



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 You can let us know if you have a concern about an aspect of your student experience at the University of Sussex. Your views are important.
- 1.2 You may wish to contact us to address your concern(s). Submitting a complaint is one option available but other options are available. These other options maybe more appropriate depending on the nature of your concern(s). Other appropriate options are:
 - giving feedbackdetail.

We encourage you to consider all options

- 1.3. Our Student Complaints Procedure operates on a set of principles. They ensure fairness and confidence for everyone through the process. Our principles cover things such as:
 - our expectations, including behaving with dignity and respect;
 - privacy and confidentiality;
 - group complaints; and
 - being accompanied or represented.

The [full list of Student Complaints Procedure principles \[PDF 120KB\]](#)

2.1.2. You can follow the student complaints procedure if you are a:

- current registered student studying at the University of Sussex;
- recent graduate, up to six months after you have left the University of Sussex;
- student who has recently withdrawn (temporarily or permanently) up to six months after withdrawing from the University of Sussex.



- If you are studying at a [partner institution](#), you may be eligible to complain to us. See the



that you are out of time. This is called a Completion of Procedures letter. You can use this to [contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).

3. The Procedure

3.1 Overview

3.1.1. Our complaints process comprises of three stages:

- Level 1 – early resolution
- Level 2 – investigation
- Level 3 – review.

3.1.2. The level of a complaint does not reflect the severity of a complaint. We aim to resolve all complaints as soon as possible, typically at the early resolution stage.

3.1.3. The University's categorisation of a complaint (i.e. Level 1/2/3) is final.

3.2 Level 1 – Early Resolution

3.2.1. To submit your initial complaint, get in touch with the relevant service provider (the specific part of the University) where your concern is placed. For example, if your complaint is about the teaching on your course, the response will usually be considered by the Director of Teaching and Learning.



3.3.2. In exceptional circumstances, the University may take a decision to escalate a complaint immediately to this Level 2 (investigation) stage. We will inform you of this after you submit your initial complaint. The University decision on the categorisation of a complaint is final.

3.3.3. You should submit your complaint **within three months** of receiving your Level 1 (early resolution) outcome.

3.3.4. To request your complaint to be considered at this stage, fill in a Level 2 [investigation request form](#).

3.3.5. All Level 2 complaints are overseen by the 'H S X W \ Director W R K U H 6 W X G H Q W ([S H O U L D O F T H E S T U D E N T E X P E R I E N C E D I V I S I O N a t S u s s e x . T h e & R P S O D L Q W V 7 H D P m a s s a g e o n t h e i r b e h a l f .

3.3.6. Before we investigate Level 2 complaints, we will:

- send an auto-reply to your form submission;
- contact you about your complaint, usually within five working days, and may ask for more details so we fully understand your concerns; and
- confirm whether we are able to investigate your complaint at Level 2.

3.3.7. As part of the investigation the:

1. 'H S X W \ Director, delegated to W K H & R P S O D L Q W V 7 H D P, will appoint an appropriately senior member of University staff to look into your complaint. This member of staff will act as the Investigator to your complaint;
2. Investigator will consider all appropriate complaint materials/documentations; and
3. Investigator writes a report explaining their findings.

The Investigator may contact you for more information to help them during this process.

3.3.8. The 'H S X W \ Director I R U W K H 6 W X G H Q W ([S H O U L D O F T H E S T U D E N T E X P E R I E N C E D I V I S I O N a t S u s s e x . T h e & R P S O D L Q W V 7 H D P m a s s a g e o n t h e i r b e h a l f .



3.4. Level 3 – Review

3.4.1. This stage applies when you have received a Level 2 (investigation) response and
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4. **Partner Institution Complaints**

4.1. Overview

4.1.1. If you are studying a [Sussex course run by a partner institution](#), you may be eligible to ask us to review your complaint (the Level 3 stage above). A review is not a re-investigation of your complaint; we assess what happened with your complaint at the partner institution.

4.1.2. In the first instance, you must submit your complaint to the partner institution that is providing your course. Do not send it to us before you have done this.

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4.4.2. We will not generally consider complaints outside this period. Our decision is final.

4.5. How to Request a Partner Institution Complaint Review

4.5.1. To request a review, complete the [partner institution complaint review form](#).

4.5.2. For details on what happens in this process, see the 'Level 3 – Review' section above.

5. **Completion of Procedures**

5.1. You will get a Completion of Procedures document when we have reached a point where we cannot pursue your complaint any further. The University's decision on this is final.

5.2. You can use your document to request an independent review, should you choose.

6. **Independent Review**

6.1. If you have exhausted our complaints process, or you have received a Completion of Procedures document, you may wish to [contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA).

6.2. The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of university student complaints. To request a review by the OIA, you will need to contact it within 12 months of the date of your Completion of Procedures document.

7. **Support**

7.1. If you need support with a complaint you can go to:

- the [Student Life Centre](#)
- [advocates in the Students' Union](#).



8.2. Mediation

8.2.1. We encourage you to consider alternative dispute resolutions as a way of solving issues. Mediation is a free and confidential which **everyone** concerned must agree to participate in the process. It helps people attempt to find their own resolution to the problem with an impartial, independent and trained third party. Find out about our:

- mediation process by emailing complaints@sussex.ac.uk and we will provide guidance;
- [restorative programme](#) if you have experienced prejudice; and
- [mediation service for students in private-sector housing](#).

8.3. Other Procedures

If you're not a current student at Sussex, but you have a concern, see our:

- [unsuccessful university applicant policy](#) and [tuition fee status information](#);
- [Masters applicant feedback, appeals and complaints](#);
- [PhD applicant feedback, appeals and complaints](#);
- [alumni and fundraising complaints procedure](#);
- [staff complaints process](#); and
- [complaints process for members of the public](#)

9. **Miscellaneous**

- 9.1. The OIA Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/>
- 9.2. The QAA Guiding Principles for handling concerns, complaints and appeals: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/concerns-complaints-and-appeals>

