

Section 10

Student Complaints Procedure

If you require this section in a different format, contact the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman (studentappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk).

Guidance notes for staff and students on the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman + 44 (0)191 227 4010

Students may seek independent advice and support from the Students' Union Advice Service <http://www.mysu.co.uk/heretohelp/advice/>

Assistance to staff on the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman.

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 All at the University hope that the student experience will be a good one and that there will be few occasions when there is any dissatisfaction or disappointment with the service and facilities provided. We recognise however that occasionally this will not be the case and the procedures set out below describe how a complaint may be lodged. The University treats complaints seriously and all complaints lodged will be considered in good faith. The majority of complaints should be resolved informally by speaking promptly and directly with the member of staff concerned. The procedures described below explain how this might be done and what to do in the case of very serious complaints or if you remain dissatisfied with the University's response. Other forms of dispute resolution may also be appropriate. **The University has a number of trained mediators and you should consider mediation or conciliation as an alternative to the complaints procedure if you think this might be helpful (contact the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman for further information).** When feeling disappointed or troubled people may act out of character. It is important that you behave reasonably when pursuing your complaint in order that you may most effectively argue your case and staff may most effectively deal with your concerns. It is important to appreciate that the University has rules about the submitting of vexatious or malicious complaints (regulation 10.2.2 (x)).

10.1.2 It is important to distinguish between a complaint and an academic appeal:

- (i) **a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with how you have been treated or a service or facilities provided by the University.** When considering making a complaint you should compare your experience against what the University undertook to provide, or what you might reasonably have expected, and consider how your expectations were not met. A complaint is also the vehicle to express concerns about the supervision received (e.g. for a dissertation), **such complaints should be lodged as soon as possible in order that appropriate actions may be taken, and in any event, before submission of work for assessment.** Complaints usually involve seeking an identifiable outcome to resolve the issue. A complaint of misconduct by a fellow student is treated as an allegation of misconduct under the student disciplinary procedure (Section 3) of this Handbook. Contact the Faculty Student Complaints Manager or the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman in the first instance;
- (ii) an academic appeal is a questioning of a decision made by an examination board. You may not question the marks awarded but if you feel that there was an error in procedure or examiners did not have all the information available that they should have, then this might be the basis of an academic appeal. See Section 7 of this Handbook;
- (iii) sometimes several issues may be involved such that it is not immediately clear whether the case should be dealt with as a complaint or an appeal. Should this be the case staff and students should consult the Student Complaints Manager or the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman for guidance. Sometimes it becomes apparent during investigation that the case needs to be reclassified-should this happen the matter will be discussed with the student concerned and the implications of the change in classification explained.

10.1.3 The University has other means for its students to provide feedback, including statements of concern, which do not include a request for a specific response. You should carefully consider which procedure best serves your needs. The formal mechanisms for comment to the University include:

- Module feedback questionnaires
- Programme questionnaires
- Teaching questionnaire
- Student staff liaison committees
- Programme committees
- Students' Union reps

- NSS survey (final year).

If you are uncertain which mechanism to use or are uncertain as to the role/purpose of these above feedback mechanisms you should discuss with the Student Support Desk in your Faculty Support Team.

10.2 Principles

10.2.1 The procedures have been developed by the University to ensure that complaints made by students are treated seriously and, if found to be valid, acted upon to ensure that the student's position is protected as far as it is possible for the University to do so. It applies to matters affecting an individual student or group of students, except where the matters fall within another established procedure (see paragraph 10.3.1 below).

10.2.2 The chief principles are that:

- (i) student complaints should be dealt with seriously and fairly. **You will not be disadvantaged as a consequence of having made a complaint** (whatever the outcome). **If considered appropriate, the University will put in place arrangements to assure the student that they will not be disadvantaged as a consequence of lodging a complaint;**
- (ii) student complaints should be dealt with quickly and simply, and at the level of the direct service agency⁴, or as close to that as possible. Every effort should be made to resolve the Student's concerns informally;
- (iii) student complaints should be treated in a consistent fashion across the University;
- (iv) the principles of natural justice are complied with when a complaint is investigated⁵,
- (vi) a complaint may be lodged by an individual student or a group of students. In the latter case a common statement of the concerns and the redress sought should be produced and signed by all those concerned. It is helpful if a spokesperson for the group is identified and agreed by all. If separate complaints regarding a similar issue are received, the Student Complaint Manager may invite the group of students to produce a single submission to be considered as a group complaint;
- (vii) the procedure should be used only where all other routes of consultation, representation or redress have been exhausted;
- (viii) it does not affect the rights of students to pursue legal remedies (if appropriate);
- (ix) only proper and valid complaints will be investigated;

⁴ 'Direct service agency' may be an academic Faculty, or University service.

