

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Contents

The following table outlines the Sections of the Student Complaint Procedure and the principles that are adhered to by the University when students make a complaint.

Section/what's included in the Section		Guiding principle for the Section
1.	Introduction Information about who can make a complaint under the Procedure and what types of issues can and cannot be raised	Students have the right to complain. A student who complains will suffer no detriment as a consequence of doing so
2.	Support available to students using this Procedure Information about the variety of sources of support available to students, including independent support from Student Advice, Students' Union	Support and advice is available to students throughout all stages of the Procedure from a variety of sources
3.	Early Resolution Stage Information about Early Resolution and the action required by students and the University	In the first instance every effort should be made to raise and resolve complaints early and locally
4.	Formal Stage Information about the Formal Stage and the action required by students and the University	The University is committed to undertaking a full and fair investigation of serious or complex complaints
5.	Review Stage Information about the Review Stage and the action required by students and the University	A student can request the Formal Complaint Decision to be reviewed to ensure that the decision is fair and reasonable in the light of the evidence available
6.	Confidentiality and Anonymity Information about the process followed by the University in order to manage complaints in a confidential and sensitive way	All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Information gathered as part of this Procedure will only be shared with other parties on a 'need to know' basis.
7.	Group Complaints The procedure and guidance for group complaints and the action required by students and the University	Where the issues affect a number of students, a group complaint may be considered.
8.	Complaint Details and Supporting Evidence Procedure and guidance for students on the formulation of complaints and supporting evidence.	The proper investigation of complaints requires complaint issues to be set out in detail and supported by the submission of evidence.
9.	External Adjudication (the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA))	
10.	Substitute Officers	
11.	Legal Action	
12.	Monitoring and Recording of Complaints	
13.	Review of Procedure/Equality Impact Assessment	
14.	Useful Contact Information (including University contacts and Student Advice, Students' Union)	

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This Procedure can be made available in the following alternative formats: Braille; large print; tape; disk and on coloured paper. Please contact the Student Complaints Team to request a copy in your chosen format.

1. INTRODUCTION

Principle

Students have the right to complain. A student who complains will suffer no detriment as a consequence of doing so.

1.1 WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Students are eligible to use this Procedure as individuals or as a group if they are:

- .1 registered Cardiff University students;
- .2 former Cardiff University students.

Guidance for Students

- G1** Registered students include those registered or enrolled on a programme and those on an interruption of study, temporary withdrawal or temporary exclusion or suspension.
- G2** Former students are eligible to use this Procedure up to **28 calendar days** after their formal leaving date or (if eligible to graduate) up to **28 calendar days** after graduation date.
- G3** The University expects you to raise a complaint yourself within **7 calendar days** of the issue arising by completion of the appropriate form and submitting it in hard copy or by email. Relevant Forms for all stages of this Procedure can be downloaded here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> or obtained in paper form from the appropriate complaint administrator (Early Resolution Stage Complaint Form) or Student Complaints Team (Formal and Review Stage Complaint Forms).
- G4** If a complaint is **not** received within the time limits attached to each stage of the Procedure, the complaint will normally be deemed as 'out of time'. The time limits may be waived if good reason can be shown by you for not having brought the complaint forward within these limits. However, you should be aware that any lengthy delay may mean the University cannot reasonably be expected to investigate and/or make a finding regarding such complaints.
- G5** Staff dealing with complaints may seek advice from the Student Complaints Team when determining the eligibility of a complaint under the Procedure. If the University decides that the complaint is **not** eligible for consideration under the Procedure (including complaints that are deemed to be 'out of time') the Student Complaints Team will send you a letter to confirm that the University's internal procedures have been completed and the reasons for the decision. This will normally be sent to you within **14 calendar days** of receipt of the complaint. This letter is known as a Completion of Procedures letter. There is no further action you can take under the University's internal procedures. You can, if you wish, refer the University's decision to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) – (see Section 9 – External Adjudication).

1.2 WHAT TYPES OF ISSUES CAN STUDENTS RAISE UNDER THIS PROCEDURE?

Students can use this Procedure if their complaint relates to any of the following:

- .1 failure by the University to meet its obligations;
- .2 concerns about the delivery of a programme (taught or research), teaching or administration, **including supervision**;
- .3 issues relating to the quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided by the University.

