

# Students' Complaints Procedure

**For UCLan Cyprus**

**May 2021/22**



## **Making a Complaint**

### **Introduction**

The University of Central Lancashire Cyprus is committed to providing high quality education and other services to its students. Our aim is to provide a supportive environment including academic, welfare and recreational services and to be responsive to concerns when they are raised.

Feedback from students is welcomed as part of the University's approach to the development and enhancement of the quality of services provided to students. There are many local routes whereby concerns and issues can be raised and addressed, and students are encouraged to make full use of these routes. In particular, students should ensure that they are familiar with the quality assurance procedures that exist within academic schools and are described within Student Handbooks.

The University does, however, recognize that there may be occasions when you have cause for complaint about the service you have received. When this happens, the Complaints Procedure is intended to provide an accessible, fair and straightforward system which ensures an effective, prompt and appropriate response.

### **The University aims to handle complaints in a way that:**

- encourages informal conciliation and facilitates early resolution;
- ensures a full and fair investigation;
- addresses all the points of the issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress;
- provides a prompt resolution within established timescales;
- positive actions can be taken to continuously improve services.

The complaints procedure (covering courses and services) is handled at UCLan Cyprus in collaboration with the parent University. All complaints related to services provided locally are fully resolved at UCLan Cyprus. All complaints related to course matters at stage 1 of an undergraduate degree (level 4) are fully resolved locally and all complaints related to course matters at stage 2 of an undergraduate degree (levels 5 and 6) and at postgraduate level (level 7) are addressed and handled by the parent University in collaboration with the Rector and the Heads of School of UCLan Cyprus.

The University hopes that students will have a positive and rewarding experience during their studies at UCLan Cyprus. If, however, concerns are brought to our attention, students can be assured that they will be treated in a serious and constructive manner and every effort will be made to ensure a satisfactory resolution.

**Professor Panikkos Poutziouris**

**Rector, UCLan Cyprus**

## What is a Complaint?

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about any programme of study or related facility or any other service provided by the University. This Procedure does not apply where there are separate mechanisms in place:

- \* Appeals Against Assessment Board Decisions, contact the Schools Administration Office;
- Staff Grievances, contact Human Resources Office;
- Freedom of Information or Data Protection, contact Student Support Office;
- Use of CCTV Equipment, contact Health & Safety & Environment Officer;
- Appeals or Complaints relating to the admissions process, contact Recruitment and Admissions Office;
- Complaints about Student Conduct, contact the Students Support Office;
- Complaints from clients of other University services who are not current or former students, contact relevant Head of Service.

\*This Procedure will not be used for matters relating to assessment performance and academic judgement, except where there is a complaint about a service provided which has to be resolved before an appeal decision can be made. The University reserves the right to reclassify a complaint as an academic appeal or vice versa, if the submission falls properly within the remit of one procedure rather than the other.

**NB:** The Complaints Procedure can be used to appeal all decisions made by the University. Where the decision has been made subject to a University policy e.g. Rules for the Use of the Library and the right of appeal contained within that policy has been exhausted, if pursued under this policy, the complaint will proceed straight to Stage 3. The complaint must be made within 15 working days of the outcome of the decision and must be based on one or more of the grounds set out in the Stage 3 section below.

## Special Cases

In the event of a complaint being made against a member of the Council or the Senate, all complaints should be in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Council or Rector, respectively. Any complaint against the Rector should be in writing and addressed to the Administrator of the Senate, who will determine how to deal with the complaint. Any complaint against the Chair of the Council should be in writing and addressed to the Secretary to the Council, who will determine how to deal with the complaint.

## Who can complain?

Any student who directly seeks or receives a service from the University may lodge a complaint under this Procedure. Former students may complain within a reasonable time period, normally 3 calendar months from leaving the University.

Matters of concern may be raised individually or collectively and students should feel assured that they will not encounter any disadvantage having lodged a complaint in good faith.

Where complaints are raised collectively, the complaint should include a signed statement from all parties confirming that they have been materially affected by the alleged incident and authorising the University to correspond with a single named spokesperson.

Anonymous or third-party complaints will not be dealt with under this Procedure, except in exceptional circumstances. It is at the discretion of the University as to how these are handled e.g. the University may initiate enquiries where it considers there is a compelling case supported by evidence.

### **Vexatious, Malicious or Frivolous Complaints**

The University may decline to deal with complaints, which are vexatious, malicious or frivolous.

