

Student Complaints Procedure 2016-17

GENERAL

The emphasis on this procedure is on informality, with the object of solving problems quickly, simply, and fairly. It is hoped that the great majority of issues can be settled amicably at an early stage. Responsibilities in each Hall are divided between the Warden and the Hall Manager and each has a responsibility for dealing with complaints within their area. It is not necessary to know how responsibilities are divided before making a complaint. The Warden will pass to the Hall Manager complaints that are for the Hall Manager to deal with, and vice versa.

Constructive criticism is always welcomed as a help towards monitoring and raising service levels. A record of all complaints, at the First, Second or Third Stage of this procedure will be kept by the Hall for a reasonable period. This record will include the complainant's name, details of the complaint and how it has been resolved or concluded.

FIRST STAGE

Making a complaint

A student may make a complaint (e.g. cleaning, maintenance or another Hall service) in person at the Hall Office during office hours, or in writing, or may ask for an appointment with the Hall Manager or Warden with whom the matter can be discussed.

Complaints about:

- Catering Issues should be directed in the first instance to CateringComments@london.ac.uk.
- General or non-personal issues may be raised at the appropriate internal Hall Committee through one of the members (if available).
- Other students may be made directly to a member of the Warden's staff.

Complaints about individual members of staff

Complaints about the Hall's staff must be addressed to the Hall Manager, and complaints about the Senior Members must be addressed to the Warden. Complaints about the Warden or Hall Manager must be made direct to the Head of Residential Accommodation at Senate House. Complaints about members of staff must be dealt with in accordance with their contract of employment and not necessarily as provided below; complaints which could lead to disciplinary action will need to be made in writing.

Complaints about discrimination or harassment

Concerns about discrimination or harassment of students should be referred in confidence to the Hall Manager or Warden in the first instance, or the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee), who shall decide the appropriate steps to be taken to investigate the concerns in accordance with the University's Equality Policy.

Appeals against deductions from Deposits or similar charges for damage

Students may appeal deductions made from their Deposits or similar charges for damage under the Disciplinary Procedure by contacting the Hall Manager in the first instance.

Resolving a complaint

The object is to resolve a problem quickly and simply and with the minimum of formality. The Warden and Hall Manager have discretion in their own areas of responsibility as to how a complaint is investigated and determined and may refer the matter to department heads. The student shall be informed of the outcome of the First Stage investigation into their complaint, normally within 14 days.

SECOND STAGE

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the First Stage, the student may request that the Warden refers the complaint to the Hall Manager or Warden of another Hall who shall investigate the complaint and normally report his/her findings to the student within 14 days. The investigator shall have discretion as to how to investigate the complaint and may decide to interview the student and the Warden or Hall Manager of the student's Hall and any other relevant parties.

FINAL STAGE

If the student remains unsatisfied with the handling of a complaint as outlined above, the student may make a formal complaint to the Head of Residential Accommodation, but only in exceptional circumstances will the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) consider any complaint which has not previously been examined under the First and Second Stages.

If the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) comes to the conclusion that the complaint has already been settled fairly in the Hall, or that the complaint is trivial, or wholly lacking in merit or substance, the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) may dismiss the complaint. If the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) comes to the conclusion that there is substance in the complaint, the Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) may either:

- (i) seek to resolve the complaint, in discussion with the student and the Warden or Hall Manager of the student's Hall; or
- (ii) by agreement with the student, appoint an arbitrator from amongst the external members of a Hall Council, whose decision will be final and binding on all concerned.

The Head of Residential Accommodation (or his/her nominee) shall usually conclude his/her investigation within 28 days and shall notify the student when the complaint is deemed to be concluded by the University.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Complaints which are allegations of malpractice, or concern some other serious matter which the student believes he or she is unable to raise in the Hall, may be made in accordance with the University's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure, which is available via the University's website: www.london.ac.uk.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

There shall be no disciplinary or other adverse implications for a student who makes a complaint or allegation, providing the student acts in good faith, within the law, and not vexatious or with malice, and in accordance with established procedures including those above. Victimisation of a complainant and deterring anybody from making a proper complaint are serious disciplinary offences by University staff.

THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The procedure detailed above completes the University's consideration of a student's complaint within Halls. Attention is however drawn to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). The OIAHE provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a University's disciplinary or complaints appeal body. Full details of the OIAHE and how to make a complaint are available from the Academic Registrar of the



University or on the website of the OIAHE <http://oiahe.org.uk>. The postal address is: Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, Fifth Floor, Thames Tower, Station Road, Reading, RG1 1LX. Telephone 0118 959 9813.