



## **UCP-COM001 Higher Education Student Complaints Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 University Centre Peterborough (UCP) is committed to high standards of service and the quality of teaching and learning. UCP's focus at all times is to ensure students have a positive and rewarding experience. However, it is accepted that students may have complaints relating to their course or the services and facilities provided. UCP takes such complaints seriously and will deal with them without recrimination and in a confidential manner in accordance with the policy.

1.2 This policy, developed in consultation with the HE Academic Board, has been designed to:

- Reflect the principles of justice;
- Be transparent and involve timely resolution of the complaints;
- Include procedures for independent review and decision making;
- Encourage the resolution of the complaint at a local level;
- Act to improve the student experience.

### **2. PURPOSE**

2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that students are aware of what to do if they are dissatisfied with an action, or lack of action, by UCP or about the standard of service provided by UCP. It also ensures UCP adheres to the requirements and expectations outlined by best practice guidance from Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically Advice and Guidance on Concerns, Complaints and Appeals, Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines. It also recognises the demands of higher education and the importance of student experience and ongoing enhancement.

2.2 It is our policy to deal as quickly as possible with any complaint a student or applicant may have about their treatment by a fellow-student; or one of our employees, services or departments. The purpose of this procedure is to give students/applicants an opportunity to sort out any such problem. We will resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage in the procedure and make every effort to do so informally. However, some complaints may be difficult to deal with informally and a student may wish to make a formal complaint. This should only be done once they have exhausted the informal route. Clear lines of communication are published to students on CANVAS and in the student handbook.

2.3 The Complaint Process can be summarised as

- **Early Resolution – Informal procedures**, which follow our lines of communication process and this, means that the student address issues with their Course Leader in the first instance for example.
- **Stage 1 – Making a formal complaint**
- **Stage 2 – Requesting an internal review:** necessary if a student is unhappy with the resolution / findings from Stage 1.

- **Stage 3 – Requesting external review:** Involvement of the Awarding Body and/ or OIA - necessary if a student is unhappy with the internal resolution / findings from Stage 2 by the institution.

### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 UCP is the higher education arm of the Inspire Education Group (IEG). This policy covers all higher education provision operating through UCP which includes Peterborough and Stamford campuses, and franchise partners (ESPA and Addict). It is to be followed by all students regardless of the awarding body.
- 3.2 A complaint is to be distinguished from an Academic Appeal which should be managed through the UCP-ASS005 Higher Education Academic Appeal Policy published on the UCP website [www.ucp.ac.uk/policies](http://www.ucp.ac.uk/policies)
- 3.3 An Academic Appeal as defined by the OIA, is a "request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on admission, student progress, assessment and awards." This relates to appeals against the decision of an Assessment Panel, Awards/Exam Board, or progression decisions. Matters, which may be dealt with by means of Academic Appeals or other regulations relating to courses of study or the assessment thereof, shall not be dealt with by means of this policy.
- 3.4 A complaint as defined by the OIA, is "an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider."
- 3.5 If an applicant or student raises concerns that do not fall neatly into the category of either a complaint or an academic appeal, or if their concern contains issues of complaint and an academic appeal, UCP will advise them which issues will be looked at under which procedure. This will be irrespective of which procedure has been used to formally raise a concern.
- 3.6 If an applicant or student submits a complaint and an academic appeal, the investigation of one may be suspended pending the completion of the other. UCP may decide to consider all matters together particularly if, for example, the findings of a complaint are likely to influence a decision regarding an academic appeal.
- 3.7 Examples of complaints include (but are not restricted to);
- Complaints in respect of a student's educational experience
  - Complaints concerning discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability, creed or ethnic origin etc.
  - Complaints on grounds of maladministration.
- 3.8 Students have the right to escalate a complaint for external review to the Awarding Body (if it relates to the academic standards and/or quality of the learning opportunity), and/or the OIA, if, after exhausting the UCP internal procedures, they remain dissatisfied.