A complaint may be considered to be vexatious when it may or may not be the latest in a series of requests and it:

- clearly does not have any serious purpose or value;
- is designed to cause disruption or annoyance, or gives rise to disproportionate inconvenience or expense;
- has the effect of harassing the University and/or its staff;
- can otherwise fairly be characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable.

A complaint may be considered to be malicious where:

- there is evidence of intention to do harm or mischief;
- it is reasonable to assume that the complainant intended to do harm or mischief;
- malice may be implied where e.g. it is clear that no redress is sought.

A complaint may be considered to be frivolous where:

- it is clear that is not serious or sensible in content, attitude or behaviour;
- there is an absence of clear desire for a sensible or reasonable form of redress.

Where there is reason to believe that a complaint is vexatious or malicious, the matter will be referred to the Head of Academic and Quality Assurance who may decide to reject the complaint without full consideration of its merits. Reasons will be given as to why the complaint is considered to be an abuse of process. The University will reserve the right to invoke the Regulations for the Conduct of Students. You should also note appendix 4, which sets out the University's approach when dealing with unacceptable behaviour by a complainant.

The student may appeal against a decision to reject his or her complaint as an abuse of process by writing to the Senior Student Support Officer within 5 working days of the decision. The Senior Student Support Officer will consider the appeal and will notify the student of the decision within 15 working days. If the original decision is upheld, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

### **Advice and Support**

Advice on the scope and operation of this Procedure may be obtained from the Student Support Office.

Each School has Course Representatives, whose role is to help students to resolve any issue(s).

Students may seek independent advice and support from the Student Council.

Where a student has declared a disability to the University, all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate his/her needs.

All stages of this Procedure are internal proceedings. These proceedings are intended to be fair and to comply with the rules of natural justice, and should not be adversarial or overly legalistic. There is no need for anyone to have formal legal representation.

Anyone who lodges a complaint, or against whom a complaint is made will be entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choosing at any stage in the Procedure. Students may seek representation from the Student Council, or may choose to be accompanied by a friend. There is no objection if the person is legally qualified, so long as that person understands and respects the nature of the proceedings and does not adopt an overly adversarial or legalistic stance. Students who lodge a complaint must be present throughout any proceedings and cannot be represented by a nominated third party.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be preserved during the investigation of a complaint to safeguard the interests of everyone concerned unless disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint. The University expects that all parties will respect the confidentiality of the process.

Any individual about whom a complaint is made will have the right to be informed of the fact and nature of the complaint by their line manager.

### **Actions**

In the case of all complaints, the University seeks to ensure that appropriate and reasonable action is taken. Where a complaint is found to be justified, any appropriate remedial action will be notified as part of the decision. If a complaint is found to be not justified at any stage, the reasons for the decision will be communicated, together with details of any further recourse that is available via this Procedure.

References in this Procedure to an office holder include a nominee acting on behalf of that office holder. The University will ensure that anyone investigating or deciding on a complaint has had no prior involvement in the complaint.

All actions under this Procedure will normally cease on receipt of formal correspondence from a solicitor on behalf of the student, or on the instigation of legal proceedings against the University in relation to the matters complained about, which will be handled by University's legal office.

### **Time Limits**

Complaints should be raised as early as possible, since any delay may affect the University's ability to properly investigate the complaint or provide an appropriate remedy. It is important that students do all they can to meet the University's deadlines for the submission of complete and detailed material, so that complaints can be progressed as quickly as possible.

### **Stage 1**

Complaints should normally be raised with the relevant member of staff immediately where possible, and normally not later than 10 working days after the incident giving rise to the complaint.

### **Stage 2**

Stage 2 complaints should normally be lodged within 15 working days of the Stage 1 response or within 15 working days of the incident giving rise to the complaint.

### **Stage 3**

Stage 3 complaints should normally be lodged within 15 working days of the Stage 2 response from the University.

### **Former Students**

Former students may complain within a reasonable time period. Normally, this will be within 3 calendar months of leaving the University.

The University will exercise discretion where there is good reason for a complaint to be submitted outside these time limits.

It is the University's aim that all complaints are dealt with in a timely manner, in particular where the nature of the complaint requires swift action. There will occasionally be circumstances when, for good reason, the University will need to extend the timescales set out in this Procedure. Where this is the case, students will be informed and kept regularly updated about progress.

