



UKCAB
UK Curriculum and Accreditation Body



Complaints Policy (Students)

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1. Introduction

UK Curriculum and Accreditation Body ('UKCAB') is incorporated in England and Wales as a private limited company [Company Number: 060212439]. UKCAB is also a registered charity [Charity Registration Number: 1153197].

UKCAB has established and operates the Scholars School System ('SSS'), a provider of higher education programmes.

SSS is a medium-sized higher education provider, operating in England in partnership with one or more awarding bodies to offer higher education courses.

Our values are as follows:

- We put our students and our community at the heart of all that we do.
- We foster excellence, innovation and creativity.
- We celebrate diversity and inclusion and the removal of barriers to success.
- We have high expectations of ourselves, our students and our partners.

At SSS, we are committed to providing our students with a transformational and high-quality educational experience within an inclusive academic community which promotes learning and personal development for all, and within which they will develop into independent and critical learners, achieve their full potential, and make valuable contributions to society. It is, therefore, important to us to provide a mechanism that students can use to address any issues that they feel might prevent or be preventing us from providing an effective experience. This Student Complaints Policy and Procedures provides such a mechanism.

It is our policy to resolve as quickly and fairly as possible, any complaint that is made by a student about their course; a service provided by SSS or a third party on behalf of SSS; their treatment by another student; or their treatment by a member of our staff.

Our policy draws on guidance from the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) (OIA)¹ and the [Quality Assurance Agency](#) (QAA)².

For the purposes of this policy, students are defined as those enrolled with us. Former students may also submit a complaint provided that the complaint relates to a matter which occurred whilst they were a student, and they comply with the timescales for the submission of complaints set out below.

This policy does not apply to applicants and academic appeals. However, applicant Feedback and complaint procedure are covered under our Complaints Policy, whilst academic appeals are dealt with by the Office of the Registrar and Controller of Examinations in consultation

with the degree awarding body. Therefore, this policy and its procedures are different from the [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

2. Scope

This Student Complaints Policy and Procedures applies to complaints:

- From students about their educational experience.
- About a service provided by SSS or a third party on behalf of SSS.
- About misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material.
- Concerning discrimination by SSS on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstance, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or age.
- About the behaviour of a member of staff towards a student.
- Relating to harassment (of any kind) and sexual misconduct.
- About the behaviour of a student or students.
- From a student who believes that he/she has suffered an injustice because of action taken or not taken by SSS or on behalf of SSS.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive.

3. Applicability of this Policy

It should be noted that, depending on the nature of a student's complaint, in some circumstances we may need to refer the complaint to the awarding body. In these circumstances, the awarding body's procedures may apply.

In the event of a complaint being made by one of our students about the awarding body's policies and procedures to which they are subject, we would aim to resolve the complaint locally through both our informal and formal procedures before referring the student to the awarding body's procedures with regards to complaints.

The principles which underpin this Student Complaints Policy and Procedures are:

- Students will not suffer a disadvantage because of making a genuine complaint.
- SSS will seek to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and to find resolutions which are in general, reasonable and acceptable.

- Students will be allowed reasonable time to seek guidance and assistance in connection with any aspect of the complaints process.
- All parties are expected to make reasonable efforts to resolve matters on an informal basis before moving to the formal stages of the process.
- Any investigations undertaken as part of the formal complaints process will be conducted by individuals who have no prior knowledge of the student's complaint.
- Students have the right to be accompanied by a relative or friend who is not acting in a legal capacity, at any meeting arranged to discuss the complaint.
- All parties to a complaint will be kept informed at all stages of the progress of any investigations into the matters raised and will be informed in writing of the outcome of the process, the reasons for any decisions taken and any proposed remedies.
- SSS will deal with complaints on a confidential basis, but students should recognise that it may be necessary to disclose details of a complaint to other persons or organisations for the purposes of investigating the complaint and seeking an effective resolution.
- Where matters are within our control, we will ensure that appropriate remedial action is taken to resolve a complaint including addressing aspects of our operations which are identified through the complaints process as requiring improvement.

It is anticipated that most complaints will be made by individual students. However, complaints from groups of students will be considered. The individuals within the group should confirm in writing their support for the complaint and identify one person who will act as spokesperson for the group and be the group's correspondent for the complaint.