### 4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 UCP policies are available at [www.ucp.ac.uk/policies](http://www.ucp.ac.uk/policies)
- Accrediting / Awarding Body Academic Regulations (e.g. Open University (OU), Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), Pearson, Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) etc.)
  - UCP policies for:

- UCP Higher Education Student Charter
- UCP Terms and Conditions of Admissions and Enrolment
- UCP-REC001 Higher Education Recruitment and Admissions Policy
- UCP-FIN01 Higher Education Tuition Fee and Refund Policy
- UCP-ASS005 Higher Education Academic Appeal Policy
- UCP-COM001 Appendix 1 CS1 Form – Stage 1 Student Complaints Form
- UCP-COM001 Appendix 2 CS2 Form – Stage 2 Student Complaints Form
- UCP-COM002 Higher Education Visitors, Customers and Stakeholders Complaints Policy

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Complaints will not be considered formal unless appropriate CS1 / CS2 forms are completed. These are available from the UCP website and need to be emailed to [academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk).
- 5.2 Complaints forms should be completed by the individual concerned. Correspondence or phone calls from others will not be considered unless UCP has received written/signed authorisation from the complainant that they want the named third party to act on their behalf.
- 5.3 Where the issues raised affect a number of students, those students can submit a concern or complaint as a 'group concern/complaint'. In such circumstances, in order to manage the progression of the concern or complaint, the group must nominate one student to act as group representative. UCP will deal with the nominated representative only and will expect them to liaise with the other students.
- 5.4 UCP will not accept anonymous complaints. Anonymous complaints do not allow for an effective investigation to be conducted and a resolution reached. Normally therefore, no action will be taken where a complaint is submitted anonymously. However, UCP reserves the right to exceptionally investigate an anonymous complaint where this is deemed appropriate.
- 5.5 Responsibilities and time frames for response and action by the student and UCP.
- **Early Resolution** – HE Course Leader / HE Manager
  - **Stage 1 – Making a formal complaint:** Independent HE Manager (one from a Faculty other than the one in which the student is studying) - Investigate the informal complaint (target of 10 working days from receipt of CS1). The complaint must be made within 3 calendar months of the first incident or event.
  - **Stage 2 – Requesting an internal review:** Academic Director (or nominee) - will undertake the Formal Stage (target of 20 working days from receipt of CS2). The CS2 should be submitted within 20 working days of the date that the CS1 outcome was notified to the complainant. In considering the CS2 the complaint will not be reinvestigated but will review:
    - The correct procedures were followed at the previous stage
    - Whether the outcome was reasonable
    - New material that the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - **Stage 3 – Requesting external review:** Once the internal procedures are completed the student has the right to refer the complaint to the Awarding Body and/ or Office

of the Independent Adjudicator. Details of how to refer your complaint to the OIA are available here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>

5.6 It should be noted that the complaint must be heard and addressed within 90 calendar days.

## 6. RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 This policy is required to ensure that correct procedures are in place and documented by all involved in the handling of complaints, both formal and informal, for higher education students.

### **Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy**

6.2 Poor student satisfaction and impact on annual return from OIA. Poor external stakeholder perception and potential financial cost and compensation. Failure to demonstrate effective enhancement. Failure to achieve a positive outcome from a Higher Education Review and the likelihood of additional scrutiny.

### **Staff training needed**

6.3 Initial and refresher training to be made available to staff.

## 7. DATA PROTECTION

7.1 UCP complies with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act, 2018. As such, applicant and student data are treated as confidential by all staff involved in this process and not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. However, the aforementioned Act requires UCP to release certain information to UK authorities upon request in order to assist those authorities with the prevention and detection of fraud or other crimes. UCP will release the requested information on receipt of an appropriate request from UK authorities such as (but not limited to) the police, Home Office (for immigration and related matters), local authorities, and the Department for Work and Pensions. UCP may use anonymised data collected as part of an individual's application and enrolment for fulfilling statistical and reporting requirements.

## 8. PROCEDURE

### **Early Resolution Stage**

8.1 Students are encouraged to follow the lines of communication (see the final page of this policy) published in student handbooks. This is also found on CANVAS, which is UCP's Virtual Learning Environment, and explained to students during induction. Initial concerns must be discussed with the Module/Unit Tutor, Course Leader or HE Manager. These staff understand the student's circumstances, programme of study, and are often best placed to resolve issues quickly.

8.2 Applicants who have a complaint in relation to admissions are encouraged to contact UCP Admissions ([admissions@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@ucp.ac.uk)) to resolve the issue informally if they have concerns that the standard of service received has fallen below the standard that might reasonably be expected.

8.3 The HE Manager for the Faculty will ensure a response is sent to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt. In some circumstances, the enquiry may extend to giving all parties an opportunity to be heard and if it is substantiated in whole or part, act to correct the

situation. From time to time, a complaint may require extensive investigation, which cannot be completed within 10 working days. In such cases, a letter/email is to be sent by the HE Manager to the complainant keeping them informed of progress.