The University will make appropriate allowances for delays occasioned by exceptional circumstances on the part of students.

### **Monitoring the Process**

In order for the University to improve its services to students, the receipts of formal [stage 2 & 3] complaints and responses will be monitored. A report on the outcome of the monitoring process will be made annually to the Student Experience & Engagement Committee. This will enable the University to continuously improve its services and ensure an inclusive, consistent and constructive approach to complaints. The effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure will also be kept under review and, where appropriate, changes will be made.

## **PROCESS**

### **Stage 1 – Informal Stage**

It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis and close to their point of origin. However, the University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where this is not appropriate and the Student Support Office can advise on this.

Initial contact, should normally therefore, be made with the relevant member of staff who is responsible for dealing on a day-to-day basis with the matter being complained about. For example, if the complaint refers to an academic matter, the first point of contact should normally be the module tutor, personal tutor or course leader. A complaint may also be informally raised with another senior member of staff. Initial contact can also be made by a spokesperson on behalf of a group, including the Student Council (and at this stage of the procedure it would not require a signed statement from the individuals concerned).

In order for a complaint to be dealt with, effectively and efficiently, it must be drawn to the attention of the relevant member of staff immediately where possible and normally not later than 10 working days after the incident giving rise to the complaint.

At this stage, the relevant member of staff will discuss the complaint with the student and other persons involved, determining whether it can be resolved without recourse to more formal procedures.

A written record of the outcome will normally be sent to student. This will be notified to the Head of School or Head of Service where the effectiveness of the School/Service could be improved, and may also be referred to in the event that the complaint is progressed to stage 2. Where informal resolution is not appropriate or possible, the student will be directed to the formal stage below.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Stage**

If, having pursued the matter informally, and the student is still dissatisfied; he/she may pursue the matter through the formal stage within 15 working days of the informal response being given.

Where it is not appropriate for a complaint to be submitted for informal resolution, a formal complaint should be normally made within 15 working days of the alleged incident or concern.

The complaint should be submitted in writing to the Student Support Office, using the Complaints Form at the back of this booklet. Where complaints are raised collectively at this stage, the complaint should include a signed statement from all parties confirming that they have been materially affected by the alleged incident and authorising the University to correspond with a single named spokesperson.

The Complaint Form requires details of: the nature of the complaint; the informal steps taken to resolve it (or the reasons why informal steps have not been taken) and a statement as to why the student remains dissatisfied; and the reasonable steps that he/she would wish to see be taken to resolve the matter. Appropriate evidence should be appended e.g. copies of relevant letters, e-mails, signed witness statements and any other supporting documentation.

The Student Support Officer will acknowledge the student's complaint and pass it to the relevant Head of School or Head of Service to deal with. If the complaint is about a Head of School or Head of Service, the appropriate Line Manager will be informed.

The Head of School or Head of Service will investigate the complaint and may request a meeting with the student to discuss the matter. The Head of School or Head of Service will notify the student in writing of his or her conclusions and of any action, the School or Service intends to take.

The student will also have the right to request a meeting with the Head of School or Head of Service if he/she so wishes.

The student may be accompanied by a friend for support, or a member of the Student Council. At the meeting the student will be invited to present his/her case and will be given the opportunity to amplify his/her written case and to submit copies of any supporting evidence e.g. copies of e-mails.

The aim of the meeting will be:

- to clarify the issues that are to be investigated within the scope of the Complaints Procedure;
- to clarify the reasonable measures that the student would wish to see taken to resolve his/her complaint;
- to ensure that where appropriate, any immediate steps are taken to address the student's concerns;
- to ensure that where appropriate, the student is aware of relevant University support services;
- to clarify the process and the anticipated timescale for a written response and the student's right to request a review under stage 3 if he/she is dissatisfied with the stage 2 outcome.

A formal record of the meeting will be taken, and a copy will be sent to the student within 5 working days with a request for him/her to sign and return the record with any comments. The formal record may be disclosed to any other person(s) named in the complaint or any other relevant parties.

It is the University's aim that most complaints dealt with under this stage will be resolved within 25 working days. The student will be informed if there is likely to be any delay in the process.

All formal complaints and responses will be monitored by the Student Support Office.

