

## **Frequently asked Questions – Student Complaints Procedure**

This leaflet provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding the University's Complaints Procedure. The full procedure is available from Education Services or accessible online at: <https://myuni.swansea.ac.uk/academic-life/academic-regulations/conduct-and-complaints/complaints-procedure/>

**If you have any other questions about the Complaints Procedure please contact: [studentcases@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:studentcases@swansea.ac.uk)**

Swansea University is committed to ensuring a high-quality educational experience for students. However, there may be times when students feel that they have not received the quality of education or level of service which might reasonably be expected.

If you have a problem during your time at the University – please let us know. By doing so, you will help us improve our services to you and to other students.

### ***Who can make a complaint under this Procedure?***

The Complaints Procedure can be used if you are an enrolled student and you have a complaint about your programme of study or research, or you are dissatisfied with any related service the University provides.

The Complaints Procedure can also be used if you are a former student of Swansea University who has withdrawn from or completed your programme, as long as the complaint is made within 3 months of the date of your withdrawal/completion or within 3 months of the date of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint- whichever is the earlier date.

Broadly speaking, the procedure can be used for all student complaints except those which have their own procedures (for example: harassment/bullying complaints; concerns/appeals against assessment and progress decisions). The procedure does not cover anonymous complaints - information about anonymous complaints can be found at Section 5.5 of the Complaints Procedure.

### ***When should I make a Complaint?***

Complaints should be made as early as possible as lengthy delays may limit the way in which we can investigate your complaint or our ability to put things right. The University will not normally consider complaints more than 3 months after the event giving rise to the complaint first arose.

### ***Who can I contact if I need advice or assistance?***

The Students' Union Advice Centre is available to assist and advise students, in confidence, regarding complaints and operates as a free service for students. You can contact the Advice Centre via email at: [advice@swansea-union.co.uk](mailto:advice@swansea-union.co.uk).

You can also contact Education Services for advice about the Complaints Procedure [see above].

### ***Will everyone know about my complaint?***

No. Complainants, and those against whom complaints are made, may expect complaints to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, the complaint will normally be copied to any

person who is the subject of the complaint, in order that they are given opportunity to respond as part of the investigation process.

### ***How can I complain? - What is the Procedure?***

#### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

The majority of complaints can be resolved easily and quickly by raising them on an informal basis at the time the problem first occurs and with the person(s) directly involved.

Informal (Stage 1) complaints must normally be raised within 3 months of the date of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint.

If possible, you should first raise your complaint with the individual who is the subject of the complaint. Alternatively, you may wish to discuss your complaint with your relevant Head of Department, Programme Director or Personal Tutor. Some general issues might suit discussion at your School's Staff-Student Consultative Committee.

The Students' Union Advice Centre can help you to raise your complaint informally.

#### **Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint to the Head of School / Administrative Department (via Education Services)**

If you are unable to resolve your concerns informally or feel unable to approach the relevant individual(s) directly, you should submit a written complaint to Education Service's Complaints Nominee within the following timescale:

- Within 21 days of the date of the response to your informal (Stage 1) complaint; or
- (Where no informal complaint has been submitted) within 3 months of the date of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint.

Your complaint should set out:

- Details of your complaint – be brief and to the point, and refer to any specific events and dates;
- Any informal steps you have taken (to include the names of staff involved) and the outcomes;
- Why you remain dissatisfied;
- What outcome you are seeking;
- Copies of any documents / correspondence which is relevant to, or support, your complaint.

You can send your complaint to [studentcases@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:studentcases@swansea.ac.uk)

The Complaints Nominee will write to you to confirm safe receipt of your complaint and may ask you to provide further information / clarification. Your complaint will then be referred to the Head of the relevant School / Administrative Department and they will seek to provide you with a written response to your complaint **within 28 calendar days**. (Some complaints will take longer than 28 days to investigate. You should expect to be kept informed if, for whatever reason, the School / Administrative Department is unable to meet this deadline).

#### **Final Review of the Stage 2 Outcome of the Complaint & External Review**

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint you may request a Final Review by completing and submitting to the Director of Education Services the Final Review Application Form **within 14 working days** of the date of the letter / email advising you of the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint. The Final Review Procedure is accessible at:

<https://myuni.swansea.ac.uk/academiclife/academicregulations/conduct-and-complaints/final-review-procedure/>

Once the Final Review process has been completed the Director of Education Services will issue you with a “Completion of Procedures” letter confirming the University’s final decision and that the procedures have been completed. You may then consider asking the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to externally review the handling of your case. Further information about the OIA can be obtained from the OIA’s website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.