- 8.4 If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction then they should move to Stage 1 (below). Any member of staff dealing with a dispute from a student should recommend the student proceed to Stage 1 if a satisfactory resolution cannot be agreed or if the staff member in any way feels it would be unprofessional to continue informally.

#### **Stage 1 - Making a formal complaint (CS1 form submitted by the student/applicant)**

- 8.5 Students/Applicants should complete a CS1 form. This must be done within 3 months of the first incident. Complainants may be offered support in order to make their complaint.
- 8.6 Support will be provided to students by the Student Officer or member of the Student Support Team. For applicants the Academic Office can provide this support ([academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk)).
- 8.7 The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of the complaint within 5 working days and an investigation will be conducted. The acknowledgement will explain the steps to be taken, how long the process is expected to take and any further information required.
- 8.8 This complaint will be investigated by an independent HE Manager (an independent HE Manager is any HE Manager who is not the Manager for the student's Faculty) and findings presented within 20 working days. The individual concerned may be contacted for further information. A student can request to attend meetings or interviews accompanied by a representative from the student body, parent or guardian. Due to data protection, we do however communicate only with the student / complainant. The Academic Office securely holds all case paperwork.
- 8.9 The complaint will be judged upheld, partially upheld or not upheld based on the findings. The independent HE Manager sends a written response to the complainant, and a copy to the Academic Office (for recording and monitoring purposes).
- 8.10 If a resolution cannot be found, the student or a representative (who must have permission from the student to act on their behalf) may proceed to Stage 2 and submit a CS2 form within 20 working days of receipt of the CS1 outcome letter.

#### **Stage 2 – Requesting an internal review (CS2 form submitted by the student/applicant)**

- 8.9 If, once the complaint receives the CS1 outcome letter, they do not consider that UCP has dealt with their complaint in a reasonable manner, they can request an internal review by submitting a CS2 form. This must be submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the CS1 outcome. As at the CS1 stage complainants may be offered support in order to make their complaint.
- 8.10 Within the CS2 form, the complaint must explain why they remain dissatisfied with the CS1 outcome of their complaint. They should identify one or more of the following grounds on which they are requesting the internal review:
- that relevant evidence has not been considered;
  - that regulations, policies or procedures have not been applied correctly;
  - that the reasons for the decision were not fully and clearly communicated;
  - that there was bias;
  - that the decision made was not fair or reasonable considering all the circumstances.

- 8.11 The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of the complaint within 5 working days and an investigation will be conducted. The acknowledgement will explain the steps to be taken, how long the process is expected to take and any further information required.
- 8.12 This complaint will be investigated by the Academic Director (or nominee) unless they are cited within the complaint and findings will be presented with 20 working days. The individual concerned may be contacted for further information. A student can request to attend meetings or interviews accompanied by a representative from the student body, parent or guardian. However, due to data protection, we communicate only with the student / complainant.
- 8.13 The complaint will be judged upheld, partially upheld or not upheld based on the findings. The Academic Director (or nominee) sends an outcome letter to the student and a copy to the Academic Office (for recording and monitoring purposes). If there is no right of refer the complaint to the Awarding Body the outcome letter will be the Completion of Procedures (COP) letter which has to be issued before a complainant can refer a complaint to the OIA.

### **Stage 3 – Requesting an external review**

- 8.14 If an internal resolution cannot be found, the student has the right to refer the complaint to the Awarding Body (if the complaint relates to their study) or the OIA.
- 8.15 ARU students can do so by emailing the ARU Office of the Secretary and Clerk at [complaints@aru.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@aru.ac.uk) Postal address: Office of the Secretary and Clerk, Anglia Ruskin University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ
- 8.16 OU students can approach the OU about any concerns through the OU's Student Casework Office (SCO) at [studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk](mailto:studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk)  
Postal address: The Vice-Chancellor's Delegate, The Open University, Academic Services, Student Casework Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.
- 8.17 BGU students can address their request for review of UCP's internal complaints investigation to the Governance, Compliance and Operations Manager by email ([governance@bishopp.ac.uk](mailto:governance@bishopp.ac.uk)). Students must attach any evidence to be considered and use the template Appendix 1 found on <https://www.bgu.ac.uk/document-download/61924>. Postal address: Governance Manager, Bishop Grosseteste University, Longdales Road, Lincoln, LN1 3DY.
- 8.18 If after review by the Awarding Body the student still remains dissatisfied they can then complain to the OIA as the Awarding Body will issue a COP at the end of its review.
- 8.19 The OIA runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. In order to refer a complaint to the OIA a COP letter is required. This will be issued either by UCP or the Awarding Body in cases where there is a right to refer a complaint to an Awarding Body. The complainant must contact the OIA. This must be done within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. Details of the rules of the scheme and information about how to make an application for review by the OIA are available at its website - [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk) .