### **Stage 3 – Final Stage**

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, he/she may submit a request for a review of the decision of the Head of School or Head of Service under stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 3 may only be invoked where the preceding stage 2 has been completed. The purpose of stage 3 is to review the action(s) and decision(s) taken at the previous stage(s). No new complaints may be introduced at stage 3. Students are strongly advised to seek advice from the Student Support Office and Student Council before progressing to Stage 3.

A request for a review should be submitted to the Student Support Office within 15 working days of the date of the stage 2 response and must be based on one (or more) of the following grounds:

1. that new evidence or circumstances have become known, which the student could not have reasonably made known at the time of the stage 2 complaint;
2. that the stage 2 investigation was not conducted fairly and/or in accordance with due process, and this materially affected the outcome;
3. that the decision and outcome of the stage 2 complaint were manifestly unreasonable in the light of the evidence provided.

The Stage 3 Complaint Form also requires details of: the nature of the complaint; the steps already taken to resolve it and a statement as to why the student remains dissatisfied; and the reasonable steps that the student would wish to see taken to resolve the matter. Appropriate evidence should be appended e.g. copies of relevant letters, e-mails signed witness statements and any other supporting documentation.

The Rector will appoint a Complaint Review Panel, (the Panel) comprising three members as follows:

- The Rector's nominee, who shall act as Chair;
- A member of staff who is a Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee), and who is not associated with the School/Service concerned;
- A student who is an elected member of the Student Council.

No member of the Panel shall have been previously associated with the complaint.

The Panel will review the case and may request further information from the student and/or the School/Service. The Panel will consider whether, in particular: the relevant procedures were followed at stage 2; the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances; clear reasons were given for the stage 2 outcomes; there are valid reasons for the late submission of new evidence.

The Panel will decide on the appropriate action of:

- dismissing the request for a review, in which case the reasons for the decision will be communicated;
- convening a hearing to hear the case by the complainant and the response by the Head of School or Head of Service;
- upholding the request for a review and determining the outcome of the complaint, including any actions to be taken by the relevant School/Service;
- referring all or part of the complaint back for reconsideration at stage 2, either by a different Head of School or Head of Service.

The Panel will aim to communicate this decision in writing within 15 working days of the receipt of the request for review.

If the Panel decides to proceed with a hearing, it will aim to convene the hearing within a further 15 working days.

Stage 3 is a review of the complaint to determine whether it is justified in full or in part and whether the School/Service has conducted a fair investigation and provided a reasonable response or resolution at stage 2.

The decision and outcome of the stage 3 complaint will be communicated by the Chair of the Panel to the student and the Head of School/Head of Service in writing, normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

### **Further Information**

The Complaint Forms for all stage 2 and stage 3 complaints are attached at the back of this booklet. Additional copies are available at the School Administration Office and the Student Support Office.

**In the event of any uncertainty about the scope of this Procedure, or who to contact in the first instance, the Student Support Office will be pleased to assist.**

**Student Support Office  
12-14 University Avenue  
CY-7080 Pyla  
Larnaka**

**Tel: +357 24694000 / 24694073**

**E-mail: [CyprusStudentSupport@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:CyprusStudentSupport@uclan.ac.uk)**

Please contact the Student Support Office if you require a copy of the Complaints Procedure in an alternative format or if you have difficulty in completing the Complaint Form.

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Complaint Form: Stage 2
Appendix 2	Complaint Form: Stage 3
Appendix 3	Notes for Guidance on a Stage 3 Complaint Hearing
Appendix 4	Policy on Unacceptable Complainant Behaviour

# Complaint Form

(for all Stage 2 Complaints)

## Guidance Notes for Applicants

If, having pursued the matter informally, you feel there are reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction, you may pursue the matter through the formal stage within 15 working days of the informal response being given.

---

## Section A

Full Name

Student Number

School of Study

Course Title

Year of Study

Contact Email Address

Contact Address

Daytime Telephone No

---

## Section B

Summary of the key points of your complaint:

**Summary of the steps already taken to address your complaint:**

**Reasonable steps you would wish to see taken to resolve your complaint:**

**Note:**

The receipt of complaints and responses to complaints will be monitored.  
As part of this process, the University may contact you to seek your views on how your complaint was handled.

If you do not wish to be contacted, please mark X in the box:

**Signed**

**Dated**

---

**Please submit the following documents with this form:**

- Copies of relevant letters, e-mails, notes and other supporting documentation
  - A list of the key events in date order
-

# Complaint Form

(for all **Stage 3** Complaints)

## Guidance Notes for Applicants

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, complete this form to request a review of the decision of the Head of School/Head of Service under stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. A request for review must be submitted to the Student Support Office within 15 working days of the date of the stage 2 response.

