

Regent College London

Complaints Procedure

Guidance Notes for Students

1. These guidance notes are intended to provide you with a user-friendly guide to how you can raise a complaint about any aspect of Regent College London's educational provision, facilities or services. Regent College London (the College) has many ways in which you can raise a concern which do not require you to use the formal Complaints Procedure. For example, you can raise concerns with your lecturers, through your Student Representatives, with Registry or Student Support staff, through your Unit, Cohort or Programme Leader or Academic Dean. You should try your best to resolve any concern you have at an informal level first. The concern should be raised as soon as possible and normally no more than 10 working days after the failure in the service or the issue giving rise to the complaint has come to your attention. Only when you feel that this has not worked or that the matter is very serious should you use the formal Complaints Procedure.
2. These notes give you some guidance about how to raise a complaint, however, you must carefully read Regent College London's Complaints Policy which can be found on the website (<http://www.regentcollegelondon.com/our-college/policies/>), and the College's VLE (HELP).
3. There are a number of circumstances under which you cannot use the Complaints Procedure. If your dissatisfaction is to do with grades or marks you have been awarded for submitted assessments or an examination, or to do with an academic award you have been made, then you will need to use the Academic Appeals Procedure. This can be found on the College's website (<http://www.regentcollegelondon.com/our-college/policies/>), the VLE (HELP) or you can obtain a copy from your Programme Leader.
4. If you are enrolled on a programme awarded by one of our University partners, you are advised to use the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure at Stage 1 to attempt to resolve the matter informally. If you then wish to lodge a formal complaint this may be done either through the University's or the College's complaints procedure, depending on the nature of your complaint. Your Director of Studies will advise you on the appropriate course of action to follow.
5. All students registered on Pearson programmes should use the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure.
6. The guidance and advice given below relates to Regent College London's Complaints Policy and Procedure.
7. If you are dissatisfied with services or facilities that are outside of the College's control you cannot use this Complaints Procedure. However, staff at the College might be able to help you with identifying how to make a complaint and to whom in such circumstances.
8. It is not possible for someone else to raise a concern or complaint on your behalf, regardless of their relationship with you, even if, for example, your parent or spouse is paying your fees for the programme you are studying at the College. Consequently, while you may obtain whatever advice and support you wish in formulating your complaint it must be you personally who raises the complaint.
9. The Complaints Procedure encourages you to try to resolve your complaint at an informal level (Stage 1) first. If you do wish to make a formal complaint this must be done in accordance with the Complaints Procedure and you are required to complete the Stage 2 Complaint form. If you write to any member of staff without completing the Complaints Form this will not be regarded as a formal, Stage 2 Complaint and will continue to be responded to as a Stage 1 Complaint. Where the issue you raise is

potentially serious, College staff will be advised not to respond to the details of your written communications until you have completed and submitted the Stage 2 Complaint Form. Similarly, if the College has tried to resolve a complaint at the informal Stage 1, but not achieved a satisfactory resolution with you, staff will be advised not to respond further unless you raise the complaint at Stage 2. In both cases, the College will inform you of this decision and refer you to the formal Stage 2 Complaints Procedure.

10. If you wish to raise an issue in confidence you are able to do so. In fact, if you raise an issue with a member of staff, they need your permission before they can discuss it with anyone else. However, you should be aware that there is often little that can be done if you do not give this permission. In any event, all concerns and complaints will remain confidential to those people who are directly involved in any investigation into a complaint that you make.
11. It is a breach of both the staff and student disciplinary procedures for anyone to harass or victimise¹ you for raising and/or submitting a complaint. Your complaint does not have to be found to be justified, provided you believe it is a valid complaint. However, if you make or support a complaint that you know is untrue, unfounded or vexatious, this will be viewed as a serious matter by the College and could lead to disciplinary action and/or legal proceedings.
12. Making a complaint should not have any noticeable impact on the day-to-day working relationship between you and any members of staff. However, the College recognises there are circumstances and types of complaints that could adversely affect your relationship with one or more members of staff, for example, if you have specifically complained about them. While the College is confident that no member of staff would victimise any student who has raised a complaint, whatever the circumstances, we understand that this may be a concern to you. The College, therefore, will balance the need to avoid unnecessary disturbance to you, of your existing teaching, supervision and assessment arrangements, with the need to demonstrate beyond doubt that you have not been victimised as a consequence of raising your complaint. If you have concerns over these matters you are advised to discuss the issues with the Academic Dean.
13. If you have a limited working relationship with a member of staff under investigation as a result of your complaint (e.g. the member of staff teaches on a module you are studying), it is expected that both you and the member of staff will continue the relationship in a professional manner and allow matters that you are complaining about to be progressed through the Complaints Procedure. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Academic Dean or Principal consider agreeing to alternative working arrangements while your complaint is being investigated. On the other hand, if you have to work more directly with the relevant member of staff (for example, they closely supervise your work, or are scheduled to assess and mark your work before the investigation into the complaint is likely to be completed) *and* if you make such a request or it is deemed appropriate given the circumstances, the Academic Dean or Principal will endeavour to make alternative arrangements.
14. To make a formal Stage 2 Complaint in line with the Complaints Procedure you must fill in each section of the Complaints Form and submit it to the Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement within 10 working days of the unsatisfactory outcome of Stage 1 or within two calendar months of becoming aware of the issue with which you are dissatisfied or concerned. Exceptions to these time limits may be possible in exceptional circumstances, such as illness, fear of victimisation, harassment or bullying, personal embarrassment or other circumstances beyond your control. In these cases, your formal complaint should be made as soon as possible and you will be asked to explain the reason for the delay in making your complaint.

The Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement will first ensure whether the complaint you are making should be dealt with through the Complaints Procedure or is more appropriately dealt with

¹ See Regent College London's Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy

through the Academic Appeals or staff disciplinary procedure. If either of the latter, your complaint will be dealt with through this procedure and you will be informed of this in writing. If your complaint is appropriate to the Complaints Procedure you will receive an acknowledgement letter within five working days of your receipt of the Complaints Form.

15. The Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement will appoint an appropriate member of staff to investigate your complaint. The appointed person may want to speak to you about your complaint to clarify details about the issues that you have raised. The investigating officer will submit a report to the Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement. The report will provide a summary of the evidence gathered about the complaint and make one of three general recommendations:
 - a. to dismiss the complaint
 - b. to suggest an amicable resolution to you, as the complainant
 - c. to find the complaint justified and suggest an offer of redress
16. You will receive a letter from the Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement within 15 working days of the Complaint Form being received. The letter will address each pertinent complaint made and justify the grounds upon which decisions have been made. A copy of this letter will also be given to the Principal.
17. If you are not satisfied with the response you have the right to lodge an appeal to the Principal. This must be done within 10 working days of receipt of the response, using the Stage 3 Appeal Against the Outcome of a Complaint Form. Within 10 working days of receipt of the Appeal, the Principal will decide if there appears to be a case to refer to the Complaints Review Panel.

If there does *not* appear to be a case for proceeding to a Complaints Review Panel, you will be sent a letter explaining the reasons for this. At this stage, there is no further recourse within the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

If there does appear to be a case for proceeding the Principal shall arrange for a Complaints Review Panel to be convened, to consider your appeal, within 20 working days of the decision.
18. You will be invited to attend the Complaints Review, and may be accompanied at the hearing by one friend (who may be another student) but not a paid legal representative.² If you prefer not to attend, the Panel will review the Appeal in your absence.
19. You can expect to receive a letter detailing the outcome within 10 working days of the Complaints Review Panel having met. If your appeal is upheld the letter will inform you of what action has been taken or is proposed in the light of the Panel's recommendations.
20. The decision and outcome of the Complaints Review Panel is final. You will be issued with a Letter of Completion which will state that you have exhausted the College's internal procedures for investigating your complaint. There is no recourse within the College to further consider your complaint. We hope that matters would not get to this stage and that the College is able to respond to your complaint at any of the previous stages in the Complaints Policy and Procedure to your satisfaction.
21. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint following the informal and formal procedures of Regent College London you may refer your complaint to an independent external body called the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>. The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints. It is a free service for students

² Where several students are bringing the same complaint, the group shall appoint two of their number (each may be accompanied by one friend who cannot be one of the complainants) to attend the hearing. Both the complainant and their friend will have the opportunity to address the panel and ask questions

and deals with individual complaints against higher education institutions in England and Wales. For the OIA to consider your complaint you must present the Letter of Completion with a completed OIA Complaint Form (<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>) to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Guidance on eligibility and the rules of the IOA is given at <http://oiahe.org.uk/media/42281/guidance-note-scheme-eligibility-march-2013.pdf>

22. The flow chart in Appendix A summarises the various stages and timescales of the complaints procedure at Regent College. Regent College's Student complaints procedure is available on the website (<http://www.regentcollegelondon.com/our-college/policies/>) and our virtual learning environment **HELP**.

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