### **Completion of Procedures**

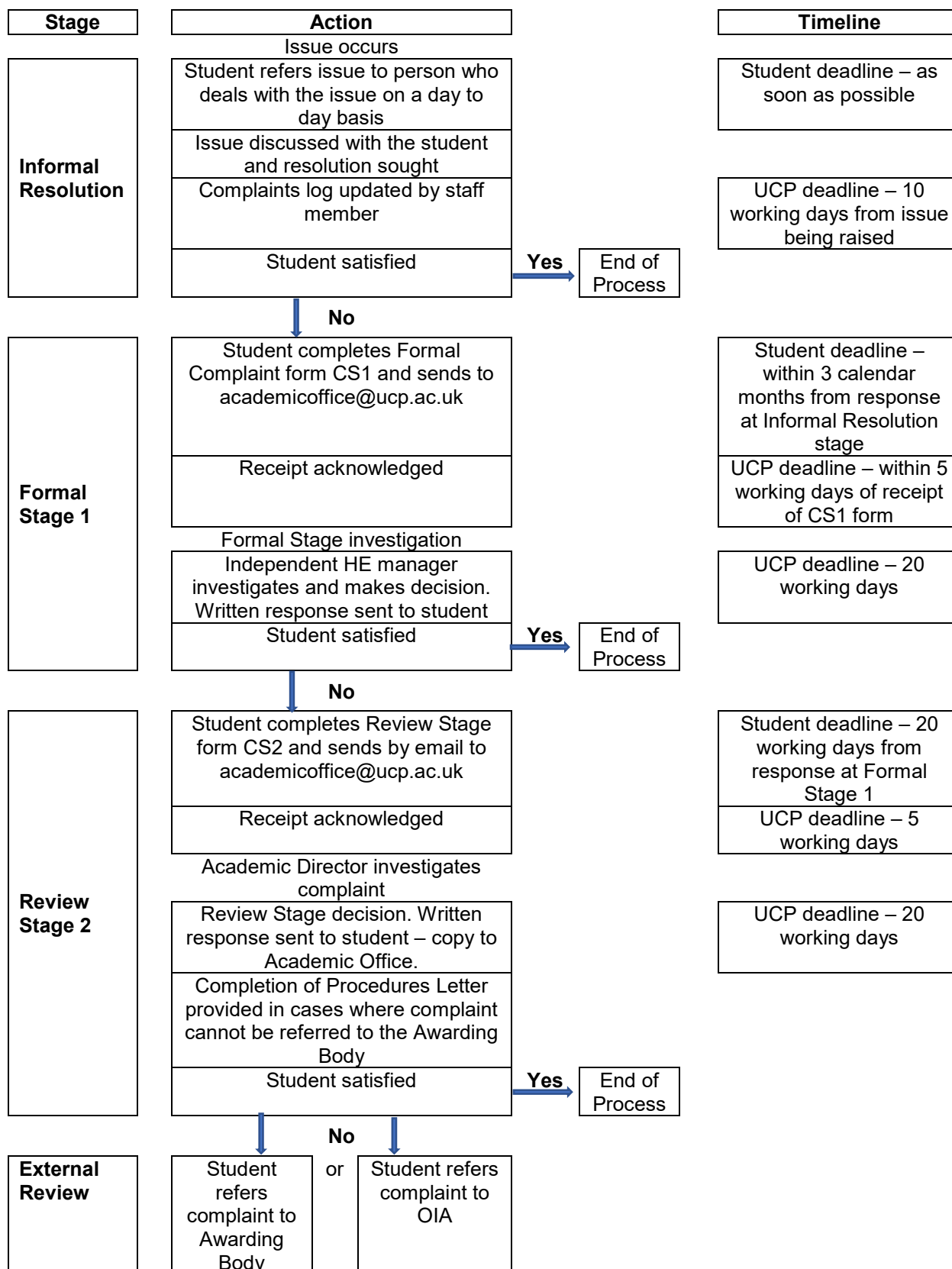
- 8.20 On completion of UCP's internal processes, or on completion of the awarding body's review, the student will be issued with a COP letter. This will include a clear explanation of the determinations made on the key elements within the complaint under review. Where relevant, UCP will provide an explanation of how any outcomes are to be implemented. The

COP letter will advise the student of the right to submit a complaint to the OIA and the time limit for submission.

