

## Complaints from the Public

The University has a Complaints Procedure for enrolled students and a Grievance Procedure for staff but we realise that there might be times when someone other than a student or staff member may feel it is necessary to complain about something related to the University. In these instances the following procedure may be used.

### 1. Procedure and advice

If you have a complaint in the first instance, it is requested that attempts are made to resolve this satisfactorily with the person or section involved or alternatively contact the Head of Compliance & Quality Systems (HoCQS) by email at [jwright@aup.ac.uk](mailto:jwright@aup.ac.uk). The complaint can be discussed and other members of staff involved to try to resolve any concerns.

We have a firm commitment to solving this type of complaint through goodwill and cooperation and hope that most complaints can be resolved informally but if that is not possible, you can still make a formal complaint.

If you wish to make a Formal Complaint you should write to:

Head of Compliance & Quality Systems  
Arts University Plymouth  
Tavistock Place  
Plymouth  
PL4 8AT

Please provide the following information:

- the background to your complaint
- details of the informal attempts you have made at resolving the complaint and who you in the University you discussed the matter with
- why the outcome of the informal attempts is not considered to be satisfactory, and
- the desired outcome of your complaint.

Either the HoCQS or a delegated member of staff will decide whether, on the basis of the information contained in your complaint, an investigation into the matter is warranted. If an investigation is not warranted, because it is believed you have not exhausted the informal complaints procedure, you will be informed within five working days of receipt of your complaint. If an investigation is warranted, you will be informed of this within 5 working days and given a date by which you should receive an investigation report in response to your complaint. The investigation will be carried out by a relevant member of staff from outside the area from which your complaint arose, within one month / 20 working days of the date the University received the complaint. Once the investigation is complete, you will receive a written report of findings and conclusions, including, if appropriate, recommendations for action to resolve the complaint.

Where the report contains actions for the University in resolving the complaint, the member of staff

charged to look at the recommendations will do so within 10 working days of the date of the report and will decide whether to follow the recommendations or take other action to remedy the complaint. You will be sent a letter outlining their decision, at which point the matter is closed. You may withdraw your formal complaint at any time, at which time the matter will be considered closed.

## **2. Principles**

The principles underpinning this procedure are that:

- the procedure provides an accessible, impartial and expeditious resolution of complaints within indicative time-frames
- the procedure encourages informal conciliation and resolution of complaints
- the procedure respects the confidentiality of complainants
- the procedure allows for a fair and full consideration of complaints made in good faith where appropriate
- the procedure allows for effective and appropriate response.

Information about members of the public making complaints, and individuals against whom complaints are made, will be dealt with in confidence and privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to process the complaint (in particular to notify anyone complained about as to the subject of the complaint), and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.

## **3. Scope of Complaints**

This Procedure covers perceived injustice or hardship suffered as a result of poor service provision, bad service delivery or failure to provide a service by the University.

It does **not** extend to:

- human resource issues such as appointments of staff, pay or discipline (where separate procedures exist)
- complaints by members of University staff, as separate processes for whistleblowing, grievances and complaints of personal harassment or bullying already exist
- contracts, insurance claims and other commercial and financial transactions
- release of information under the Data Protection, Freedom of Information Acts and/or Environmental Information Regulations, which should be handled via the appropriate procedures that exist for these purposes
- complaints by registered students of the University, where separate procedures already exist
- complaints by parents or guardians on behalf of registered students of the University
- complaints about University policies
- complaints about the Students' Union or its procedures.

The University reserves its rights not to investigate or take any action in relation to any complaints received anonymously or received on behalf of an anonymous complainant through a third party. Similarly, the University will not treat comments on social media threads as a complaint. Until a complainant's identity is verified only information regarding University process and procedures will be provided.

The University will consider complaints which are made in good faith and reserves the right to decline to consider any complaints which are merely frivolous, vexatious, defamatory, abusive and/or motivated by malice, or to enter into continuing correspondence about such complaints and reserves its rights to take any further action which it regards as appropriate in respect of such complaints.

#### **4. Other advice**

If your complaint relates to antisocial behaviour by students in your community, you may wish to refer to the Plymouth City Council information page [on reporting anti-social behaviour](#), dial 101 or for noise issues call Environmental Health (Plymouth: 01752 304147 (Mon-Thurs + Sun 9-5pm) 01752 668000 (Fri + Sat 9-1pm)).

If your complaint relates to sexual misconduct or other forms of harassment, it is recommended that the police be contacted first with the University notified if appropriate. This will not preclude any subsequent investigation by the University, even if no charges are brought but a police investigation usually takes precedence University procedures.

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