⁵ See Appendix B of the 'Handbook of Student Regulations 2016' for further information

- (x) vexatious and/or malicious complaints shall be considered misconduct by the complainant, and hence for disciplinary action to be dealt with under provisions elsewhere in the Handbook of Student Regulations (Section 3: Student Disciplinary Rules and Procedures)⁶;
- (xi) to prevent the submission of malicious or vexatious complaints, no action will be taken in respect of anonymous, or anonymised complaints. The complaints process is an open and transparent process and anonymous complaints will only be actioned in exceptional circumstances;
- (xiii) the deadline for receipt of complaints shall be 3 months after the alleged event(s) concerned which gives rise to the complaint. Only in exceptional circumstances will a complaint outside this time-period be accepted for consideration;
- (xiv) throughout the complaints process the student may be accompanied by a Friend⁷. Upon occasion, and with the agreement of all the parties concerned, the student may be represented by such a friend;
- (xv) **at any stage the complaints procedure can be suspended if both parties agree to mediation or other dispute resolution procedures in order to attempt to resolve the dispute.** This would be without prejudice to continuation of the complaint should the student wish. The mediator would be someone acceptable to both parties. The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman may be contacted by either party at any point in the complaints procedure to discuss mediation or any other dispute resolution procedure.
- (xvi) Section 13, Appendix I provides a mechanism for students to challenge exclusion due to failure to pay tuition fees. Some complaints may involve a variety of issues that impact on the amount of tuition fees due or when they should be paid. In the case of such complaints the Faculty may pause the University's normal procedures for recovering outstanding tuition fees. If the University's internal procedures for considering a complaint have been completed without resolution of the dispute, the University will then resume normal procedures for recovering outstanding tuition fees. This will be done even if the student subsequently chooses to progress their complaint externally (such as to the OIA)

10.3 Scope of the Procedure

10.3.1 The procedure may not be used where another procedure is in existence within the University, e.g. academic appeal or disciplinary procedures.

⁶ Depending upon the nature of the allegations, if malicious complaints are lodged by students who have since left the University, they may find themselves liable to legal proceedings

⁷ See regulations 1.3 and 1.4 for the meaning of 'Friend'

NB: (a) Where doubt exists on which procedure to use, definitive advice should be obtained from the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman.

(b) In addition, a student may discuss issues of concern with staff in the Student Administration and Support Team in their Faculty, Student Support & Wellbeing, a student representative on the appropriate Programme Committee, and with a representative of the Students' Union.

10.3.2 Student concerns raised under other existing procedures may not also be pursued concurrently by the Student Complaints Procedure; equally student complaints raised under the Student Complaints Procedure may not also be pursued concurrently under other existing procedures.

10.3.3 Staff may not concurrently initiate actions under other existing University procedures for matters that are the subject of consideration under the Student Complaints Procedure.

10.3.4 Procedures shall normally be completed according to the timescales indicated in these regulations. If for any reason these timescales cannot be met, the student shall be informed.

10.3.5 If you have a concern about an issue for which it is not clear who is responsible (e.g. general facilities) you should consult the Student Support Desk within your Faculty, the Student Complaints Manager or the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman for advice.

10.4 Procedure for complaints against Faculties or Service Departments and matters which fall under the auspices of a Faculty (e.g. placements)

(This procedure covers all matters other than those involving complaints against the Students' Union: see the procedure described in paragraph 10.6 below. See also paragraph 10.8.1 for complaints that do not fall under either procedure.)

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the flow diagram appearing in Appendix 1.

The vast majority of complaints should be resolved informally and directly with the person concerned. Occasionally the issue being complained about may be especially serious and sensitive e.g. allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination or other incidences of serious misconduct, such that it would be inappropriate to have to speak directly to the person concerned or the allegations may be such that the University may ultimately need to follow other procedures. Such complaints are described as 'Category B' complaints in these regulations and are dealt with in a separate manner recognising the great seriousness of the complaint to both the complainant and the subject of the complaint. All other complaints are described as 'Category A'.