Guidance for Students

G6 Failure by the University to meet its obligations

This could include information on the University's website, contained in programme student handbooks and the Student Charter.

G7 Student/Staff Panel Representative

Some issues, such as timetabling, heating in a lecture theatre, may be raised with your Student/Staff Panel Representative.

G8 Complaints relating to supervision

If you think that your supervisory arrangements are not functioning as well as they should be then you must make your School aware of this as soon as possible so that the School can help to resolve the situation. In order to give the School an opportunity to review supervisory arrangements and, where appropriate, implement a remedy for the remaining period of supervision, complaints about supervision **must** be made under the Formal Stage of this Procedure and should be raised as soon as possible and within **28 calendar days** of the problem arising.

You should be aware that issues about supervision are **not** normally grounds for academic appeal and, therefore, you should **not** wait for marks to be formally confirmed by the University before raising an issue about supervision.

G9 Placements

If you are on a placement of any length, studying or working, and wish to complain about the service provided by the placement provider which you think has impacted on your learning experience, then you should submit a complaint under the Formal Stage of this Procedure directly to Cardiff University.

It is normally expected that complaints about general issues will be raised by you directly with the placement provider by using the placement provider's internal complaint procedures. Where this is not possible you should contact the appropriate University complaint administrator (see <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints>) for further guidance.

If you have raised your complaint directly with the placement provider and you are unhappy with the outcome you may submit a Formal complaint to the University (see Section 4).

1.3 WHEN IS THIS PROCEDURE NOT APPLICABLE?

This Procedure should **not** be used to make a complaint about the following:

- .1 Academic Judgement - *that is the decision made by academic staff on the quality of academic work or the criteria being applied to mark work (rather than the administrative marking process)*¹. Academic Judgement cannot be challenged under any procedure;
- .2 Any matter that may be actively pursued under the Academic Appeals procedure. Please refer to the Appeals Procedure: www.cardiff.ac.uk/appeals;
- .3 Complaints relating to Campus Facilities. Please refer to Campus Services Customer Complaints Procedure: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/campus-facilities-complaints-procedure>
- .4 A fellow student. Please refer to the Student Behaviour Procedure: <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/your-study/your-rights-and-responsibilities/student-behaviour-and-discipline>
- .5 The Students' Union: <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/about-cusu/governance/policy/>
- .6 Applications: complaints relating to an application to study at Cardiff University. Please refer to the Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Applicants: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/admissions-policies/complaints-and-appeals>

Guidance for Students

- G10** You should be aware that marks and assessment results cannot be changed by using this Procedure. Issues related to the outcome of an academic assessment must be raised through the Academic Appeals Procedure: www.cardiff.ac.uk/appeals
- G11** Where you have initiated more than one procedure the University will determine the most appropriate Procedures to be followed. Where the issues are related, the University may decide to suspend one procedure pending the outcome of the other. Alternatively, the University may, with your agreement, decide to consider matters together, for example, where a complaint covers issues that fall within the remit of other procedures such as the Academic Appeals Procedure.

2. SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS USING THIS PROCEDURE

Principle

Support and advice is available to students throughout all stages of this Procedure from a variety of sources.

- 2.1** Students are encouraged to obtain advice, guidance and support and may be accompanied at all meetings.

¹ As defined in the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) - The Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/96361/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf>

- 2.2 Independent support and guidance is available to students from Cardiff University Students' Union Student Advice.
- 2.3 University staff and the University's Student Support Centres can advise students on the Procedure but are **not** able to assist in the formulation of a complaint or accompany a student to meetings held under the Procedure.
- 2.4 The University understands that in exceptional cases students may be unable to make a complaint themselves, for example, due to a health condition and in such cases the student may be represented by a third party. In these cases students are encouraged to appoint an independent representative who is familiar with the University's procedures and processes for example, a Students' Union adviser.

Requests to be represented may be made by students in writing under any stage of this Procedure to the Student Complaints Team. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the request is approved, the student will be asked to sign a consent form which will be provided by the Student Complaints Team. The University will then correspond directly with the student's representative in relation to the complaint and a copy of all correspondence will be sent to the student for information.

