**Student Complaints - Frequently Asked Questions**

**I am concerned about something, how can I raise the issue to try to get it resolved?**

You must speak to the person responsible in the first instance, or if you still have concerns, speak to the Advice Zone. You must raise any issues within **3 months of the last occurrence**. You may be referred to another, more appropriate, member of staff depending on the nature of the concern raised. It is anticipated that it will be possible to resolve many concerns at this early resolution stage before it becomes necessary to take a complaint to a formal investigation.

**I raised my concerns with the person responsible but I am dissatisfied with the response I received. What happens next?**

If you have completed the early resolution stage and are not satisfied with the response you can submit a formal complaint by completing a [Student Complaint Form](http://uso.southwales.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2016-09-15/Student_Complaint_Form_2016-17.doc) and sending it to the Student Casework Unit.

**I have not used the early resolution stage but want to submit a formal complaint. Can I do this?**

The University appreciates that sometimes it is necessary for a complaint to be progressed directly to the formal stage. Should this be the case, the Associate Registrar (Student Casework) (or nominee) will make a decision on any requests for direct access to the formal investigation stage.

**The Student Complaints Regulations state that I need to submit evidence with my Student Complaint Form, what evidence is required?**

It is your responsibility to provide information to support any statements that you make on your complaint form; for example, emails, evidence of conversations with staff, witness statements, module descriptors, assessment cover sheets or reports from professionals. Your complaint will not be considered unless it is supported by appropriate evidence. Please ensure any evidence submitted is organised in an appropriate manner.

**Can we submit a group complaint? How do we do this?**

Yes, you can submit a group complaint. If you submit a group complaint you need to ensure one of you is nominated as the main contact; this student will act as a spokesperson for the group. Each member of the group must confirm in writing that they wish the nominated individual to act in this capacity and that the complaint reflects their concerns.

The nominated spokesperson will receive updates on the complaint on behalf of the group. All members of the group will be invited by the spokesperson to any meetings arranged to discuss the complaint and receive a copy of the outcome letter. The spokesperson for the complaint must inform the Investigating Officer 24 hours in advance of who will be accompanying them.

**If I submit a complaint and an appeal at the same time, how will the University manage this?**

If the complaint and appeal are unrelated they will be dealt with under the separate relevant regulations.

Where part or all of the complaint and appeal are related the University will consider all of the information presented. Please note that it might take the University longer than the deadlines set out in the Regulations and Procedure to deal with the issues raised. The University will ensure that you are notified throughout any investigations about the status of the issues you have raised.

**I am a student at a partner institution; can I use the University regulations?**

If your complaint relates to academic matters then you should use the University’s regulations. Where matters are the responsibility of the partner institution, for example crèche facilities, you will need to access the partner institution’s complaints procedure.

**I am on placement, are these regulations available to me?**

If you are on a placement and wish to make a complaint about an aspect of your experience whilst on placement you should, in the first instance, contact your faculty who will advise you on the process. Whether the complaint will be dealt with by the University or the placement provider will depend on the circumstances of the complaint. If the complaint is more appropriately dealt with through the placement provider’s own complaints procedure, you will be assisted by an appropriate member of staff in the faculty in taking this forward.

**What happens after I submit my formal complaint?**

Once the Student Casework Unit has received your complaint it will be sent to the relevant faculty/department. An Investigating Officer will be appointed to consider your case. The Investigating Officer will meet with you to discuss the issues that you have raised to ensure that they fully understand your complaint. They will then meet with relevant staff members and/or witnesses to discuss your complaint from their perspective.

*NB Policing Degree apprenticeships programmes only – your employer will be automatically notified of any submissions/ outcomes under this process.*

Once the Investigating Officer has completed all of their investigations they will draft a report, which will be presented to the Dean of Faculty/Head of Department (or nominee) who will include a formal response from the faculty/department. The final report will then be submitted to the Student Casework Unit.

**When can I expect to receive an outcome?**

You should receive a response within 40 working days of submission of your complaint. However, sometimes it is necessary to extend this deadline, for example if your case is particularly complex. The Student Casework Unit will let you know if this is the case and provide you with regular updates on progress and expected completion times. Once you have received the Investigating Officer’s report, you must respond to the University within **1 month** to confirm whether you accept the outcome.

**What happens if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?**

You can request a review of the formal investigation into your complaint providing that you meet the grounds set out in the Procedure by submitting a ‘Request for Review Form’ to the Student Casework Unit. If the Academic Registrar (or nominee) considers that there are grounds for review, the case will be referred to a Complaint Review Officer.

If you do not feel that you have grounds under these regulations, but are still dissatisfied, you can request a Completion of Procedures Letter that will allow you to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), providing that you meet their [Rules](http://www.oiahe.org.uk/rules-and-the-complaints-process.aspx).

**What support is available to me during my complaint?**

You are allowed to have a support person with you at any discussions, meetings or hearings, for example, a representative from the Student’s Union or a friend. Please note their role is not to represent you, advocate on your behalf or to speak for you. You are also able to obtain advice and support from the University’s Wellbeing Services and the Chaplaincy.