Every Faculty and Service will have a 'Student Complaints Manager' to provide advice about the Student Complaint Process and help determine whether the nature of the complaint is such that it may be 'Category B'. If you have concerns about going directly to the person concerned to discuss your complaint, you should first consult the Student Complaints Manager in confidence.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean of Faculty/Service Director to ensure that all students are aware of the appropriate person to whom a student may make a complaint. Notices shall be posted in all Faculties, Services and other areas of the University to ensure that students are aware of their rights in this respect. Students off campus should seek advice as indicated at the beginning of this Section.

For both 'Category A' and 'Category B' complaints there are three stages in the University's procedures as follows:

- (i) Stage 1– The Informal Stage, in the majority of cases it is expected that the whole matter is dealt with directly and confidentially by the parties directly concerned;
- (ii) Stage 2- The Formal Stage. The complaint will be investigated by an independent person, usually the Student Complaints Manager;
- (iii) Stage 3-The Review Stage, if you feel that there was an error in the procedure followed when investigating the complaint you may request a review of the decision at Stage 2.

At the end of this process, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you may take your case outside the University, to the 'Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education' (regulation 10.5).

10.4.1 'Category A' Complaints

- (i) **Stage 1 – The Informal Stage – Early Resolution**

It is expected that in the first instance complaints will be made directly to the person delivering the service wherever possible. The member of staff concerned may wish to be accompanied at such a meeting. Consult the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman if there are any concerns with this. At this stage, the person to whom the complaint is made will discuss it informally with the student and other persons who are involved, with a view to resolving the complaint without recourse to more formal procedures. You may expect the matter to normally be dealt with within 10 working days.

In cases where the student might feel intimidated by approaching the subject directly they may first discuss their concerns with the Student Complaints Manager or the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman and seek advice on how to progress

their complaint. If the complaint appears to be 'Category A', they will attempt to facilitate communication between the student and the subject of the complaint.

The identification of a complaint as potentially 'Category B' is sufficient reason for the complainant to not have to speak to the subject of the complaint in person e.g. when alleging sexual harassment or discrimination.

In addition, a student may discuss issues of concern with the Student Support & Wellbeing Service; a student adviser or counsellor within the Service; a student representative on the appropriate Programme Committee; and with the Students' Union.

The University hopes that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally. Details of discussions taking place at this stage shall remain confidential unless both parties agree to the sharing of information with others or the complaint goes to Stage 2.

No complaint about named members of staff shall be raised within Programme Committees.

(ii) **Stage 2 – The Formal Stage**

If the student considers the complaint unresolved at the end of Stage 1 they may progress to Stage 2, the formal stage of the procedure, by submitting a completed Student Complaints Pro Forma (Appendix 2 and also on the University's web page, https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/). The pro forma should be submitted to the Student Complaints Manager (or their nominee), the deadline for submission of such a formal complaint shall normally be 10 working days from receiving the outcome to the complaint at Stage 1, (10.4.1 (i)).

The Student Complaints Pro Forma should indicate why the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal approach at Stage 1. It helps the University understand your complaint, and seek a resolution, if the outcome sought is described. It must be recognised that the University's response, in the light of its investigation, may be different to this. An indication of the outcome desired can nevertheless be extremely helpful to the University.

The Stage 2 procedure is as follows:

- (a) The student completes a Student Complaints Pro Forma and delivers it to the Student Complaints Manager or their deputy. In the case of a complaint about an Executive Dean/Director of Service or Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)/Faculty Registrar, the case should be considered by an Executive Dean/Director of Service or Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)/Faculty

Registrar, from another Faculty/Service Department at the appropriate staff level. Contact the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman in the first instance.

- (b) On receiving a written complaint, the Student Complaints Manager shall, as soon as possible, and not later than 5 working days after receiving the complaint:
 - 1. acknowledge receipt in writing to the student;
 - 2. advise any member(s) of staff concerned, in writing that a complaint has been received and the substance of the complaint.
- (c) The Student Complaints Manager shall then:
 - 1. decide whether the complaint lies within this procedure and requires to be dealt with by other means;
 - 2. consider such evidence, written or otherwise, and hold such discussions as deemed appropriate. In this respect; students and staff may be asked to give evidence. Any student questioned during this investigation may be accompanied by a Friend (as defined in 10.2.2 (xiv) or by their Trade Union representative). Any member of staff may be accompanied by a work colleague or a member of their Trade Union;
- (d) If evidence of potential serious misconduct emerges the Student Complaints Manager may re-categorise the Formal Complaint at this point as 'Category B' when it would then be investigated further as described in 10.4.2.(ii)
- (e) The Student Complaints Manager will report their findings to the student, the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman and any relevant member(s) of staff, normally within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is upheld, either in whole or in part, a proposed remedy or other form of redress will be offered. The report provided to the student must be sufficiently detailed for them to understand the University's response to the complaint and for them to decide whether they wish to progress the complaint further
- (f) At this point Stage 2 of the complaints process is deemed complete and the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will provide the student with details of the review stage (Stage 3, 10.4.3) and details of the OIA.