- 2.5 Students cannot normally be accompanied or represented by someone acting in a legal capacity unless this is requested and agreed as a reasonable adjustment.

Guidance for Students

G12 Independent support

You are encouraged to seek independent support from someone familiar with the University's procedures and processes, i.e. a Students' Union adviser. Where applicable, support can also be provided by your Professional Union or Professional Body.

G13 Staff support available to students

This includes Senior Personal Tutors, Personal Tutors, Programme Directors, Year Tutor and the School or Professional Service complaint administrators, or equivalents.

G14 Contact Information

Contact Information for the different support services available to you can be found in **Section 14 – Useful Contact Information**.

G15 Complaints about staff

Staff implicated in a student complaint may seek support from their line manager and/or Human Resources. They may also be accompanied/supported at any investigation meetings by a Trade Union representative (if they are a member) or by a colleague who has no material interest in the complaint. Staff cannot normally be represented by someone acting in a legal capacity unless this is requested and agreed as a reasonable adjustment.

3. EARLY RESOLUTION STAGE

Principle

In the first instance every effort should be made to raise and resolve complaints early and locally.

- 3.1 Complaints must be submitted by completion of the Early Resolution Complaint Form which can be downloaded here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints>) or obtained in paper format from the relevant complaint administrator and submitted with relevant evidence to the School, College or Professional Service complaint administrator in hard copy or by email. This action should take place normally within **7 calendar days** of the problem arising. The University expects that the complaint will normally be resolved and a written outcome by email issued within **14 calendar days** of receipt of the Early Resolution Complaint Form.
- 3.2 On receipt of the Early Resolution Complaint Form, if it is considered that the complaint is likely to take longer than **14 calendar days** to resolve due to the complexity or seriousness of the issue, then the complaint can be referred for consideration under the **Formal Stage** (See Section 4) and the student will be informed accordingly.
- 3.3 If students are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Early Resolution Stage they may escalate the complaint to the **Formal Stage** of the Procedure; this should normally be done within **14 calendar days** of the date of the Early Resolution Stage written outcome.

Guidance for Students

- G16** Colleges, Schools and Professional Services will identify members of staff to undertake the role of the complaint administrator. Contact information can be found here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> .
- G17** Early Resolution remedies may include:
- providing you with more information/explanation;
 - suggesting solutions;
 - offering an apology.
- G18** If responsibility for the issue raised lies in the staff member's area of work, every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint at source in consultation with you. Where necessary, liaison with other staff and services will take place to facilitate a swift resolution.

4. FORMAL STAGE

Principle

The University is committed to undertaking a full and fair investigation of serious or complex complaints.

4.1 SUBMITTING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

- .1 Students may submit a Formal Stage complaint under the following circumstances and timescales:

- (i) they are dissatisfied with the Early Resolution Stage, normally within **14 calendar days** of receiving the Early Resolution written outcome; or
- (ii) complaints of a serious nature, as soon as possible but normally within **28 calendar days** of the problem arising.

Formal Complaints must be submitted by completion of the Formal Stage Complaint Form which can be downloaded here:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> or obtained in paper form from the Student Complaints Team and submitted in hard copy or by email.

Guidance for Students

G19 On receipt of the formal complaint, the University will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is submitted under the right procedures and the appropriate stage, within stated deadlines, and in the required format. This might result in:

- referral to the Early Resolution Stage if this is considered appropriate and has not been completed by you;
- you being advised to use a different procedure;
- a request for further information or clarification;
- the complaint being rejected, for example because it is submitted late;
- the complaint proceeding to formal investigation;
- with your agreement, referral to a mediation process.

4.2 INITIAL CONSIDERATION

- .1 If the complaint is **rejected** the Student Complaints Team will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter confirming the reasons for the decision and will provide the student with a copy of any information considered and the complaint file will be closed. A copy of the Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to the appropriate Senior Officer (s)², including the College Registrar as appropriate.

There is no further action a student can take under the University's internal procedures. However, students can, if they wish, refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

- .2 If the complaint **proceeds** the Student Complaints Team will refer the complaint to the appropriate Senior Officer and a copy will be sent to the College Registrar as appropriate. The Student Complaints Team will confirm to the student in writing the date of the referral and to whom it has been referred.

