

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY
PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS BY UNIVERSITY REGISTERED
STUDENTS AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

2015

What is the Scope of the Procedure for Dealing with Complaints by University Registered Students at Partner Institutions?

- 1 These procedures concern complaints received from students registered by the University and studying at partner institutions on University programmes after 11 November 2015. The procedures do not apply to students studying at a partner institution not registered on a University programme.
- 2 A complaint is defined as any specific concern about the provision of a programme of study or related academic or support service, including registration, but does not extend to disciplinary procedures.
- 3 For the purpose of these procedures, 'partner institution' refers to another institution delivering, supporting, or assessing educational provision leading or contributing to academic credit or a qualification of the University. It does not apply to students of the University who only attend a partner institution for the purposes of a professional placement as part of their programme of study.
- 4 The University Procedures relating to Appeals apply in all cases of an appeal against the decision-making process of an academic or professional body charged with making decisions on progression, assessment, plagiarism, academic awards or fitness to practise or professional suitability.

What are the Responsibilities of the Parties?

- 5 The student is to use to the full the internal procedures of the partner institution to address any complaint.
- 6 The partner institution is to draw to the attention of all students by suitable means the arrangements for making complaints, including the role of the University, and to operate appropriate procedures for addressing those complaints.
- 7 The University will consider complaints only where
 - (a) the student is (or formerly was) registered by the University on a validated or accredited programme and studying at the partner institution; and
 - (b) the partner institution is not a provider covered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) scheme which is required to issue a Completion of Procedures letter under the scheme rules
 - (c) the complaint relates to an aspect of provision for which the University has a responsibility; and

- (d) the student has exhausted the internal complaints procedures of the partner institution or, where applicable, relevant accrediting body; and
- (e) the complaint is not subject to any legal proceedings.

How are complaints made to the University?

- 8 The complaint is to be addressed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) at Canterbury Christ Church University.

What happens on receipt of a complaint?

- 9 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) will receive the complaint on behalf of the University. In the event that the Pro Vice-Chancellor is prevented from doing so due to a potential conflict of interest or for any other reason, the Vice-Chancellor will nominate a senior member of the University to receive the complaint.
- 10 On receipt of the complaint, the Pro Vice-Chancellor shall
- (a) inform the partner institution of the nature of the complaint
 - (b) invite response in writing on the complaint from the partner institution
 - (c) obtain confirmation that the student has completed the internal procedures of the partner institution or, where applicable, a relevant accrediting body
 - (d) obtain confirmation that the complaint is not subject to any legal proceedings.
- 11 Based on the evidence available, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will determine whether the complaint meets the requirements set out in paragraph 7 above.
- 12 If following discussions with the Pro Vice-Chancellor the partner institution accepts the case put forward to the University by the student, the Pro Vice-Chancellor may resolve the complaint with the student and the partner institution.

What happens when the complaint is deemed to require no further investigation?

- 13 If the Pro Vice-Chancellor determines a complaint does not require further investigation by the University, the student will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons.
- 14 The student will have the right of Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor against the decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor not to proceed with the complaint. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will inform the student of the right of Appeal.

What happens when the complaint is deemed to require an Investigation by the University?

- 15 Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor deems a complaint requires investigation by the University, the complaint shall be referred to an Investigator to investigate the case on behalf of the University in line with the University Framework for Student Procedures. The student will be advised of where and how to access advice and support at the University through Student Support, Health and Wellbeing and/or the Students' Union. Where the student has access to support within the partner institution, the student may use this support as an alternative.

How is the Student's Perspective considered?

- 16 It is aimed to complete the Formal Investigation stage within twenty working days of the appointment of the Investigator. The general exception is where notification is received outside the published term dates for the programme, when the aim is to complete the Formal Investigation stage within forty working days of the appointment of the Investigator.
- 17 The Investigator must ensure the student has adequate opportunity to be heard.
- 18 The student has the right to request support in the preparation of the case from the University's Department of Student Support, Health and Wellbeing or from the Students' Union.
- 19 The student is to be given a copy of the evidence requested by and presented to the Investigator.
- 20 The student has the right to make personal statement in writing. The Investigator must consider all such statements presented by, or on the specific written authorisation of, the student. The Investigator is to be satisfied that any written statements made on behalf of the student have been made available to the student.
- 21 Where an Investigator upholds the position of the student based on a reading of the written case, and the student agrees the outcome, there is no requirement that the student is invited to talk with the Investigator.
- 22 Where a case requires further investigation, the Investigator must give the student the opportunity to be heard either in a face to face meeting or at a distance by making use of any appropriate means of telecommunication, including telephone and Skype.
- 23 When attending in person, the student has the right to be accompanied by a friend, defined as a registered student of Canterbury Christ Church University, a member from the same cohort as the student, a member of the Students' Union Council, an officer of the Students' Union or a current member of staff of the partner institution or University. In all cases, the friend may speak on behalf of the student.
- 24 When a student declines to meet with the Investigator, the Formal Investigation will be concluded based on the evidence collected. The right to Representation to the Vice-Chancellor will be unaffected by non-attendance at a meeting.

What happens when a Complaint is upheld?

- 25 When the Investigator upholds a student complaint in whole or in part, the programme manager(s) concerned will draw up an action plan to address the issues that were upheld. This is to demonstrate how the decision of the Investigator is to be addressed.
- 26 The action plan is to be agreed with the student concerned, and a copy provided to the Investigator. The action plan is to be drawn up within twenty working days of the Investigator writing to the student and programme manager(s), and to be agreed with the student within forty working days of the notification. In the event of disagreement, the Investigator is to act as a conciliator and, should the need arise, issue a binding action plan.
- 27 The Investigator may extend the period for the completion of an Action Plan with the agreement of both the programme manager(s) and the student.

What are the Arrangements for Representation to the Vice-Chancellor?

- 19 The student may make Representation to the Vice-Chancellor in writing against the decision of the Investigator within twenty working days of the date of the formal written response.
- 20 In exceptional circumstances, the Vice-Chancellor may extend the time allowed for submission of a Representation if satisfied there were valid reasons why the request was not submitted within twenty working days. Such circumstances might include, but are not limited to, the student being ill or having other pressing reasons.
- 21 The Vice-Chancellor will nominate a suitable individual to review the Representation.
- 22 The Vice-Chancellor's nominee is not limited in the means of seeking a resolution. The nominee may, for example, propose a particular course of action, recommend mediation be undertaken subject to the agreement of the student or determine that a further investigation is to be undertaken.
- 23 The outcome of the Review Stage may be a confirmation that the procedures were followed, the outcome was reasonable and there was no further action that the University should take.
- 24 It is aimed to complete the Review Stage within twenty working days of the Vice-Chancellor acknowledging the notification. The general exception is where the notification is received outside the published term dates, when the aim is to complete the Review Stage within forty working days of the notification being acknowledged.
- 25 The decision of the Vice-Chancellor's nominee represents the completion of the internal procedures of the University.

What happens after the Internal Procedures of the University are complete?

26 Once the student completes the internal procedures of the University but believes the issue has not been appropriately addressed, the student may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Effective from 1 January 2015

Revised 11 November 2015 to take account of the extension of the OIA scheme to other providers, effective immediately