10.4.2 'Category B' Complaints

- (i) **Stage 1 – The Informal Stage**

- (a) If the complaint is identified by the Student Complaints Manager as potentially of a sensitive nature such as an allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination or other serious misconduct such that the University may ultimately need to follow other procedures, it will be considered as a potential 'Category B' complaint. The Student Complaints Manager will explain the procedure to be followed to the student and pass details to an Independent Manager within the Faculty/Service.
- (b) The Independent Manager will speak to both the complainant and the subject of the complaint to determine whether there are grounds for a formal investigation. Any student questioned during this investigation may be accompanied by a Friend (as defined in 10.2.2 (xiv) or by their Trade Union representative). Any member of staff may be accompanied by a work colleague or a member of their Trade Union.
- (c) If the preliminary investigation establishes that there is no indication that the complaint is of a 'Category B' nature, the complaint should be treated as a 'Category A' complaint and the complainant should raise their concerns directly with the member of staff concerned (10.4.1 (i)).

(ii) **Stage 2 – The Formal Stage**

- (a) If the preliminary investigation above establishes that there is a case for a formal investigation Stage 1 will be deemed to be complete and Stage 2 will be undertaken according to the University's appropriate staff procedures. The student may be questioned further when they may again be accompanied by a Friend or their Trade Union representative.
- (b) At the conclusion of the University's investigation
 1. if the complaint is not upheld, the student will be provided with relevant details
 2. if the complaint is upheld (either in whole or in part), the student will be informed of this (but with due regard to the confidentiality of the University's staff management procedures). The Faculty/Service will decide what redress should be offered. The report provided to the student must be sufficiently detailed for them to understand the University's response to the complaint and for them to decide whether they wish to progress the complaint further
 3. other staff will be informed of the outcome of the complaint with due regard to confidentiality as appropriate.

- (c) At this point Stage 2 of the complaints process is deemed complete and the student will be informed of the Review Stage (Stage 3, 10.4.3) and given details of the OIA by the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman.

10.4.3 Stage 3 – The Review Stage⁸

- (i) If the student is not satisfied with the decision at Stage 2 of the procedure then he/she may seek a review by writing to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman⁹. The following are the only permissible grounds for a review:
 - (a) that there was a procedural irregularity in the consideration of the Student's case which materially affected the outcome;
or
 - (b) that relevant information, that could not previously be made available and affects the outcome, has subsequently emerged;
or
 - (c) that the outcome was manifestly unreasonable in light of the evidence considered at the time and the relevant regulations
- (ii) The student shall submit his/her **request for review in writing within 10 working days after receiving the conclusions of the Stage 2 investigation**. If it may not be possible to meet this deadline the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman should be informed within this 10 working days period. If the request for review is submitted late a good and valid reason should be provided and evidence where possible. Requests for review submitted late will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman (or their nominee) shall, immediately on receipt of the request for review, notify, in writing, any members of staff involved (and the Director of Human Resources, if appropriate) that a request for review has been made.
- (iv) The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will review the case (normally within 10 working days) according to the procedure described in Appendix E before deciding on the appropriate action of:
 - (a) dismiss the request for review on the basis that:
 - (i) the request is not based on any of the grounds permitted in regulation 10.4.3 (i);
 - (ii) that the request was submitted outwith the permitted time-period with no good reason;
 - (iii) that no case has been established for a review.

⁸This section should be read in conjunction with Appendix G of the 'Handbook of Student Regulations'

⁹ studentappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk

In these cases the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter;

or

(b) in the case of upholding 10.4.3 (i) (a) or (b), direct that the complaint be considered further at Stage 2 taking into account the full information that is now available;

or

(c) in the case of upholding 10.4.3 (i) (c), refer the case to a Review Panel (regulation 10.4.3 (v)) to be normally convened within 20 working days of the judgement of the request for review.