### **Recording, Monitoring and Analysis of Complaints**

- 8.21 The Academic Office will oversee the tracking and monitoring of complaints processed through the procedure. All forms and outcome of investigations must be submitted to the Academic Office.
- 8.22 In order to continually review and enhance the student experience, complaints received are reviewed and monitored by the Academic Office. The details of all informal and formal complaints are also summarised and presented at the Higher Education Academic Board, which meets on a semester basis to ensure any common themes can be addressed or changes to policy can be implemented. Complaint trends and the annual report are reviewed by the governing body.
- 8.23 The Academic Office will hold a record of all complaints for 3 years for audit purposes.

## HE Student Complaints Procedure Flow Chart





## Course Academic Enquiry

Module/unit content, Turnitin, assessment feedback, on course issues, module choices, timetables, lateness & absences

1. Student Rep
2. Module Tutor
3. Course Leader
4. HE Manager

### Claire Swales

Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

[Claire.Swales@peterborough.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.Swales@peterborough.ac.uk)

### Glen Mason

Science & Technology

[Glen.Mason@peterborough.ac.uk](mailto:Glen.Mason@peterborough.ac.uk)

### Daniel Lee

Teacher Training & Partnerships

[Daniel.Lee@stamford.ac.uk](mailto:Daniel.Lee@stamford.ac.uk)

### Katie McAllister

Business & Education

[Katie.mcallister@peterborough.ac.uk](mailto:Katie.mcallister@peterborough.ac.uk)

5. Academic Director, Liz Knight

[Kam.agina@peterborough.ac.uk](mailto:Kam.agina@peterborough.ac.uk) (PA)

## Student Advice Enquiry

### Student Support Team

Health & wellbeing, absence or non-attendance, extensions, extenuating circumstances, suspending your study (intermission), withdrawing and financial hardship.

room UCP013 - [support@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:support@ucp.ac.uk)

For all Academic Appeals and Complaints please contact [academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk)

### Finance Team

Tuition fee queries

[studentfinance@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@ucp.ac.uk)

### Admissions Team

Application and registration queries

[admissions@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@ucp.ac.uk)

CANVAS Support [ilt@ieg.ac.uk](mailto:ilt@ieg.ac.uk)

ProPortal support [promonitor@ieg.ac.uk](mailto:promonitor@ieg.ac.uk)

IT support – [itservices@ieg.ac.uk](mailto:itservices@ieg.ac.uk)

## Student Experience Enquiry

### Student Experience

Social & extra-curricular activities

[StudentOfficer@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:StudentOfficer@ucp.ac.uk)

### Employer Hub

Employability, mentoring, work experience, internships, volunteering, employment and career progression

[employerhub@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:employerhub@ucp.ac.uk)

### Accommodation

[Accommodation@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:Accommodation@ucp.ac.uk)

### UCP Reception

Facilities & printing  
01733 214466

**Student Officer** [studentofficer@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:studentofficer@ucp.ac.uk)

The Student Officer is a graduate who, alongside their postgraduate studies, provides information, advice and support to the student body.



### CS1 Stage 1: UCP STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Before completing this form, you should read our student complaints policy.

The scope of this procedure is restricted to:

- Complaints in respect of a student's educational experience at University Centre Peterborough and UCP@Stamford including relationships with any non-teaching department.
- Complaints concerning discrimination by UCP / UCP@Stamford on grounds of gender, race, disability, creed or ethnic origin etc.
- Complaints on grounds of maladministration.

Matters which may be dealt with by means of Academic Appeals or other regulations relating to courses of study or the assessment shall not be dealt with by means of this procedure.

This procedure, in consultation with the Student Officer, has been designed to:

- Reflect the principles of natural justice
- Be transparent and involve timely resolution of complaints
- Include procedures for independent review and decision making
- Encourage the resolution of the complaint at a local level.

Prior to making a formal complaint you must have tried to resolve the issue informally and you will be required to enter the details of this attempt on this form.

