



Complaints Procedure for Higher Education Programmes

Highbury College Complaints Procedure for Higher Education Programmes

1 What is a complaint?

- 1.1 The QAA Quality Code defines a complaint as “the expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service.” Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter B9: Academic appeals and student complaints
- 1.2 The Complaints Procedure covers the programmes we offer, teaching and learning and the services we provide. Although the Complaints Procedure covers most aspects of your programme, it does not cover the outcomes of an assessment. If you are concerned about a decision made on your academic progress, assessment or final results you should raise this through the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 1.3 If we need to deal with your complaint through another College procedure, one of the Quality Officers will contact you in writing.

2 How does the College deal with complaints?

- 2.1 All of the College’s students have the right to expect high quality services and provision. If you have a complaint about a course or any of the services the College provides, please let us know. By letting us know when things go wrong, you help us to put them right. The College Complaints Procedure is designed to help you take up any problems and make sure that:
 - All complaints are recorded and investigated
 - Every effort is taken to resolve your complaint at an early stage
 - You are kept informed at every stage
 - Your complaint will be dealt with in confidence
- 2.2 We keep careful records of all complaints so that we can be sure that they are properly investigated. We also want to have a clear picture of the kinds of problem which our customers experience. This helps us to improve what is on offer. There are various ways in which a complaint may be investigated. We will make sure that all those directly involved have a chance to comment. We will also let you know in writing who will be investigating your complaint and who we will need to talk to resolve your complaint.
- 2.3 Every effort will be made to resolve your complaint. We can assure you that your complaint will be treated seriously and that we will learn from the problems that you bring to our attention.

- 2.4 This procedure is available on request in different formats including audio, disk, Braille and enlarged print. If you would like help from a signer, reader or interpreter when making a complaint, please contact one of the Quality Officers who can arrange for help:

Quality and Standards Office
Highbury College,
Tudor Crescent,
PO6 2SA
Telephone number 02392 383131

3 What are the stages in the Complaints Procedure?

3.1 Stage 1 - How can you let us know if you have a complaint about your course or a service provided by the College?

- 3.1.1 Wherever possible complaints should be raised immediately with the member of staff responsible, or with one of the support services below, with the aim of resolving the problem directly and informally:

- Student Support Services
- One of your Student Representatives
- A Learning Support Advisor

3.2 Stage 2 - How can you make a formal complaint?

- 3.2.1 Where it has not been possible to resolve matters at Stage 1 you should write to the Quality and Standards Office at Highbury Campus. In order for your complaint to be properly investigated it is essential that you are specific about the cause and nature of your complaint. You should present full details, including your name and term-time address and include all relevant documentation. You should detail what attempts you have already made to resolve the complaint, and state what outcome and remedy you are seeking.

- 3.2.2 Formal (Stage 2) complaints should be lodged within 3 months of the conclusion of the informal (Stage 1) phase. Complaints received later than this will not normally be considered. You should expect to receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within 3 working days.

- 3.2.3 Your complaint, and all relevant documentation, will be forwarded to the relevant Head of Department (for an academic complaint) or to the relevant Head of Business Support (for a non-academic complaint).

- Academic complaints relate to issues that have a direct effect on the provision of teaching and learning.
- Non-academic complaints usually relate to issues connected with College services but also cover any inappropriate behaviour from

College staff, including allegations of behaviour which is discriminatory or harassing.

3.2.4 If the Head of Department or Head of Business Support has already been involved at Stage 1, an appropriately senior alternative member of staff will be identified to deal with the Stage 2 investigation

- We will investigate the matter(s) you have raised
- A member of the College's staff will be appointed to investigate your complaint
- We will write to you with the outcome of your complaint within 15 working days wherever possible.
- We will inform you in writing if the matter you have raised cannot be dealt with within 15 working days, including the reasons for the delay and the date by which we will respond

3.3 Stage 3 - What should you do if you do not agree with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with?

3.3.1 In the event that you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint at Stage 2, your complaint can be passed to the Head of Higher Education for final internal review. You should lodge your request for Stage 3 review of your complaint within one month of receiving the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation. Requests for review received later than this will not normally be considered.

3.3.2 Requests to review the outcomes of Stage 2 investigations will be considered in terms of whether any of these conditions are met:

- There were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the complaint; or
- Fresh evidence can be presented which was not or could not reasonably have been made available to the investigator at Stage 2; or
- The finding of the investigation was against the weight of the evidence

3.3.3 If the Head of Higher Education is satisfied that any of the above conditions apply, s/he will undertake a further investigation of the complaint. Where the Head of Higher Education has been involved in any earlier stage of the complaints process, or in the events to which the complaint relates, s/he will pass the review over to another senior manager.

3.3.4 You will be notified of the outcome of the investigation of the complaint at Stage 3 in writing.

3.3.5 If you do not agree with the outcome of a complaint that we have investigated using the College procedure and wish to appeal, you may write to the Principal at the following address:

The Principal
Highbury College
Tudor Crescent
Portsmouth
PO6 2SA

- 3.3.6 The Principal will acknowledge your letter within 3 working days and you will receive a response to your appeal within 15 working days. Having exhausted all the internal stages of the College complaints procedure there are avenues which a student may pursue if he or she is still dissatisfied.

For University of Sussex Programmes

- 3.3.7 You may write to the University of Sussex outlining your complaint and reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the College complaints procedure. You should write in the first instance to:

Academic Registrar
Sussex House
University of Sussex
Falmer
Brighton
BN1 9RH

The University of Sussex will only consider complaints of an academic nature.

For University of Portsmouth Programmes

- 3.3.8 You may write to the University of Portsmouth outlining your complaint and reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the College complaints procedure. You should write in the first instance to:

Complaints Team
University House
University of Portsmouth
Winston Churchill Avenue
Portsmouth
PO1 2UP

For Canterbury Christ Church University Programmes

- 3.3.9 You may write to the Canterbury Christ Church University outlining your complaint and reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the College complaints procedure. You should write in the first instance to:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)
Canterbury Christ Church University

North Holmes Campus
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

4. Independent Review

- 4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (the OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals.

For University of Sussex, University of Portsmouth and Canterbury Christ Church University

When the College's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Any further pursuit of this complaint with the University of Sussex, University of Portsmouth or Canterbury Christ Church University will result in a Completion of Procedures letter from the University. Students seeking an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within 3 months of the issue of the College's Completion of Procedures letter.

For other Higher Education Programmes

- 4.2 When the College's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students seeking an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within 3 months of the issue of the College's Completion of Procedures letter.
- 4.3 An appeal to the OIA is made by completing a Scheme application form. The form can be downloaded from the OIA website or requested by telephone or letter:

www.oiahe.org.uk
Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
5th Floor
Thames Tower
Station Road
Reading
RG1 1LX
Tel: 01189 599 813
E-mail: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

For further information on how the OIA scheme works and how your complaint will be reviewed, please refer to the OIA website.

For NEBOSH Programmes

- 4.4 You may write to NEBOSH outlining your complaint and reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the College complaints procedure. You should write in the first instance to:

Tania Barker
Customer Service Manager
NEBOSH
Dominus Way
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1QW

At the conclusion of the NEBOSH complaints process, you may also seek regulatory advice from SQA Accreditation. You should write to:

The Senior Regulation Manager
SQA Accreditation
Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

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