



Complaints Procedure

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Policy statement

This complaints policy outlines University Centre Quayside's process for investigating and acting upon complaints. A complaint is defined as an expression of significant or sustained dissatisfaction where a complainant seeks a specific action to address the issue. The complaints procedure is based on the expectation that all reasonable efforts have already been made to deal with the grievance prior to reaching the stage of a formal complaint.

Principles

The Centre considers complaints as important feedback and complainants will not suffer any disadvantage as a consequence of lodging a formal complaint. The Centre will seek to act on complaints in a timely manner and do so impartially and objectively.

All complaints shall be recorded, together with the actions and timescales taken to resolve the complaint.

Procedure

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the complaints officer (complaints@ucq.ac.uk) who will:

- Acknowledge receipt and log complaint within 1 working day
- Forward the complaint to the appropriate member of the Academic Council for investigation
- Monitor that the complaint has been responded to within the timeframes set in this policy

Investigating Academic Council member:

An investigating member of the Academic Council will be appointed for a complaint, based on having no conflict of interest with the complaint.

The investigating member will investigate the complaint through a desk based scrutiny of all the available evidence and through interviews with members of staff and/or students if required. The investigating member will be able to draw upon any member of the Academic Council to assist in the investigation of the complaint, unless a conflict of interest exists. The investigation should not be undertaken by anyone who has had prior involvement with the complaint in question.

Outcome

The outcome of a complaint may include the complaint being:

- upheld in whole with a statement as to the remedy
- upheld in part with a statement as to the remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed
- dismissed with a statement as to the reasons

Timescales

All complaints shall be logged and acknowledged within 1 working day.

UCQ will strive to resolve 90% of complaints within 10 working days of receipt and 100% resolved within 20 working days of receipt, unless otherwise agreed with the complainant and contracting authorities.

Escalation

Should the complainant consider that their formal complaint has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Principal & CEO to review their complaint. The complainant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the complaint should be reviewed and the resolution that the complainant seeks. This review will only be considered by the Principal & CEO where:

- the request for review has been received by the Principal & CEO within 2 working weeks of the notification of the outcome of the complaint
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or
- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the formal complaint

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal complaints procedure and your complaint refers to services you have received relating to your course and achieving your qualification then please contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Contact details of the Awarding Organisation can be found on their website. If you would like to confirm who your Awarding Organisation is, please contact the UCQ Student Services Team on 0191 275 5015 or review your Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Should you address your complaint to the Awarding Organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome you may then raise your complaint to the relevant qualification regulator. Either a representative of UCQ or the Awarding Organisation will be able to offer you guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of higher education student complaints. Once you have exhausted UCQ's internal procedures, if you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint that you take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules.

This complaints procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA in December 2016 (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/96361/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf>).