(v) The Review Panel shall comprise:

(a) Chair: an Executive Dean or a member of the University Executive nominated by the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor

(b) one member of staff, who must be from a different Faculty/ Service from that against whom the complaint is made and from that of the appellant, nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching);

(c) one student representative, who must be from a different Faculty from that against whom the complaint is made and from that of the appellant, nominated by the President of the Students' Union;

(d) the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing or their nominee, (unless the complaint is against the Student Support and Wellbeing Department);

(e) one staff representative from a Trade Union recognised by the University, who must be from a different Faculty/Service against which the complaint is made and from that of the appellant, to be nominated by the Union branch Chair

No member of the Panel shall be directly concerned with the complaint.

The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman, or nominee, will act as adviser and shall appoint a Clerk to the Panel (supported as necessary by other staff).

A representative of a relevant profession/discipline of study may attend the panel as an adviser as determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) or the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) as appropriate.

(vi) The student will be informed of the composition of the Panel at least seven working days before the Hearing. If the student feels that there is good reason why there would be a conflict of interest or other good reason why any one of the Panel members would not be able to fairly judge their case, they should submit their

argument in writing to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman within two working days of receiving notice of the composition of the Panel. They should fully explain the basis of their concerns and support this with evidence in so far as this is possible. The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will consider the submission before making a judgement as to whether the proposed composition of the Panel should be changed. The judgement of the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman on this matter will be final. Papers will only be sent to Panel members after the composition of the Panel has been confirmed. All relevant papers will be provided to members of the Panel and to the student at least 5 working days before the Hearing.

- (vii) The Review Panel shall be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and shall follow the order of proceedings as described in Appendix E of the 'Handbook of Student Regulations'. The Panel will only address the issues successfully raised in the request for review and will not consider the complaint afresh. If the student fails to attend, the Panel shall decide whether to consider the complaint in their absence, dismiss the complaint, or invite the student to a re-convened Hearing.
- (viii) The Clerk to the Panel shall provide the student with a written report within 10 working days of the Hearing and a copy to the Vice-Chancellor and other relevant staff for information. In the case of reviews of Category 'B' complaints, the report will not include details of actions taken by the University under its staff management procedures. The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman shall issue a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'¹⁰ to the student;
- (ix) The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman shall then ensure that any appropriate action is taken.

This is the end of the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure.

10.6 Procedure for complaints against the Students' Union

Section 22 of the Education Act 1994 provides that there should be a complaints procedure available to all students who:

- (i) are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Students' Union, or
- (v) claim to be disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right (also in Section 22) not to be a member of the Union, or, in the case of a representative body which is not an association, that he/she does not wish to be represented by it.

¹⁰See Appendix H of the 'Handbook of Student Regulations'

Any Full Member, or student eligible for Full Membership but who has exercised the right not to be a member in accordance with the Education Act 1994 is consequently entitled to complain about unfair or unreasonable treatment by the Students' Union.

10.6.1 Outline Procedure

The procedure is as described in the Students' Union Byelaw 'Procedures For Complaint Against the Students' Union' (available on the Students' Union web page and from the Students' Union. In summary, the procedure is as follows:

- (i) It is expected that most complaints will be resolved informally at the earliest opportunity. The complainant, or group of complainants, should raise the matter with the manager or Sabbatical Officer for the activity or event in question. This may be done orally at the time or electronically. A response should normally be received within seven working days of receipt of the complaint.
- (ii) if the complainant remains dissatisfied they may lodge a Stage 2-formal complaint. A Complaints Pro Forma should be completed (available from the Students' Union website) and emailed to the Students' Union President (su.enquiries@northumbria.ac.uk). A written response from the Students' Union President (or nominee) should normally be received within 15 working days;
- (iii) If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response at (ii) above, they may appeal to a panel of the Board of Trustees. Any such appeal should be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the response at (ii) and be submitted to the Students' Union Chief Executive. The only permitted grounds for an appeal are:
 - a. that there was a procedural irregularity in the investigation of the complaint which materially affected the outcome from stage (ii) above
or
 - b. that relevant information, that could not previously be made available, has subsequently emerged.

This is the end of the Students' Union internal complaints procedure.

10.6.2 Stage 4 – Request for Review by the University

- (i) The 1994 Education Act requires the University to ensure that the Students' Union "operates in a fair and democratic manner". If the student feels that the consideration of their complaint has not been considered in such a way they may appeal. This is the only permitted ground on which an appeal may be lodged.

