

Complaints – Student Guide

If you feel dissatisfied with your experience at The University of Law then you have the right to make a complaint. This guide is designed to give you a brief overview of the University's complaints procedure and some tips for filling out the complaint and review forms. As this is only a guide, it is important that you read the [Overarching Policy for Academic Appeals and Student Complaints](#) and the [Student Complaints Policy](#) before making your complaint.

What can I complain about?

Complaints can be made about any aspect of your University experience, except:

- Appeals against the decisions of Examination Boards, or issues related to assessments (conduct or content), final results or concession applications, as these are dealt with under the Academic Appeals procedure (please see the [Academic Reviews and Appeal Policy](#));
- Appeals against decisions taken under disciplinary proceedings as these are dealt with under the disciplinary procedure (please see the [Student Discipline Regulations](#));
- The contractual liability for the payment of course fees (as distinct from the processes or administration employed in relation to fee payment – **please also note that the chasing of outstanding fees will not be suspended during investigation of a complaint**); and
- Appeals against decisions taken regarding Disability Support provisions (these are dealt with under the Disability Support Review process).

How do I complain?

Informal Complaint

First you must raise your concern informally with the person concerned, Student Information or your course supervisor. Until you tell us, we won't know there is a problem and most complaints can be dealt with quickly and effectively at this local level. In the event that the outcome is unsatisfactory you may then issue a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

The formal complaint form is found on the website (See the When Things Go Wrong section here – www.law.ac.uk/policies). You need to fill it out and return it by post or email along with supporting documents to evidence your complaint. The addresses are complaints@law.ac.uk or Academic Registry (University Complaints Officer), The University of Law, 14 Store Street, Bloomsbury, London, WC1E 7DE. It is important that you do this **within three months** of the event you are complaining about.

You will receive an acknowledgement within seven calendar days, and an Investigating Officer (IO) will be appointed. You may be asked to provide further details or to meet with the IO to discuss your complaint. The IO will carry out an investigation and produce a report which will be sent to you along with the outcome within five weeks of the acknowledgment of the

complaint.

I'm not happy with the outcome of my complaint; what can I do?

If you aren't satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, then the University offers an appeal process. The appeal form is sent to you with the outcome of your original complaint and must be completed **within 14 calendar days** of receipt and returned in the same way as the complaints form. You must either:

1. provide further evidence to support your original complaint and explain why you didn't provide this initially; or
2. demonstrate that the formal complaints procedure was not followed correctly and that this had a detrimental impact on the outcome of your complaint; or
3. demonstrate that the investigation reached a decision that no reasonable body could have reached.

The appeal follows the same process as the complaints investigation except that it will be investigated by an Appeal Officer (AO) with no prior involvement in the case. **Please note that the AO can reduce the offer made to you in the initial outcome, as well as potentially increasing it.** Upon the conclusion of your review the University will give you a Completion of Procedures Letter along with the report.

I don't agree with the outcome of the appeal; what can I do?

After the review process you have exhausted all complaints routes within the University. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome of the review process then you may request a further review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). [Further details will be provided with the review outcome and can also be found at www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). You must provide the OIA with your Completion of Procedures Letter and complain to them **within twelve months** of the date of that letter.

I'm outside the time limits to complain

If you're outside the time limits but still wish to make a complaint you must prove that there were exceptional circumstances which justified your delay in submission.

I have a complaint about a fellow student or a staff member

If you have a complaint about a fellow student or a member of University staff, you may wish to approach a tutor or other member of staff with your concerns informally in the first instance. If you feel that you wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so via the process outlined above.

The complaint may then be dealt with as a disciplinary matter where appropriate and the process to be followed is outlined in the appropriate staff and student disciplinary policies. For staff, this will be referred to the staff members campus-based HR business partner and for students, the student's Campus Dean.

As the Complainant, you may not be informed whether any action has been taken against a member of staff or the student body due to data protection reasons and may not see the outcome of any disciplinary investigation.

I have a question not covered here

For further details please contact the University Complaints Officer on complaints@law.ac.uk.

Tips for filling out the forms

Evidence

You need to be clear about the grounds for your complaint and how you intend to evidence it. Evidence may include letter or email correspondence or excerpts from policies or the student handbook that you believe have been breached.

Content

When filling out either form it's important to remember that it will be investigated by someone who has no prior involvement with your complaint. Therefore you need to include plenty of detail such as what happened, when, what was said, who was involved and what the consequences have been. The more specific you can be the more likely the complaint is to be resolved quickly.

However, it is important to keep in mind the grounds for your complaint. Detail is good, but irrelevant details will simply confuse the investigator. If you feel your complaint requires context, put the background details in a separately labelled paragraph.

On the complaint form you also need to detail what you have already done to resolve the issue: this is the informal stage. Your complaint will have more weight if you can show that you have made a real effort to resolve it informally, and where you have missed the informal stage you may be referred back to it before your complaint will be investigated. Where you have tried the informal stage you need to state what you have done, when, who was involved, what was the outcome and why you are unsatisfied with it.

Remember when completing the appeal form there are only three possible grounds for review and you must explain why you believe one of these grounds exists. You cannot simply reiterate the original complaint.