Where the complaint is about a Head of School/Professional Service, the complaint will be referred to a Pro-Vice Chancellor or the Chief Operating Officer for consideration. If the complaint is about a Pro Vice- Chancellor or the Chief Operating Officer it shall be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for consideration. If the complaint is about the Vice-Chancellor it shall be referred to the Chair of Council.

² 'Senior Officer' includes: Heads of School/Professional Service, Director of Campus Facilities, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Chief Operating Officer and the Vice-Chancellor

If the complaint involves more than one College, academic School and/or Professional Service, it will be referred to a Pro Vice-Chancellor to allocate to an appropriate Investigating Officer. The Student Complaints Team will inform the student and relevant Senior Officer(s) and College Registrar as appropriate.

- .3 The University will confirm the outcome of this initial evaluation to the student in writing and will make any referral to the appropriate Senior Officer(s) normally within **7 calendar days** of receipt of the complaint.

4.3 ROLE OF THE SENIOR OFFICER

The Senior Officer will allocate the complaint to an Investigating Officer, normally within **3 calendar days** of receipt or may decide to conduct the investigation personally.

4.4 THE INVESTIGATION

The Investigating Officer will confirm the scope of the investigation to the student. If the student's expectations appear to go beyond what the University can reasonably provide or what is in its power to provide, the Investigating Officer will advise the student as soon as possible in writing in order to manage the student's expectations about possible outcomes.

The Investigating Officer will gather and consider any relevant evidence to produce a factual and objective written investigation report, including any information considered at the Early Resolution Stage. During the investigation, the Investigating Officer may ask to meet with the student, any person implicated in the complaint and any other relevant parties. The report will outline the process followed, evidence gathered, conclusions drawn and any remedy.

The Formal Complaint Investigation Report and any recommendations will be referred to the appropriate Senior Officer for consideration/approval.

4.5 OUTCOME

Students can expect to receive the Formal Complaint Decision³ normally within **32 calendar days** of the complaint being allocated to the Investigating Officer. The student will also receive copies of the information considered by the Investigating Officer and will be provided with a clear explanation of the reasons for each decision. Students will also be given information about:

- their right to take the complaint to the review stage;
- the grounds on which they can do so;
- the time limit for escalating to the review stage;
- the appropriate procedure;
- where and how to access support.

The Formal Complaint Decision will also be copied to the College Registrar as appropriate and the Student Complaints Team.

³ Normally, short Formal Complaint Investigation Reports will form part of the Formal Complaint Decision letter, longer reports will be produced separately.

4.6 STUDENT CONFIRMATION

If **satisfied** with the Formal Complaint Decision, the student is required to confirm this in writing to the Senior Officer normally within **10 calendar days** of the date of the Formal Complaint Decision. This may be done by email or post.

Where appropriate the Senior Officer will arrange for any agreed remedy to be implemented. The complaint will then be closed.

If the student is **dissatisfied** with the Formal Complaint Decision, a review can be requested (see Section 5 – Review Stage). Students should submit their request for review by completing the Review Request Form which can be downloaded here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> or obtained in paper form from the Student Complaints Team, as fully and accurately as possible, normally within **10 calendar days** of the date of the Formal Complaint Decision. The form may be submitted to the Student Complaints Team in hard copy or by email.

If students do **not** confirm that they are satisfied with the Complaint Decision within **10 calendar days** of the date of the Formal Complaint Decision or submit a Review Request **within 10 calendar days** of the Formal Complaint Decision, the University will close the complaint file and notify the student in writing.

Guidance for Students

G20 Allocation of your complaint to an Investigating Officer

The complaint will be allocated by the Senior Officer to a member of staff who has been trained as an Investigating Officer and has had no previous involvement in the matter.

G21 The Investigating Officer's role

The Investigating Officer will hold separate meetings with you and any other parties to the complaint.

Special attention will be given by the Investigating Officer to identifying complaints that may require particularly swift action. This may include but is not limited to:

- complaints involving a threat of serious harm;
- complaints relating to disability support;
- issues of serious and repeated services failure and/or significant delay.

The Investigating Officer may be assisted by an administrative officer.