#### 1. YOUR DETAILS

Title ..... Forenames..... Surname.....

Correspondence Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Daytime Tel..... Mobile Tel.....

Email address.....

Student Identification Number(if you are a student).....

Course/Year of Study.....

Course.....

Campus of study.....

Date of submission of this form.....

## 2. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT

Please provide clear and concise details of the complaint below.

**What would you like as an outcome?**

### 3. DETAILS OF ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE COMPLAINT INFORMALLY

Please provide details of your attempt(s) to resolve your complaint informally. (If you have not done this please return to the Early Resolution stage as we are confident that many issues can normally be resolved this way)

Who did you discuss the complaint with?.....

.....

Post title (if appropriate).....

Department (if appropriate).....Date discussed.....

#### What was the outcome and why are you still dissatisfied?

#### 4. DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

I confirm that the information provided on this form is true and correct and in submitting this form I consent for the information provided in this form to be used as detailed below and I understand that University Centre Peterborough and UCP@Stamford;

- will not accept complaints from third parties or anonymous sources;
- will deal with any complaint that it believes to be malicious and unfounded under the provisions of its Student Disciplinary Policy;
- will hold some elements of the information I have provided on an electronic database;
- may need to share the information I have provided with other persons or organisations as part of any investigation to resolve my complaint.

Signed.....

Date.....

We would welcome your feedback in relation to the Complaints procedure. If you would like to make any suggestions/comments once the procedure has been completed, please submit these to the Academic Office

**Once completed, please return this form by email to [AcademicOffice@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:AcademicOffice@ucp.ac.uk) or please send this form to the Academic Office, University Centre Peterborough, Park Crescent Peterborough, PE1 4DZ**

**You should keep a copy of your submission.**

**If you have any additional documents which you are unable to send by email, please send these, together with a copy of this form to the Academic Office, as above.**

#### ***For internal use only:***

Date complaint received.....

Office reference.....



**CS2 Stage 2: UCP STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Before completing this form, you should read our student complaints policy.**

This procedure runs alongside the academic appeals procedure. As a result, it only deals with:

- Complaints in respect of a student's educational experience at University Centre Peterborough and UCP@Stamford including relationships with any non-teaching department.
- Complaints concerning discrimination by UCP / UCP@Stamford on grounds of gender, race, disability, creed or ethnic origin etc.
- Complaints on grounds of maladministration.

We will not deal with matters which may be dealt with through Academic Appeals or other regulations relating to pathways of study or how they are assessed using this procedure.

This procedure, in consultation with the Student Officer, has been designed to:

- Reflect the principles of natural justice
- Be transparent and involve timely resolution of the complaints
- Include procedures for independent review and decision making
- Encourage the resolution of the complaint at a local level.

**HAVING BEEN UNABLE TO RESOLVE THE COMPLAINT AT STAGE 1, I REQUEST THAT THIS MATTER BE REFERRED TO STAGE 2 OF THE STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE.**

**1. YOUR DETAILS**

Title ..... Forenames..... Surname.....

Correspondence Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Daytime Tel..... Mobile Tel.....

Email address.....

Student Identification Number..... Course/Year of Study.....

Pathway.....

Faculty/Service.....

Date of submission of this form..... Date of CS1 submission.....

**2. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT (including in particular why you feel the complaint had not been resolved at Stage 1 of the Complaints process)**

[Empty box for details of the complaint]

### 3. DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

I confirm that the information provided on this form is true and correct and in submitting this form I consent for the information provided in this form to be used as detailed below and I understand that University Centre Peterborough and UCP@Stamford;

- will not accept complaints from third parties or anonymous sources;
- will deal with any complaint that it believes to be malicious and unfounded under the provisions of its Student Disciplinary Policy;
- will hold some elements of the information I have provided on an electronic database;
- may need to share the information I have provided with other persons or organisations as part of any investigation to resolve my complaint.

Signed.....

Date.....

We would welcome your feedback in relation to the Complaints procedure. If you would like to make any suggestions/comments once the procedure has been completed, please submit these to the Academic Office

**Once completed, please return this form by email to [academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk](mailto:academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk) or please send this form to the Academic Office, University Centre Peterborough, Park Crescent Peterborough, PE1 4DZ**

**You should keep a copy of your submission.**

**If you have any additional documents, which you are unable to send via email, please send these, together with a copy of this form to the Academic Office, as above.**

***For internal use only:***

Date complaint received.....

Office reference.....