- (ii) The student shall submit a completed Student Complaints Pro Forma to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman¹¹ within 10 working days of being notified of the final response of the Students' Union to their complaint, specifying the reasons why the student feels that their complaint has not been considered in a proper manner by the Students' Union.
- (iii) The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will review the case on the basis of the documentation provided and decide on the appropriate action of:
 - (a) dismissing the appeal at this stage on the basis that the appeal is not based on the permitted grounds in regulation 10.6.2 (i) or that no supporting evidence has been provided;
 - (b) *or* uphold the appeal and return the complaint to the Students' Union to reconsider the complaint in the light of the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman's analysis.
- (iv) The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will normally inform the student of their judgement within 15 working days of receiving their appeal and issue a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'¹⁰. A student who disagrees with the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman's analysis may then take this complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education¹⁰.

10.8 General Issues

10.8.1 Other Complaints

From time to time, there may be complaints made by students which do not fit comfortably into either of the procedures in 10.4 or 10.6 (nor into the other existing procedures listed under paragraph 10.3.1 above: Scope) for example, complaints about misleading statements in University documentation, or other complaints which neither originate from within a Faculty nor against the Students' Union. In all such cases, the complaint should be addressed to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman, who will commission an investigation into the complaint according to such procedures as appear appropriate to the nature of the complaint, broadly following stages similar to those specified in 10.4.1 above.

¹¹ mike.adey@northumbria.ac.uk

Appendix 2

Northumbria University Student Complaints Pro Forma⁹

This form is to be completed in support of complaints made by students in accordance with the University's Student Complaints Procedure, Section 10 of the Handbook of Student Regulations. Please read this before completing this form. You should especially note that it is expected that you first attempt to resolve the complaint informally (this should be within three months of the alleged event(s) about which you are complaining). If you remain dissatisfied you should normally submit a Formal Complaint within 10 working days of hearing the outcome of your informal complaint. If submitting a group complaint all should individually sign a Pro Forma.

In investigating your complaint, we will take every care to safeguard your privacy and confidentiality. However, any member of staff mentioned in the complaint will be made aware of the issues raised and will have an opportunity to comment on them. In addition, it may be necessary to share your complaint with other parties within the University likely to be helpful in providing a solution.

1. Personal Details

Name: _____ Student Number: _____

Faculty: _____

Programme of Study: _____

Contact

Address: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Contact e-mail Address: _____

Dates of the alleged event(s) about which you are complaining: _____

⁹ This form is also available online on the Legal Services Team web page –

http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/?view=Standard

2. Formal Complaint

You should set out the reason(s) why the complaint is being made; state who or what is being complained about; state the nature of the complaint; and the consequences that you believe you have suffered as a result.

Add additional sheets as necessary

N.B. Should you wish to utilise additional supporting documentation, please attach these to this Pro Forma.

3. Stage 1, Informal Complaint Details

Please summarise your attempts to resolve your complaint informally:

a) To whom was the initial complaint made: _____

b) Date of any meeting: _____

c) Why do you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint?

4. Outcome Sought to the Complaint (You should indicate the outcome you seek in making this complaint). NB this is to help the University understand your complaint. The ultimate outcome may differ from this:

N.B. You are asked to note that this is your preference only, and places no restriction on the outcome of the operation of the Complaints Procedure.

5. Documentation Attached

Please list any documents supplied in the space below and attach to this Pro Forma.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

6. Name and Position of the Person(s) to whom the Complaint is submitted

7. Data Protection

I hereby consent for any sensitive/confidential personal data held by the University to be made available to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman for use as evidence or supporting documentation as appropriate. I understand that as part of the investigation into my complaint, the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman may be required to share this information with other University staff on a need-to-know basis.

I declare that to the best of my knowledge all of the information I have supplied is true, accurate and complete.

I give my consent for information in this Pro Forma and attached documents, and personal data held elsewhere within the University, to be shared with relevant members of University staff on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of investigating my complaint.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

N.B. Should you require advice or assistance in completing this form, or in relation to any other aspect of the Complaints Procedure, this may be obtained from the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman (studentappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk) the Students' Union, or your Faculty Support Team.

Please submit the completed form to the appropriate member of staff as described in regulation 10.4.1 of the Handbook of Student Regulations. Off campus students may submit this Pro Forma electronically, using an electronic signature from a Northumbria University email account.

This form is also available online on the Legal Services Team web page –

https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/