



STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Audience	Policy	Version Number and Month	Next Review Due	External Reference Points:
External (Website)	Student Complaints Policy and Procedure	V-03, Nov 2018	November 2020	UKQC Chapter B9 Academic appeals and student complaints Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): The good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals

AIMS

London Churchill College (LCC) defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a programme of study or related academic or administrative service, when the complainant has drawn his or her concern to the attention of the College and is not satisfied with the response.

This policy seeks to ensure that complaints against the College made by students are treated seriously and, if found to be valid, are acted upon to ensure that student's interests are protected as far as it is possible for the College to do so.

The procedures described in this policy apply to students of HND Programmes awarded by Pearson.

Examples of complaints include:

- Failure by the College to meet obligations including those outlined in programme or student handbooks.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the College.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration.
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the College.
- Any form harassment or bullying from fellow students, member of staff on grounds of their perceived race, nationality, gender, transgender status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, age, other personal characteristic or for any other reason.

POLICY

- The College keeps students informed of their rights to submit complaints, as well as the timeframes within which to do so.
- Students will not be disadvantaged as a result of making a formal complaint.
- The Registrar will report to the Academic Board after the end of each academic year on the activity and outcomes of Student Complaints as part of a continuous review process.
- This Policy covers students who are registered with the College or were recently registered on a programme of study delivered by the College within the qualifying period.

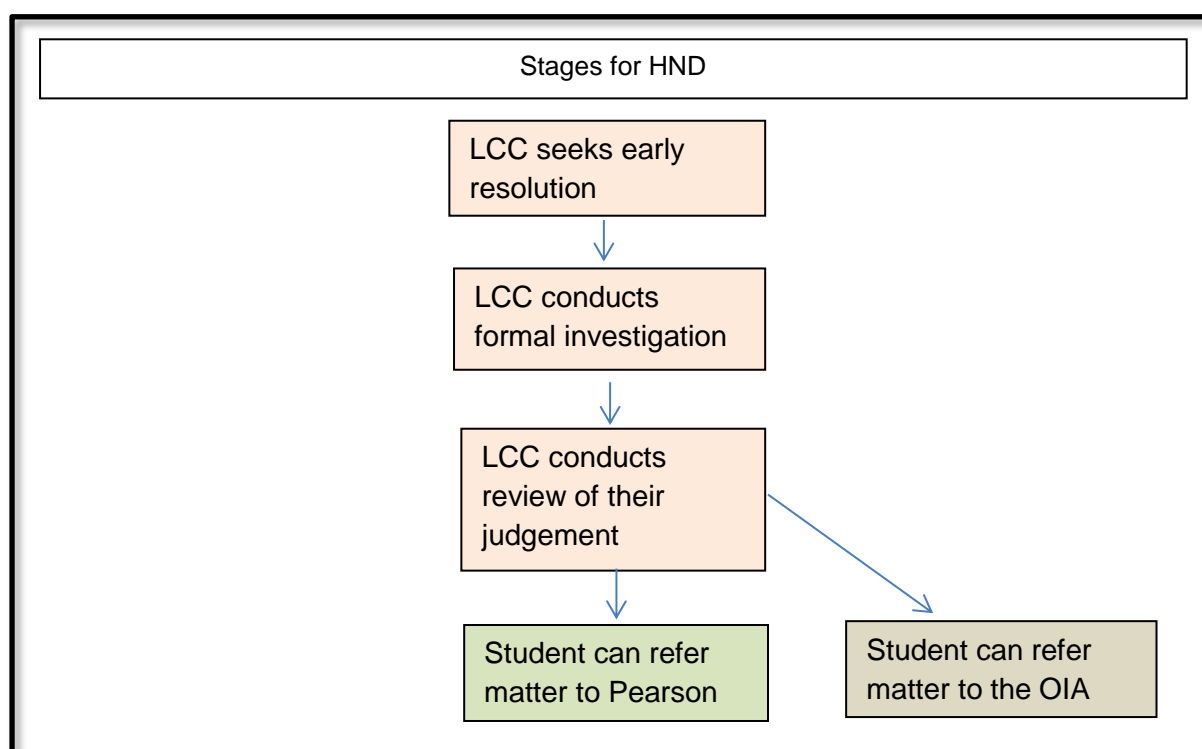


- Where an issue affects a number of students, a group or collective complaint may be made, and one student may be nominated as a spokesperson or liaison point, if all others agree, in order to manage the process more effectively. Collective complaints follow the same procedure as stated below.
- A Completion of Procedures (COP) letter will be sent to the student once they have completed the internal complaints procedure and no further steps can be taken.
- Any complaint made against a fellow student will be investigated in line with Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.

PROCEDURE

The Complaints process consists of multiple stages, which allow students to escalate their Complaint to higher authorities if they are dissatisfied with the initial result.

The process is outlined in the figure below, indicating where responsibility for completing the stage lies.