The request for a review must state the grounds on which the appeal is sought and should be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence.

The Complaints Review Panel will meet in closed session initially, to determine whether there are grounds for appeal.

---

## Section A

First Name

Surname

<b>Student ID/Enrolment Number</b>	
<b>School of Study</b>	
<b>Course Title</b>	
<b>Year of Study</b>	
<b>Contact Email Address</b>	
<b>Current Postal Address</b>	
<b>Daytime Telephone No.</b>	

---

## Section B

The grounds for appeal against the stage 2 decision are as follows:

1. that new evidence or circumstances have become known, which the student could not have reasonably made known at the time of the stage 2 complaint;
2. that the stage 2 investigation as not conducted fairly and/or in accordance with due process, and this materially affected the outcome;
3. that the decision and outcome of the stage 2 complaint were manifestly unreasonable in the light of the evidence provided.

## Section C

---

Student's Case:

**Please note** that the purpose of stage 3 is to REVIEW the decision made at stage 2 – **no NEW complaints can be introduced at stage 3.**

**Please provide a brief summary of the nature of your complaint and the steps already taken to resolve it:**

**Please detail which ground(s) you wish to seek a review of the stage 2 outcome (Ground 1., 2. or 3. detailed above) and the reasons why:**

**Ground (s)** (1., 2. or 3 above): \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason:** *(Please use additional sheets if necessary)*

**Please state the reasonable steps you would like to see taken to resolve your complaint:**

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit this form along with:**

- a list of key events in date order
- all supporting evidence, e.g. copies of relevant emails, letters, notes etc

## UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE CYPRUS

### Notes for Guidance on the Conduct of a Stage 3 Complaint Hearing

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of a complaint hearing shall be for the Complaints Review Panel to review the decision taken by the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) at Stage 2. This will involve hearing the case by the Student and the response from the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee).

The Panel will have due regard for previous attempts to resolve the complaint and shall determine whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part and whether the School/Service has provided a reasonable response or resolution.

#### 2. The Complaints Review Panel

The Rector shall appoint a Complaints Review Panel (the Panel) comprising:

- i. the Rector's nominee (Chair): a member of the Senior Management team who is not associated with the complaint;
- ii. a member of staff who is a Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) who is not associated with the School or Service concerned;
- iii. a student member: normally an elected member of the Student Council

No member of the Panel shall have been previously associated with the complaint.

#### 3. Notice of a Stage 3 Complaint Hearing

If the Panel decides to proceed with a hearing, the Student will be given 15 days' notice of the hearing date and will be notified of his/her right to be accompanied by a friend. The Student will be invited to submit a one-page summary/chronology of the complaint and any documents on which he or she relies, including witness statements, by no less than 7 days before the hearing. The Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) will then compile a bundle of all documents generated by the previous stages of the Complaints Procedure, and any additional documents upon which the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) seeks to rely, including a report on the conduct of stage 2 investigation and the reason for his/her decision and witness statements from witnesses or staff named in the complaint. The Student Support Officer will circulate copies of all documentation to the Panel and both parties not less than 3 days before the hearing.

Where the complaint is about a member of staff, the response of the member of staff may be incorporated in the response of the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee).

#### 4. Conduct of a Stage 3 Complaint Hearing

The following procedure will normally apply at a stage 3 hearing:

- i. the Chair will invite all those present to introduce themselves and will explain the purpose of the hearing;
- ii. the Student (or representative) will present the complaint;
- iii. the Panel and the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) will have the opportunity to question the Student;
- iv. the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) will present the response;
- v. the Panel and the Student (or representative) will have the opportunity to question the Head of School/Head of Service;

- vi. the Panel may ask questions of either party at any stage during the hearing;
- vii. summing up by the Student (or representative);
- viii. summing up by the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee);
- ix. at the Panel's discretion it may depart from the normal procedure, if it appears to be in the interest of fairness to do so;
- x. the Panel may retire to consider its decision; or seek further information; and/or adjourn to a later date.

The Student Support Officer will act as advisor to the Panel.

#### **5. Documentation and Witnesses**

The Panel will receive copies of all documents generated by the previous stages of the Complaints Procedure. The Panel may request additional documentation from either party either before or at the hearing.

