

Student Complaints Policy and Process

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Sarum College aims to provide a high standard and quality of service in the delivery of its academic programmes, services and facilities but recognises that occasionally things can go wrong. When they do, complaints will be properly and promptly addressed and any lessons learned applied to enhance the student and staff experience.

Sarum College has a general Student Complaints Process and then a separate escalation process for each respective validated programme.¹ Sarum's complaints process has an informal aspect – where we will work with students to try to mitigate and address concerns – and a second aspect where, if a student is unhappy with our informal process, they may escalate the matter via a formal complaint to the College and/or to the respective validating partner of the programme.

Every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly, objectively and independently and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily. Staff determining complaints must not have had any previous involvement in the complaint.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that enquiries will usually have to be made with others to investigate the complaint.

A number of different forms of complaints or grievance may be specified. This list is not exhaustive but may include:

1 Concerns relating to the general content and/or administrative arrangements associated with the course or programme of study.

General academic or administrative concerns relating to any academic programme should be raised with the respective programme leader or course host. Issues relating to the provision by an individual tutor should wherever possible be raised directly with the tutor concerned. Course evaluation forms provide further opportunity on a confidential basis to identify aspects of particular modules with which students are dissatisfied.

If dissatisfaction persists, a formal complaint in writing should be submitted to the Director of Academic Development and/or Principal of Sarum College whereby the identified parties will be obliged to investigate and respond formally.

If further dissatisfaction persists, a complaint should be made to the validating partner of the programme of study and procedure followed accordingly.

¹ University of Durham Common Awards: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/students/complaints-appeals/> and University of Winchester: <https://winchester.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-and-governance/policies-and-procedures/>

2 Complaint relating to assessment.

Concerns of award-seeking students arising from assessment procedures or practices should be addressed to the Programme Leader.

Should the student deem the response inadequate or requiring further action, the complaints procedures as indicated by the programme of study and the validating partner under which the programme falls (for Ministry programmes, this will be a University of Durham Common Awards procedure; for Winchester postgraduate programmes, this will be a University of Winchester complaints procedure) will be followed. Please see the respective programme handbooks and/or university policies noted here for details.

If the student is part of a non-accredited certificate programme (eg. Spiritual Direction or Exploring Theology) and wishes to escalate the matter, the complaint procedure is that the student should submit a formal complaint in writing to the Director of Academic Development and/or Principal whereby the identified parties will be obliged to investigate and respond formally.

If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome after having exhausted the College's internal complaints processes and/or that of the validating partner, the student may wish to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the external regulator for higher education complaints to which we subscribe (<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>).

3 Grievance or complaint about the nature or quality of the services provided by the College.

Students should contact the relevant Programme Leader, Sarum College Course Host or the Principal of Sarum College to be brought to the College Leadership Team for consideration.

If dissatisfaction persists, a formal complaint in writing should be submitted to the Director of Academic Development and/or Principal of Sarum College whereby the identified parties will be obliged to intervene and respond formally.

4 Grievance or complaint of a personal nature.

Grievances or complaints of a personal nature should in the first instance be taken up directly with the person concerned or with the Programme Leader. Every effort will be made in conjunction, if necessary, with colleagues to resolve the matter with or on behalf of the student.

If student dissatisfaction persists, a formal complaint in writing should be submitted to the Director of Academic Development and/or Principal of Sarum College, setting out in writing the difficulties that remain unresolved. One or both parties will discuss the matter with all persons involved with a view to finding a satisfactory resolution, with identified parties obliged to respond formally.

Document Information

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