Complaints made by a third party on behalf of a student will not normally be considered by SSS. However, there are circumstances in which such a complaint will be considered (e.g. students with mental health issues) provided the representative is not a legal representative and provided we receive the explicit written consent of the student for the representative to act on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered by SSS since complaints require a full investigation to enable resolution and this is not possible with an anonymous complaint. In addition, there would be problems communicating the outcome of an anonymous complaint.

4. Academic decisions made by the awarding body

Students who wish to make a complaint about academic decisions made by the awarding body, should appeal under the relevant awarding body's procedures.

5. Responsibilities

We will ensure that each party involved in a complaint is given an equal opportunity to present their case.

All parties involved in a complaint are expected to act courteously, fairly and reasonably towards each other and to comply with the requirements of the procedures by completing complaints documentation, adhering to any deadlines, responding appropriately to any requests for information or attendance at meetings and undertaking any reasonable action required in pursuance of a satisfactory remedy.

We will investigate all complaints brought under the formal part of the procedure. However, we reserve the right to refuse to consider any student complaints which are thought, after initial investigation, to be unreasonable, vexatious or malicious. Examples of such complaints include:

- Complaints that are obsessive, harassing or repetitive
- Insistence on pursuing complaints that have no merit or where the outcomes expected by the student are unreasonable or unrealistic
- Insistence on pursuing complaints (which may have some merit) in an unreasonable manner
- Complaints which are driven by a desire to cause disruption or annoyance

If a complaint from a student is felt to fall into any of the above categories, we will write to the student to explain our reason for ceasing consideration of the complaint.

In the case of complaints by students about staff, we will provide appropriate support to help both the student and staff member through the process.

We will report on the operation of this Student Complaints Policy and Procedures to relevant committee(s) to ensure its processes are working as intended and are in the best interests of students and the institution. Anonymised summaries of student complaints and how they have been managed will be presented, from time to time, to relevant committees.

6. Process

6.1 Stage 1: Informal Procedure

Students should try to resolve matters of concern informally first through approaches to appropriate personnel such as their Course Leader, Module Leader, or the Student Support Team. In many instances, these people will be best placed to respond to the complaint and to resolve it quickly and effectively.

The student should raise the complaint within 10 working days of the cause for the complaint occurring.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved after this discussion, the student has the right to address the issue through the formal stages of the process.

The relevant staff member involved in the informal procedure will record the actions taken to consider and resolve the concern, the decision reached, and brief details of what was communicated to the student, and when. This information can then be made available to those dealing with any formal complaint should the student decide to make one.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal Review

The *Stage 2 Formal Review* is used where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 Informal Procedure, or where informal procedures are not suitable due to the nature, complexity or seriousness of the case.

The *Stage 2 Formal Review* stage begins when a student completes and submits the Student Complaints Form.

When completing the Student Complaints Form, the student will be requested to provide the following:

- Full details of their complaint
- Details of why the informal resolution was unsatisfactory
- What outcome(s) they seek
- Supporting evidence that may include signed witness statements, letters, email trails and any other relevant information

The Student Complaints Form and any supporting evidence should be submitted to complaints@scholarsschool.ac.uk within 10 working days of the cause for the complaint occurring, or (if applicable) within 10 working days of being informed of the outcome of the Stage 1 Informal Procedure.

Receipt of the Student Complaints Form will be acknowledged within 2 working days.

The Complaints Panel deal with all Stage 2 complaints. The Complaints Panel, that is chaired by a member of the Associate Deans, includes the following members:

- Member of staff from the Registry's Office
- Member of staff from the Retention or Admissions Office – who serves as a scribe to the Panel

- Representative from the Campus Management Team
- HR Manager or representative if the complaint involves a staff member

The Complaints Panel will review the complaint to determine whether the issue indicated by the student is within scope of this Policy and Procedures, or whether the student should be referred to a different policy or procedure.

If the Complaints Panel determine that the complaint is within scope, details of the complaint will be recorded and stored on the Complaints Log.

The Complaints Panel will convene and start the investigation.

The Complaints Panel may request the student for additional information and/or evidence and may request to meet with the student.