Otherwise additional documentary evidence, other than that which was submitted by the Student and that included in the bundle prepared by the Head of School/Head of Service under paragraph 3 above, will be admitted only at the discretion of the Panel.

The Student and the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) are entitled to submit any statements by witnesses in writing. Witnesses may be invited to give evidence in person at the discretion of the Panel.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The Panel may decide:

- i. that the complaint is justified in full or in part and that the School/Service should implement recommendations; or
- ii. that the School/Service has no case to answer and has provided a reasonable response or resolution at Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.
- iii. The Panel may also recommend any changes to the University policies and procedures.
- iv. Any conclusions or recommendations will be communicated by the Chair of the Panel to the Student and the Head of School/Head of Service (or nominee) in writing, normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

The Student will also be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

## Policy on Unacceptable Complainant Behaviour

1. This Policy sets out the University's approach to the relatively few complainants whose actions or behaviour it considers to be unacceptable. The term complainant includes any person acting on behalf of a student or who contacts the University in connection with a complaint. The principles set out in the Policy also apply to the University's dealings with people other than complainants.
2. The University understands that making a complaint can be a stressful experience for students; however, we also have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff.
3. The University is committed to dealing with all complainants fairly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service, but we do not expect staff to tolerate behaviour, which we consider to be unacceptable, for example, any communication which is:
  - abusive, offensive, defamatory or distressing;
  - aggressive, threatening, coercive or intimidating;
  - unreasonably persistent or demanding.
4. The University will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, and this may include action under the University's Regulations for the Conduct of Students.
5. Complainants can contact the University by letter, e-mail or telephone. We cannot correspond with anyone who is not confirmed in writing as the representative of the complainant.
6. When we consider that the behaviour of a complainant is unacceptable, we will tell them why we find their behaviour unacceptable and we will ask them to change it. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, we will take action to restrict their contact in connection with the complaint.
7. The decision to restrict access will be taken by the head of the Student Support Office (or nominee), with advice from the University Solicitor where appropriate. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The University will take account of any reasonable adjustments as a consequence of any declared disability. The options, which will be considered, are as follows:
  - asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct;
  - requesting contact in a particular form e.g. letters only;
  - requiring contact to take place with a named person;
  - restricting telephone calls to specified days and times;
  - asking the complainant to appoint a representative to correspond with us;
  - in exceptional circumstances, invoking the procedures for malicious or vexatious complaints as outlined below.
8. We will write to tell the complainant why we believe their behaviour is unacceptable, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.
9. Where a complainant behaves unacceptably during a telephone conversation, we may as a last resort terminate the call.
10. Where a complainant continues to behave in a way, which we consider to be unacceptable, we may decide to terminate contact with them. This may mean that we will not continue with the handling of their complaint.
11. Where the behaviour threatens the safety and welfare of University staff and/or students, we will consider other options, e.g. action under the University's Regulations for the Conduct of Students (including suspension from the campus), reporting the matter to the police, or taking other legal action.
12. This Policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Student Experience and Engagement Committee.

## **Definitions**

### **Vexatious Complaints**

A complaint may be considered to be vexatious when it may or may not be the latest in a series of requests and it:

- clearly does not have any serious purpose or value;
- is designed to cause disruption or annoyance, or gives rise to disproportionate inconvenience or expense;
- has the effect of harassing the University and/or its staff;
- can otherwise fairly be characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable.

### **Frivolous Complaints**

A complaint may be considered to be frivolous where:

- it is clear that is not serious or sensible in content, attitude or behaviour;
- there is an absence of clear desire for a sensible or reasonable form of redress.

### **Malicious Complaints**

A complaint may be considered to be malicious where:

- there is evidence of intention to do harm or mischief;
- it is reasonable to assume that the complainant intended to do harm or mischief;
- malice may be implied where e.g. it is clear that no redress is sought.

### **Unsubstantiated Complaints**

A complaint may be considered to be unsubstantiated where:

After investigation of the complaint where during the course of which the complainant was given full opportunity to provide evidence in support of the complaint, no prima facie evidence has been provided to the University.

The decision to deem a complaint as vexatious, frivolous, malicious or unsubstantiated will be taken by the head of the Student Support Office (or nominee), with advice from the University Solicitor where appropriate. The decision will be given in writing with associated summary reasons. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued at the same time.