



## COLLEGE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

### Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedure

- This procedure needs to be taken in conjunction with standard complaints and appeals procedures of University of Chester. We affirm that there will be no discrimination in the case of students who make a complaint or mount an appeal.

### Definitions

- By 'complaint' we understand 'an expression of specific concern raised by one or more students about the standard of the provision provided by the College, in relating both to the service it offers and to student learning opportunities'. See further, <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/good-practice-framework/contents/complaints-and-academic-appeals.aspx> (10); <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-chapter-b9-academic-appeals-and-student-complaints#.VmguloR3X8s>, p. 4.
- An 'academic appeal' in this context is a request by a student, or group of students, to review a decision relating to a mark or set of marks awarded, progression, or awards.

### Complaints

- As a Christian institution that takes its commitment to its students very seriously, we are quick to respond to concerns raised by students and expect that, in the large majority of cases, complaints can be dealt with amicably and in a spirit of fellowship and cooperation.
- Minor complaints and suggestions for general improvements would normally come through the Student Representatives, who have regular Student Faculty meetings and bi-annual 'eBoS' (extended Board of Studies) with the Principal, Vice-Principal and Academic Dean.
- Where there are causes of concern that cannot be dealt with adequately or appropriately through Student Representatives, we ask students to raise those concerns informally, as soon as possible, with either the Vice-Principal (primarily for issues relating to the campus and to student life more generally) or the Academic Dean (primarily for academic related issues, including complaints about members of faculty). The Vice-Principal and Academic Dean will do all they can to resolve the issues of concern – in consultation with each other and with the Principal.
- NB. If the complaint involves either the Vice-Principal or Academic Dean, the initial complaint may be made to the other, whatever the subject.

### Complaints Procedure

- If concerns remain, then a student may make a formal complaint, in writing, to the Board of Governors (BG), giving as much detail as possible about the issue(s). The complaint will be discussed by them, who will contact the student within two weeks of the receipt of the

complaint, to discuss the matter further. A formal response, outlining proposed action, will be given to the student within two weeks, from the time of that second contact between the BG and the student. Where appropriate the BG will consult with, and if necessary refer the complaint on to, relevant outside bodies.

- If the student is still not satisfied, the members of the BG who represent the Board of Directors will nominate an appropriately qualified independent adjudicator to investigate the complaint(s) further. The adjudicator will contact the student within two weeks, and, if necessary, arrange a meeting. The adjudicator will also talk to the BG and relevant College personnel. Within one week of those discussions, the adjudicator will give a verdict, in writing, to the student and to the BG, as to whether or not the complaint was justified, and what further action should be taken.
- Please note that in any meetings with the student to discuss matters further, formal or informal, the student is welcome to have a friend present. Whilst we hope it will not be necessary, if at any stage the student wants to seek legal representation (and particularly if the student wants to have a legal representative present at any meetings), the College needs to be informed so as to be able, if necessary, to seek its own legal representation.
- Full written records will be kept at each of the formal stages. They will be kept confidential.
- Once the complaints procedure has been completed, the BG will send a Completion of Procedures letter to the student. This letter will confirm that all complaints procedures have been correctly followed, and will indicate what action is to be taken, or why the complaint has been rejected.
- Where a student feels unable to make the complaint directly, he or she may nominate a representative.
- Where several students are bringing a complaint, the group, too, should nominate a representative. The above procedure, including the time frame will apply to representatives.
- If all attempts to resolve the matter internally are still deemed unsatisfactory, a student may appeal directly to the University of Chester. The University's primary role in these cases is to check that [the College has followed correct procedures](#). Further details are available via the [Chester Portal](#).

#### Academic Appeals

- Any student who is concerned about his or her initial grade may discuss this with their tutor. If it is found that there has been an irregularity, which may include ambiguity in the assessment instructions or tutorial guidance, then this may be communicated, with the tutor's agreement, to the Academic Dean and then, where appropriate, to the staff member performing the moderation of the module. This may occasionally lead to the raising or lowering of marks. Though this will often affect the whole class rather than an individual.
- Please note, though, that there is not ground for appeal against a marker's academic judgement. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome, he or she may lodge an official complaint (see above).
- Once a mark has been finalised, any appeal must take place in line with the appeals procedure of the University of Chester. Again, though, appeals are possible only on the basis of procedural errors, such as incorrect assessment information being provided,

administrative errors such as incorrect calculation of results, or extenuating circumstance that for some reason could not be declared in advance in the usual way.

- If marks have not yet been agreed by a Module Assessment Board (MAB), it may be possible to settle these matters internally; if the marks have been agreed at a MAB, students must use the formal Appeals Procedure must be used. Guidance notes are provided in [Section 7 of the Quality and Standards Manual, Handbook F, available on the Chester Portal](#).
- Issues relating to progression and awards need to be taken up in an appeal directly to the University of Chester.

#### Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

- Mattersey Hall subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of our internal procedure, students may be able to apply for a review to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Further details will be included in the Completion of Procedures letter. For further information, see <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>