Date:	tbc
Related Policies:	Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure Employment policies Protection of Dignity at Work and Study Policy
Related Guidance and/or Codes of Practice:	QAA Quality Code, Advice and Guidance for Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals
Policy Owner:	Registrar
Lead Contact:	Dr Simon Jones