Structure

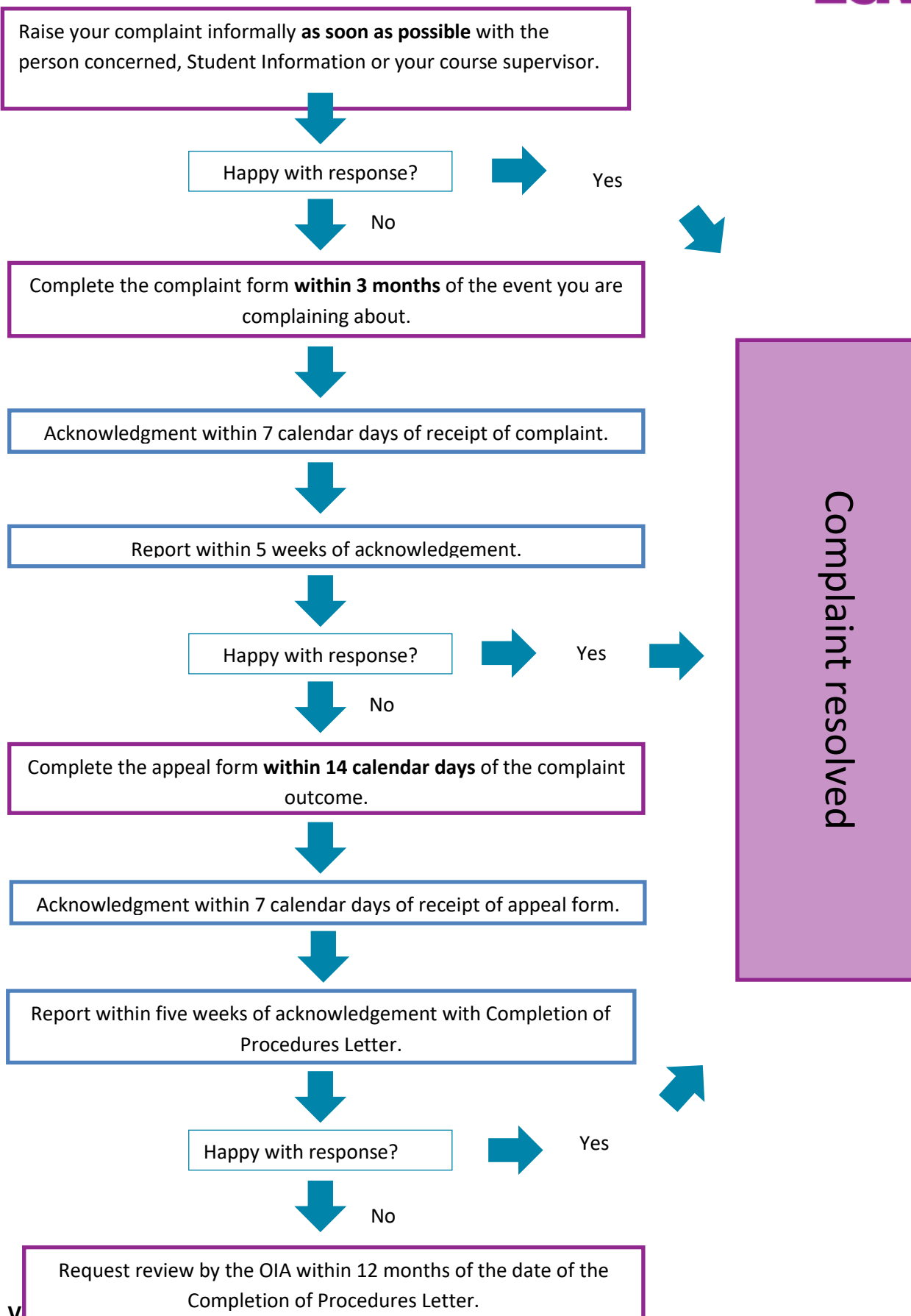
You're trying to persuade someone to your point of view. Therefore you want to make your complaint as easy to follow as possible. Approach things in a logical order; use sub-headings and bullet points if appropriate. Don't feel constrained by the size of the box; you can continue on a separate sheet. It's better to have a longer but clearly laid out complaint than one crammed onto the form. If you do decide to use an additional sheet, make sure that this is indicated on the form.

Style

We know that making a complaint can be upsetting; however it helps to try and remain detached when completing the forms. It is best to keep to the facts and avoid personal opinion. We do want to know how you feel, but overly emotional language may cause confusion.

Outcome

Both forms ask what outcome you seek. When thinking about this please remember that requests have to be reasonable, relevant to your complaint and practicable to implement. Example remedies may be a formal apology, a change of timetable or an offer of additional tuition normally by joining another class.



Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
1.0			June 2019
1.1	Senior Quality Officer	Change to the document coding convention	March 2020
1.2	Head of Student Information and Administration - Quality	Update to department names	August 2020
1.3	University Complaints Officer	Update to document location information	November 2020
1.4	Senior Quality Officer	Update in regard to complaints about staff and students	January 2021