Early Resolution

Any student or group of students who consider making a complaint should discuss the matter informally in the first instance with their personal tutor in order to seek early resolution.

Early resolution is designed to address straightforward concerns swiftly and locally for the benefit of all parties before any formal complaint is made.

On completion of the informal stage, the Personal Tutor should provide the student with a written outcome.

Stage One: Formal Stage

Complaint should be received within 10 working days of Early Resolution

Outcome to be issued to the student within 20 working days



The formal complaints process is triggered when:

- the student declines to engage with early resolution and initiates the formal process
- early resolution was attempted, but the student remains dissatisfied.
- the issues raised are complex and will require detailed investigation, for example where a complaint relates to the conduct of staff members or covers a number of different incidents.

Formal complaints should be submitted to the Registrar within 10 working days of the outcome of the Early Resolution using the Student Complaints Form Part A. On receipt of a Complaint, the Registrar will undertake an initial evaluation to:

- consider whether the correct procedure is being used, referring it on as necessary to an independent staff member.
- acknowledge receipt of the written complaint within five working days;
- consider the evidence, and, if necessary, hold discussions with the complainant and any other persons they deem appropriate in order to fully investigate the complaint.

Having fully investigated the complaint over a period not normally exceeding 10 working days from its receipt, the registrar shall decide whether:

- the complaint should be progressed through other procedures in which case the complaint shall be terminated at this stage; or whether
- there is reasonable justification for the complaint; or whether
- there is no reasonable justification for the complaint.

This Registrar shall seek to resolve any justifiable complaint through recommendations; and shall, if the recommendations are agreed by all parties, refer the matter to the Principal's Executive Group, who will ensure that the resolution is implemented.

The outcome of the formal stage shall be communicated to the student in writing. If the complaint is not upheld, the student will be informed of their right to request a review of Stage One, as well as instructions on how to do so and the time limits.

Stage Two: Review Stage

Should be made within 10 working days of Stage One outcome
Outcome issued to student within 28 days of Complaint Panel

If the student is not satisfied with the decision at the conclusion of the Formal Stage or if the recommendations made at this stage are not implemented, they may appeal to the Principal using Student Complaints Form Part B (Review Stage). The student should submit the form within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of the first Formal Stage.

A request for a review may be on limited grounds, including but not confined to:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.



The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage (1) before it can be escalated to the review stage (2).

The Principal shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and will:

- either dismiss the case and inform the student in writing with a COP letter.
- seek to negotiate and agree an alternative set of recommendations; or
- determine whether there are sufficient grounds to establish a Complaints Panel to further consider the appeal.

The Complaints Panel shall consist of two members of the Principal's Executive Group, the Registrar and a member of the Academic Board who has had no involvement in the case. They shall hear the complaint within 10 working days of receipt of it.

Students and staff members involved directly in the complaint may be accompanied by a friend. Both the student and any member(s) of staff concerned shall be entitled to be present throughout a hearing except when the Panel deliberates on its decision.

Student and any staff members involved directly in the complaint and persons accompanying them shall be permitted to question any persons giving evidence to the meeting and to directly address the Student Complaint Panel.

The Panel shall submit a written report to the Principal. The decision of the Panel shall be final.

Investigation by Pearson

Pearson will aim to respond within 10 working days

If a student on an HND programme is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Complaint with the College, they may make a complaint to Pearson using their online form. Pearson advises students to allow the College to investigate and respond to their concerns before making a complaint directly to them, except in cases where the student suspects malpractice by the provider.

Complaints to Pearson can be submitted using their online form or through the post. Full details are available on their website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints.html>

The Registrar/Principal will provide students with the relevant information to support them in taking their Complaint to Pearson.

Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter

The College must issue COP Letter to the student within 28 days

The College shall issue the student with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter once they have completed the internal complaints procedure and there are no further steps to be taken.



The College will, under the OIA Scheme Rules, issue a the letter to a student promptly, and not later than 28 days after any of its internal processes have been completed.

The issue of a Completion of Procedures Letter serves the following main purposes:

- It confirms the date when the student completed the internal Appeal procedures;
- It clarifies the issues considered by LCC under those procedures;
- It establishes the timescale for bringing a complaint to the OIA;
- It advises the student of the possibility of bringing a complaint to the OIA.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA):

Complaint must be received within 12 months of COP Letter
Generally confirms outcome within 90 days of receipt of complete complaint file

Once all internal procedures have been exhausted and if the matter has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the student, they may put their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) by completing the OIA Complaint Form.

The COP letter issued by the College will advise the students of where to obtain the OIA Complaint Form.

The OIA must receive the signed form within 12 months of the date of the COP letter, otherwise they will consider the complaint to be out of time.

Following the OIA process does not prevent the student from pursuing a complaint or appeal with Pearson. They may choose whichever route(s) that believe is the most appropriate.