G22 Completion of the Formal Stage

Normally the Formal Stage of the Procedure should be completed within **52 calendar days** of submission of your formal complaint. This may be affected by the actions and cooperation of you as the complainant. It is important to do all you can to meet all University deadlines for the submission of complete and detailed material.

There will occasionally be circumstances when, for good reason, the University will need to extend the timeframe. Where this is the case, the University will notify you and keep you regularly informed of progress.

5. REVIEW STAGE

Principle

A student can request the Formal Complaint Decision to be reviewed to ensure that the decision is fair and reasonable in the light of the evidence available.

5.1 WHEN CAN STUDENTS SUBMIT A REVIEW REQUEST?

If students remain dissatisfied with the Formal Complaint Decision they can request a review of the decision by a Reviewer.

A complaint must have been completed under the **Formal Stage** before it can be escalated to the Review Stage. This stage will not normally include a reconsideration of the issues raised, or a further investigation. The grounds for a Review Stage request are:

- .1 the Procedures were not followed correctly at the Formal Stage;
- .2 the decision and/or remedy were unreasonable;
- .3 there is new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide at the Formal Stage.

Guidance for Students

G23 The Reviewer

The Reviewer will not have had any previous involvement in the complaint and will be sufficiently senior to the officer who has approved the Formal Complaint Decision.

G24 In relation to points 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, the Reviewer will review the complaint on the basis of the information available to the Investigating Officer at the Formal Stage.

G25 If the review request is based on ground 5.1.3, details of the new evidence must be supplied together with an explanation as to why this was unavailable at the time of the investigation and why it is considered to be material.

G26 If the complaint has resulted in a course of action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure you will be informed. However, there is no right of review against any subsequent decision made under that procedure.

5.2 SUBMITTING A REVIEW REQUEST

Students should submit their request for review by completing the Review Request Form which can be downloaded here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> or obtained in paper form from the Student Complaints Team, as fully and accurately as possible, normally within **10 calendar days** of receiving the Formal Complaint Decision. The form may be submitted Student Complaints Team in hard copy or by email.

The student should set out clearly which of the three grounds at 5.1 above apply and why and, if 5.1.3 applies provide copies of the new evidence.

Guidance for Students

G27 On receipt of the Review Request, the University will undertake an initial evaluation to check that you have completed the Formal Stage of the Procedure, that the request is submitted under the correct Procedure and under permitted grounds, within the deadline, and in the required format. This might result in:

- .1 the request being rejected, for example because it is submitted late or under grounds which are ineligible;
- 2 the complaint proceeding to the Review Stage.

If the student's expectations appear to exceed the scope of the Review Stage, you will be advised of this by the University as soon as possible in writing in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes.

If the Review Request is rejected at initial evaluation, the University will also issue you with a Completion of Procedures letter explaining the reasons for the decision and close the complaint file. A copy of the Completion of Procedures letter will also be sent to the appropriate Senior Officer, the Investigating Officer and College Registrar as appropriate.

There is no further action you can take under the University's internal procedures. However, you can, if you wish, refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

The University will confirm the outcome of this initial evaluation to you and issue a Completion of Procedures letter as appropriate normally within 7 calendar days of receipt of the review request.

If the complaint is escalated to the Review Stage, the Student Complaints Team will inform the appropriate Senior Officer normally within 7 calendar days of receipt of the Review Request, that a Review Request has been received and will provide them with a copy of the request, a copy of the Formal Complaint and a copy of the Complaint Investigation Report. A copy of the Review Request will also be sent to the Investigating Officer for information and the College Registrar as appropriate.

The Senior Officer will be asked to provide a Review Request Response normally within 7 calendar days of the date the Review Request is sent to them.

The case will be referred to the Reviewer normally within 7 calendar days of receiving the Review Request Response.

5.3 OUTCOME

The Reviewer will consider the Review Request, including any information considered at earlier stages of the Procedure, on the basis of the grounds under which it has been submitted and the Review Request Response. The Reviewer may decide to either **uphold** or **overturn** the Formal Complaint Decision and will advise the Student Complaints Team normally within 10 calendar days of the date of the referral. Students can expect to receive the Reviewer's decision normally within 38 calendar days of the Review Request being received by the University:

.1 Formal Complaint Decision and any proposed remedy upheld

If the Reviewer rejects the Review Request and **upholds** the Formal Complaint Decision, the University will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter, confirming the Reviewer's decision and the reasons for this and close the complaint. A copy will also be sent to the Senior Officer, Investigating Officer and the College Registrar as appropriate.

