

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

1 The University of Law's Student Discipline Policy has been informed by the Office for Students Sector-Recognized Standards and the General Ongoing Conditions of Registration and has regard to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. These definitive reference points for all English higher education institutions set out how academic standards are established and maintained and how excellence in the quality of learning opportunities is assured.

This policy sits within The University of Law's Quality and Standards Code, which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

Introduction

2 The University of Law (the University) recognises that central to this policy is the University's responsibility for the academic standards and integrity of all awards granted in its name. For the purposes of this policy, a student is defined as anyone who has accepted a place at the University, is currently studying at the University, or is a past student of the University.

3 This Policy sets out the key principles and procedures which cover concerns about the behaviour and actions of students of the University, which may constitute a disciplinary offence.

4 This Policy may be used for both individual and collective disciplinary matters (eg collusion).

Responsibility for this policy

5 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the maintenance of standards and quality assurance of academic provision and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Expectation

6 The University has regulations and procedures for handling disciplinary matters; these regulations and procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and ensure reasonable and consistent outcomes.

Key Aims and Principles

- 7 The University follows these Key Aims and Principles:
- 7.1 *Transparency* – the University provides details of who is responsible for dealing with the disciplinary matter at each stage of the process, and also provides information on what action can be taken if the resolution is unsatisfactory;
 - 7.2 *Speed* – the University ensures disciplinary matters are investigated and outcomes reached in a timely manner whilst ensuring reasonable time for preparation and proper consideration of the relevant matters by students and University staff involved in the process;
 - 7.3 *Impartiality* – the University ensures that no person who has any direct interest in a disciplinary matter is involved in deciding its outcome;
 - 7.4 *Consistency* – the University ensures that outcomes from the disciplinary offence are consistent across similar cases;
 - 7.5 *Proportionate* – the University ensures that outcomes are proportionate to the disciplinary offence;
 - 7.6 *Accessibility* – the University ensures that all students are able to access this Policy, regardless of disability or domicile.

Procedural approach

Responsibility

- 8 **The University's** responsibility is to:
- 8.1 make students aware of its Student Discipline Policy;
 - 8.2 inform a student of any disciplinary investigation into their actions when appropriate;
 - 8.3 deal reasonably, consistently and proportionately with the disciplinary matter and complete the internal process within 90 days of notifying the student of the disciplinary hearing, where possible;
 - 8.4 take action where appropriate;

- 8.5 ensure all procedures undertaken are by impartial personnel who have no direct interest in the disciplinary matter;
- 8.6 ensure that an accurate record is kept of any disciplinary investigation and the outcome;
- 8.7 keep the student informed at every stage of the proceedings;
- 8.8 ensure all students can access and reasonably engage with the policy regardless of disability or domicile.

9 The student's responsibility is to:

- 9.1 be aware of the academic regulations and observe them;
- 9.2 respond to communications regarding disciplinary matters in an open, honest and timely manner;
- 9.3 attend any meetings called to discuss disciplinary matters;
- 9.4 explain any actions as clearly and as fully as possible;
- 9.5 adhere to any requirements and outcomes determined by the University with regard to disciplinary matters.

Procedures for dealing with disciplinary matters

10 In the first instance, the relevant Campus Dean or equivalent assigns an impartial Investigating Officer to look into the matter.

11 If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, a disciplinary hearing takes place to investigate further. The Head of Student Discipline assigns an impartial member of staff, to be known as a Hearing Officer, to conduct the meeting.

12 If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the disciplinary hearing, they may submit an appeal application. Any outcome from the hearing stage (eg mark of zero for an assessment or expulsion from the University) will remain in effect until potentially overturned at the appeal stage. The Head of Student Discipline then assigns an Appeal Panel, which conducts an appeal hearing and establishes a final outcome that is consistent, fair and proportionate.

13 In certain specific circumstances, it may not be possible for some stages of the above procedure to take place, or it may be necessary for some stages of the above procedure to be repeated.

14 More detail on these procedures can be found in the Student Discipline Regulations.

15 Support for students is available during the disciplinary process.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

16 The OIA is an external body that conducts independent reviews of student complaints. The University is a member of the OIA for Higher Education scheme. This scheme enables students to obtain an independent review of their case, subject to the OIA's rules for eligibility. Further information can be obtained from www.oiahe.org.uk.

17 If, having completed the University's procedures for disciplinary matters, a student is dissatisfied with the outcome, he or she may request a review by the OIA. Full details of this service, incorporating required timescales, are provided to the student by the University.

18 On conclusion of any appeal of the disciplinary decision, Academic Registry provides the student with a Completion of Procedures letter, which they must present to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if they wish to request the OIA to review their case.

Confidentiality

19 As far as possible, matters raised as a disciplinary case and in the response to the student remain confidential to those directly involved in the investigation of the matter, unless maintaining confidentiality would impede the University's ability to progress, investigate or respond to the matter or would involve a breach of the University's wider obligations or a risk to health or safety.

20 Outcome reports are published to appropriate University staff, if this is required to enable the University to take remedial action. Outcomes of disciplinary matters may also be reported to regulatory bodies where appropriate.

Record Keeping and Reporting

21 The University's Academic Board ensures that a procedure for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing disciplinary matters is in place. A report dealing with the handling of such matters is presented annually to the Academic Board.

Responsibility for the provision

22 Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Student Disciplinary Policy lies initially with the Campus Deans, supported by the Head of Student Discipline and Academic Registry.

Monitoring and review of the provision

23 Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Student Disciplinary Policy lies initially with the Campus Deans. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Head of Student Discipline.

Version history

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Drafting team – chaired by Head of Complaints	Initial drafting	30/05/14
V1.1	QA team – chaired by Centre Director, Bristol	QA	04/07/14
V1.2	External Consultant	External Review	31/07/14
V1.3	Review group: VP (AGQS), Academic Registrar, Director: Education and Quality, Head of Quality Assurance		06/08/14
V1.4	Proof Reader	Proofing	11/09/14
V1.5	Executive Management Board	Approval	16/09/14
V1.6	Academic Board	Approval	19/09/14
V1.7	Academic Registry	Amendments	16/07/15
V2.0	Vice Provost – External and Academic Development	QA group	20/08/15
V2.1	Head of Student Discipline	Review	18/12/15
V3.1	Director of Operational Services	Amendments	29/04/16

V3.2	Academic Board	Approval	19/05/16
V3.3	Academic Registry	Final amends	23/05/16
V3.5	Review Group and other stakeholders	Revised to align with published QAA advice and guidance	06/09/19
V3.6	Registry Officer	Change to the document coding convention	March 2020
V3.7	Senior Quality Officer	Further naming convention clarifications	26/03/20