



Code of Practice for Student Grievances

Approved by College Council, 17 Oct 2018

1. Principles

1.1. In this code, 'complaint' means 'grievance brought by a college student' and 'complainant' refers to the student, without prejudice concerning the validity of the grievance.

1.2. This code covers complaints about any matters under the control of the College which affect the academic progress or personal wellbeing of any student(s). Complaints about matters not under the control of the College must be taken elsewhere, e.g. the university's Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, see www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints. Students are welcome to consult their College Tutor for advice on this.

1.3. This code covers matters of personal grievance, not matters of College policy. The latter should be raised through the MCR, whose President and other committee members sit *ex officio* on College Council and other committees.

1.4. The College seeks to provide fair procedures for examining and resolving complaints, and to ensure that these are free from bias due to conflict of interest or other reasons.

1.5. No student will be disadvantaged by making a genuine complaint. However, the College expects that students will not make frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints and may take action against any such offences.

1.6. If a complainant requests confidentiality, this will be respected as far as possible in the investigation of the complaint. Investigation often requires sharing necessary details with relevant people, but the complainant will be kept informed of this throughout the process.

1.7. Students are welcome to seek advice as appropriate from relevant people, including:

- their Tutor
- MCR Committee members, e.g. President or Welfare Officer
- Students' Unions' Advisory Service of CUSU and the Graduate Union
- Director of Studies (BA, etc), Course Director (Masters) or Supervisor (PhD)

However, the College maintains the right to follow its own procedures.

1.8. There are three stages for resolving a complaint: informal, formal and appeal. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at the informal stage.

2. Informal Stage

2.1. For practical matters the complainant should speak first to the responsible staff member: Head of Facilities for maintenance; Head of Domestic Operations for accommodation or catering; Head Porter for portering. This staff member will follow it up informally and report back to the student. However, if the complaint is against this specific staff member, the student should speak to their College Tutor.

2.2 For any other matter the complainant should speak first to their College Tutor, who will follow it up informally and report back to the student. If the complaint is against their Tutor, the student should speak to the Senior Tutor or a Deputy Senior Tutor.

2.3 A student should raise their complaint as early as possible (so that the College can address the matter promptly), and at latest within four weeks of its cause.

2.4 The staff member or Tutor should address the matter promptly and report back to the student at latest within two weeks, keeping either the relevant email or a dated written note of their report.

3. Formal Stage

3.1. If the complainant is unsatisfied, they may bring their complaint formally. They must do this in writing to the Dean within two weeks of the responsible staff member or Tutor reporting back to them in the informal stage. They must also submit any relevant documentation. The Dean will acknowledge receipt and conduct an investigation. If the complaint is against the Dean, the formal complaint should be submitted to the Bursar, who will act as Dean for this complaint or appoint another Fellow to do so.

3.2. The Dean will examine the complaint and speak to all relevant parties. Any students summoned to speak to the Dean (whether the complainant or others) may be accompanied by another member of the college or university.

3.3. The Dean will report back to the complainant within three weeks. Any recommended remedy should be implemented without delay.

3.4. The Dean will keep records of formal complaints and their outcome.

4. Appeal

4.1. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, they may appeal, on the basis that:

- (a) a significant procedural irregularity occurred, or
- (b) important evidence was ignored or emerged subsequently, or
- (c) the remedy is inappropriate.

The appeal must be addressed in writing to the Vice-President, stating clearly the reason for the appeal. The appeal must be presented within two weeks of receipt of the Dean's decision. If this is not possible, the complainant must give notice of appeal and the reason for requesting a delay.

4.2. The Vice-President will convene and chair an Appeal Panel, to include two other Fellows from Hughes Hall (Class A-G) who have had no previous role in the case. The Panel will conduct an appropriate investigation into the appeal, make a ruling and convey it in writing to all parties within three weeks. If this is not possible, the parties will be kept informed of progress. There is no restriction on this ruling: it may dismiss the appeal, or it may accept it partially or wholly, and may propose the same or a different remedy. This constitutes the final college ruling.

4.3. Any further appeal must be addressed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, see www.oiahe.org.uk.