

CLASS Complaints Procedure

Introduction

While we hope that you will have no cause to complain about the service you receive at CLASS, we recognise that there will be the rare occasion when your expectations may not be met.

As a department of the University of Westminster, CLASS policy draws on the University 'Complaints Procedure for Students.' The procedures for Stage 1 (informal) below are for complaints originating in the Assessment Centre, which do not fall within the remit of the standard University guidance to students. A summary of Stage 2 (formal) is provided, together with a link to full details of these procedures.

For customers of the Assessment Centre the following general guidance applies:

- i. A complaint is defined as any written communication using the words 'complaint' or 'complain'.
- ii. In the instance of a verbal communication using these words, the customer will be asked to put the issue in writing.
- iii. In instances where a third party is acting on behalf of the complainant, written and signed evidence of their authority to act should be provided. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- iv. The complaint should be received within one month of the alleged event, actions or lack of actions.
- v. Instigating a complaint gives CLASS permission to investigate. Information you submit will remain confidential as far as this is consistent with the right of any other parties to know of allegations that are made against them.
- vi. Staff will normally be asked to respond to any allegations made against them.
- vii. Complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, professionally and in a non-confrontational manner. Feedback from complaints is important to us and will be reviewed to improve our service delivery.

Making a complaint – stage 1 (informal)

Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint informally with the individual who holds responsibility for the matter which is the subject of the complaint.

Where the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the complaint should be raised with the Assistant Centre Manager and / or the Centre Manager. They or their nominee, will continue attempts to resolve the complaint on an informal basis to the satisfaction of all those involved.

The complaint should be made in writing. A letter or FAX should be marked for the attention of both the Manager and the Assistant Manager. An email should be copied to both (see [contact details](#)). A complaint about the Assistant Manager should be referred to the Manager only, and vice versa. The Assistant Manager will liaise with

the Director of Research & Enterprise Services regarding any complaint about the Manager.

The complaint should contain (where appropriate):

- The reason for your complaint, with sufficient detail to allow investigation.
- Names of people involved, where known.
- The outcome that would satisfy you.
- Your full contact details or those of your appointed representative (see iii above) and your preferred method of written contact, if different to the method you've used to contact us.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 24 working hours of receipt.

We will issue a full response within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint and all accompanying information. This response will indicate if your complaint was upheld and the reason for the decision. If we require further time to fully investigate your case we will issue an interim communication within this period and will let you know when you can expect a full response.

Making a complaint – stage 2 (formal)

It is important that these informal procedures are exhausted before a formal complaint is made. If an informal complaint has not been resolved by the Assistant Centre Manager, Centre Manager or their nominee, within 15 working days of receipt of the last piece of evidence submitted, a formal complaint may be submitted in writing to:

The University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors
309 Regent Street
London
W1B 2UW

The letter of complaint should set out brief details of the nature of the complaint, the informal efforts so far made to resolve it, an explanation of why the customer continues to feel dissatisfied, and an indication of the redress or resolution which is desired. Any documents or correspondence relevant to the complaint should be enclosed. Customers are advised to keep copies of all correspondence and accompanying documentation

The University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors or his/her nominee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within ten working days.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors will assign it for investigation to an appropriate member of the University's senior staff not previously involved in the informal investigation. The letter of acknowledgement will provide the name and position of the investigator and an indication of the timescale in which a formal response can be expected. In the event that the investigation takes longer than expected, a further letter will be sent which will indicate the revised timescale.

The investigator will be responsible for undertaking a full and fair examination of the issues raised in the complaint, with due regard to the scale and seriousness of the complaint. The investigator may determine who, if anyone, will be interviewed during

the course of the investigation and from whom any written submissions will be sought. Customers will not normally be invited to present a complaint in person. At the end of the investigative process, the investigator will provide a short report of his/her findings to the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors.

The University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors will send the investigator's report to the customer and will maintain a formal record of the complaint and its outcome. Should the investigator uphold the complaint, in full or in part, the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors will provide information as to what action will be taken by the University.

Where a complaint is not upheld, customers have a right of appeal against the findings. Appeals must be made in writing to the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors within ten working days of the date of the letter detailing the outcome of the complaint.

Depending on the grounds for appeal, the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors will either refer the matter back to the original investigator for further consideration, or will him / herself review the findings of the investigation or ask another senior member of staff to do so.

What if I'm still not satisfied?

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. Students who have exhausted the University's Complaints Procedure for Students and do not believe that their complaint has been satisfactorily dealt with may request the OIA to look into their complaint. Information about the OIA and its service may be found on its website www.oiahe.org.uk

Students wishing to make a complaint to the OIA should notify the University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors that they remain dissatisfied with the University's response to their complaint. The University Secretary and Clerk to the Court of Governors will issue a "Completion of Procedures" letter in the format prescribed by the OIA.

Full details of the University of Westminster's [Complaints Procedure for Students](#)

Who else can I turn to?

DSA-QAG, the body that audits assessment centres, can offer advice:

DSA-QAG Central Administration Unit
Second Floor, Centrum House
38 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DX

Tel: 0141 548 8006
administration@dsa-qag.org.uk
www.dsa-qag.org.uk

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