There is no further action students can take under the University's internal procedures. However, students can, if they wish, refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

.2 Formal Complaint Decision upheld but alternative remedy offered

If the Reviewer **upholds** the Formal Complaint Decision but considers that an alternative remedy is to be offered, the University will issue the student with details of the new remedy. A copy will also be sent to the Senior Officer, Investigating Officer and the College Registrar as appropriate.

Students will be asked to confirm whether or not they are satisfied with the Review Stage Decision (see 5.4 below).

.3 Formal Complaint Decision overturned

If the Reviewer **overturns** the Formal Complaint Decision, the University will issue the Reviewer's Decision to the student, explaining the reasons for the decision and any revisions to the Formal Complaint Decision. The Senior Officer and Investigating Officer will be informed of the decision and also the College Registrar as appropriate. The student will be asked to confirm whether or not they are satisfied with the Reviewer's Decision (see 5.4 below).

5.4 STUDENT CONFIRMATION

Where the Formal Complaint Decision is upheld but an alternative remedy is offered (see 5.3.2) or the Formal Complaint Decision is overturned (see 5.3.3), students are required to confirm in writing to the Student Complaints Team, normally within **14 calendar days** of the date of the Review Request Decision, whether or not they are satisfied with the decision. This may be done by email or by post.

If the student is **satisfied** with the Review Stage Decision, the University will arrange for the agreed remedy to be implemented and the complaint will be closed.

If the student is **dissatisfied** with the Review Stage Decision, as there is no further action the student can take under the University's internal procedures, the University will automatically issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the student, normally within **14 calendar days** of receipt of the confirmation. A copy of the Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to the Reviewer, the Senior Officer and College Registrar as appropriate. Students can, if they wish, refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

If the student does **not** confirm their satisfaction, or otherwise, with the Review Request Decision within **14 calendar days** of the date of the Review Request Decision, as there is no further action the student can take under the University's internal procedures, the University will close the complaint file and automatically issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the student normally within **14 calendar days**. A copy of the Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to the Reviewer, the Senior Officer and College Registrar as appropriate. Students to whom Completion of Procedures letters are issued can, if they wish, refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Guidance for Students

G28 Completion of the Review Stage

Normally the Review Stage of the Procedure will be completed within **38 calendar days** of submission of your Review Request. This timeframe may be affected by your actions and cooperation as the complainant. It is important to do all you can to meet all University deadlines for the submission of complete and detailed material.

There will occasionally be circumstances when, for good reason, the University will need to extend the timeframe. Where this is the case, the University will notify you and keep you regularly informed of progress.

G29 Completion of Procedures letter

The Completion of Procedures letter will inform you about your right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) (see Section 9 – External Adjudication), the time limit for doing so and where and how to access advice and support.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Principle

All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Information gathered as part of this Procedure will only be shared with other parties on a 'need to know' basis.

6.1 Persons who are the subject of a complaint will be informed of the complaint so that they are given the opportunity to respond.

6.2 At the **Formal Stage** the completed Formal Complaint documentation will normally be copied to the person(s) who is (are) the subject of the complaint unless the student can demonstrate that there is a good reason for not doing so.

6.3 Anonymous complaints will not normally be accepted. However, in compelling cases supported by evidence, an exception may be made.

Guidance for Students

G30 The Student Complaint Procedure will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality and you can be confident that no detriment will be experienced if you raise a complaint in good faith. Anonymous complaints will only be considered where there is clear and compelling evidence that justifies an exception being made and for the matter to be investigated.

G31 We will normally use your University email account to correspond with you about your complaint. If a University email account is not available, you will be asked to provide an alternative personal email account.

G32 The University expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other and with respect.

G33 Where a complaint raised is later shown to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, it will be dismissed and disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7. GROUP COMPLAINTS

Principle

Where the issues raised affect a number of students, a group complaint may be considered.

7.1 The University will accept a group complaint where students are complaining about the same issue at the same time and seeking the same outcome. The University requires the group to appoint one spokesperson to represent the group as a whole and to liaise with the other students.