The Complaints Panel will provide a written response to the student no later than 20 working days after the receipt of the completed Student Complaints Form. If this is not possible, the student will be advised in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an expected deadline for the written response to be provided. The written response sent to the student will outline the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any remedies proposed. If the complaint is not upheld, the letter will explain why there are no grounds to take the matter further and that no action will be taken.

If the student is satisfied with the written response, the complaint is deemed to be resolved. If the student is not satisfied with the written response, they may refer the matter to *Stage 3: Appeal*.

6.3 Stage 3: Appeal

The *Stage 3 Appeal* enables a student to request a review of the *Stage 2 Formal Review* decision on the following grounds:

- The procedures were not followed correctly
- The decision is unreasonable
- New evidence is available that was not available at the time of *Stage 2 Formal Review*

To invoke the *Stage 3 Appeal*, the student must complete the Student Complaints Appeals Form and submit it to complaints.appeals@scholarsschool.ac.uk within 10 working days of being informed about the outcome of the *Stage 2 Formal Review*.

Receipt of the Student Complaints Appeal Form will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

The Chair of the Student Complaints Appeals Panel, in consultation with other members of the Panel, will review the complaint and any new evidence.

If the Chair determines that there are no grounds for appeal, the student will be informed in writing.

If the Chair determines that there are grounds for appeal, the Student Complaints Appeals Panel will be convened. The Panel could decide to request the student to attend a meeting of the Panel. The Panel could also request any other witness or person to attend a meeting of the Panel.

The outcome of the hearing will be sent in writing to the student within 20 working days of the appeal being submitted.

The decision of the Panel will be final and will be the end of our internal procedures.

7. Completion of Procedures

The *Stage 3 Appeal* forms the final stage of SSS's Student Complaints Policy and Procedures, and we will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter at this point.

The student then has the right to take their case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#) and / or the awarding body, subject to the considerations outlined below.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. SSS is a registered member of the OIA scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may then be able to ask the OIA to review your complaint/appeal/disciplinary case etc. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed this procedure before you complain to the OIA. We will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your complaint/appeal is not upheld, we will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your complaint/appeal is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

Students must make their complaint to the OIA within 12 months of completing this procedure. The 12-month period will normally run from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

It should be noted that we will fully comply with any judgement made by the OIA where the complaint relates to SSS.

The position outlined above is true in all cases other than where the complaint is in relation to the awarding body's policies and procedures. In the case of the latter, we will not issue a Completion of Procedures letter upon completion of Stage 3 as it is at this point that we are required to refer the student to the awarding body's Student Complaints Policy. It is only when the awarding body has exhausted its procedures in relation to a complaint of this nature that it will issue the Completion of Procedures letter and refer the student to the OIA.

8. Remedies

Remedies for complaints include, but are not limited to, an apology, a clear explanation of the events or context that led to the incident in question, or alterations to a process or to a service provided by SSS. SSS seeks to ensure that any remedies proposed are reasonable and appropriate to the nature and circumstances of the complaint

9. Referrals

SSS reserves the right to refer complaints at any stage to an alternative means of resolution, including to a mediation process, if it is in the best interests of the timely and effective resolution of the complaint.

Exceptionally, with the agreement of the student and of staff concerned, complaints may be referred to one of the formal stages in the process omitting earlier informal or formal stages if it is in the interests of the timely and effective resolution of the complaint. Such complaints might include those involving a threat of serious harm, those where the impact of the issues raised has detrimental consequences for the student's mental health, those relating to disability support, issues of a highly sensitive nature etc.

10. Confidentiality

We will deal with complaints on a confidential basis but may need to disclose details of a complaint to other persons or organisations to investigate the complaint and seek an effective resolution. For example, we will need to inform any person named in a complaint of the substance of the complaint so that they can exercise their right to reply as part of the investigation. In addition, we may need to divulge information to meet UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) requirements.

Where a student has made a complaint about another student or a member of staff, we will notify the student bringing the complaint of the outcome. However, it may not be appropriate for us to share specific details affecting the other student or staff member, particularly where disciplinary action is being taken. It is equally important that the student bringing the complaint also respects the need for confidentiality throughout the complaints process.

Control Panel

Document Control Box	
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