7.2 The University reserves the right to separate out group complaints where individual remedies would be more appropriate and to apply a resolution to a wider number of students than may have submitted the group complaint.

7.3 The Completion of Procedures letter (if issued) will be addressed to the 'group spokesperson'. All students party to the group will be named in the Completion of Procedures letter and a copy will be sent to all students party to the group.

7.4 If a student wishes to withdraw from the group, this should be confirmed in writing, either by email or post, to the person managing the complaint.

7.5 All other aspects of the Procedure apply to Group Complaints including the support that is available to individual students making a complaint (see Section 2).

Guidance for Students

G34 For Data Protection Purposes, each student party to the group will be required to sign an individual Group Complaints Consent form which can be downloaded here: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints> or requested in paper form from the Student Complaints Team. The consent of all parties to the group will need to be received by the person managing the complaint prior to accepting the group complaint.

8. COMPLAINT DETAILS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Principle

The proper investigation of complaints requires complaint issues to be set out in detail and supported by the submission of evidence.

- 8.1** Students are required to set out their complaint clearly and succinctly at all stages of the Procedure, providing evidence to substantiate the issues raised where possible, and stating the outcome they are seeking. The types of evidence that may be relevant include, but are not limited to:
- .1 University documentation for example, relevant Student Handbook;
 - .2 Correspondence;
 - .3 Independent medical evidence;
 - .4 Witness statements;
 - .5 Reports by Professionals;
 - .6 Financial information.

Guidance for Students

- G35** The independent evidence that could be submitted by you to support your complaint may include:
- Medical/health certificate which confirms illness for a defined period;
 - Letter of support/explanation from a support service at the University (for instance, a statement from the Disability and Dyslexia Service);
 - Letter of support/explanation from a third party (such as a police report, counsellor's letter, local authority report, etc.);
 - A witness statement, including information to corroborate your complaint. The statement must be signed by the witness and dated.
- G36** Such supporting evidence must be submitted on documentation that is recognisably authentic (for example, on headed paper) and be signed and dated by the relevant authority. It must be unaltered and not annotated by you. Translated evidence should similarly be authentic and can normally be obtained from the facility issuing the certificate (for example, hospital, official body).
- G37** The University will not normally accept covert recordings as evidence to support a complaint.

9. EXTERNAL ADJUDICATION

If, having received the formal notification of the Completion of Internal Procedures, the student is still not satisfied that the University has considered the complaint fairly and justly there is provision for an external review of the case.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. Further information can be found on the OIA's website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

10. SUBSTITUTE OFFICERS

The University reserves the right to substitute any officers within the Procedure as necessary. No officer shall be substituted by any person who is connected with or has any interest in the complaint.

Guidance for Students

G38 The University will ensure that decisions are taken by people who are not connected or associated with the issue that is subject to the complaint.

11. LEGAL ACTION

All actions under this Procedure will normally cease upon receipt of formal correspondence from a solicitor intimating a legal claim against the University on the student's behalf, or upon instigation of legal proceedings against the University in relation to the complaint.

12. MONITORING AND RECORDING OF COMPLAINTS

The monitoring and recording of complaints will be in accordance with the specifications contained in the Policy for the Student Complaint Procedure.

13. REVIEW OF PROCEDURE/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A review of this Procedure and an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on a regular basis. The Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

14. USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience and Academic Standards Cardiff University Main Building Park Place Cardiff CF10 3AT Tel: 029 208 70530	Student Complaints Team Cardiff University 2 nd Floor McKenzie House, Newport Road Cardiff, CF24 ODE Tel: 029 206 88745 Email: Studentcomplaints@cardiff.ac.uk
Student Advice 3 rd Floor, Students Union, Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3QN Tel: 029 2078 1410 Fax: 029 2078 1508 Email: advice@cardiff.ac.uk	Student Support Centres 50 Park Place, Cardiff Tel: 029 208 74844 Email: studentsupportcentre@cardiff.ac.uk And 2 nd Floor, Cardigan House Heath Park, Cardiff Tel: 029 208 74844 Email: studentsupportcentre@cardiff.ac.uk

Details of complaint administrators can be found here:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints/complaint-administrator-contacts>