

## **Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure**

At the meeting of APRC in May 2011, it was resolved that amendments should be made to the proposed process for dealing with unreasonable concerns/complaints and unacceptable behaviour on the part of students submitting concerns/complaints. Further discussion has taken place with the Guild of Students, Legal Services and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), and the following revised wording is proposed for inclusion within the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure with effect from 1 August 2011.

### Appendix 1: Operation of the Procedure

- A1.1 As noted in paragraph 1.2 above, students who raise concerns or formal complaints through this Procedure may do so without fear of recrimination. Where, however, a student's concern/complaint is considered to be unreasonable, or a student's behaviour is considered to be unacceptable, action may be taken as set out below. In appropriate cases, disciplinary action may be taken against the student.

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#### Unreasonable complaints and unacceptable behaviour

- A1.7 The University understands that raising a concern or formal complaint can be stressful for students. For this reason, sources of advice and support for students are detailed in Appendix 4 of this Procedure. However, the University does not expect Staff dealing with concerns/complaints to address unreasonable issues or to tolerate behaviour which it considers to be unacceptable.
- A1.8 Concerns or complaints which the University considers to be unreasonable may include:
- concerns/complaints which are malicious and/or obsessive and/or excessively prolific and/or repetitious;
  - concerns/complaints which do not clearly identify the precise issues which the student wishes to be investigated.
- A1.9 Behaviour which the University considers to be unacceptable may include:
- communication which is offensive, aggressive, intimidating, defamatory or harassing;
  - communication which is excessively persistent or demanding;
  - unreasonable refusal to co-operate with the requirements of the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure;
  - adoption of a 'scattergun' approach, for instance, raising the same concern/complaint with multiple members staff;
  - covert recording of meetings and conversations.
- A1.10 The initial decision as to whether a concern/complaint is unreasonable and/or whether a student's behaviour is unacceptable will be taken by the Director of Registry (or nominee), in consultation with the University Senior Tutor and other relevant colleagues.

- A1.11 If it is determined that a concern/complaint is unreasonable, or that the nature of the communication within a complaint submission is unacceptable, the Student Complaints Officer will write to the student explaining why that initial decision has been taken and asking the student to revise and resubmit the concern/complaint by a specified deadline. If the student does not do so, or if the Director of Registry (or nominee) and the University Senior Tutor consider that the resubmitted document continues to be unreasonable or that the nature of the communication continues to be unacceptable, the Student Complaints Officer will write to the student explaining that the University is terminating consideration of the concern/complaint. This decision will not be taken lightly.
- A1.12 If it is determined that a student's behaviour is unacceptable, the Student Complaints Officer (or nominee) will write to the student explaining why that initial decision has been taken and asking the student to alter his behaviour. Where a student continues to behave in an unacceptable manner despite a written request to alter his behaviour, the Director of Registry (or nominee) and the University Senior Tutor may decide to terminate or restrict for a specified period of time contact between the student and members of Staff dealing with the concern/complaint. This decision will not be taken lightly. The student will be advised in writing of the decision by the Student Complaints Officer (or nominee) and when the University will review the decision.
- A1.13 The period of termination or restriction of contact will only be extended if there are good reasons for doing so. The University may be unable to continue with its consideration of the concern/complaint while the termination or restriction of contact is in operation. In appropriate cases, the University may also take disciplinary action against the student.
- A1.14 If the student wishes to appeal against the decision to terminate consideration of the concern/complaint and/or the decision to terminate or restrict contact as described above, he/she may do so by writing to the Student Complaints Officer. The Student Complaints Officer will arrange for the student's appeal to be considered by the Director of Academic Services (or nominee), who will consult with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (or nominee) and a Sabbatical Officer of the Guild of Students. If the Director of Academic Services confirms the decision, the student will be advised in writing that he/she may request a Completion of Procedures letter in order to complain to the OIA (as detailed in paragraph 8.2).
- A1.15 A decision to terminate the University's consideration of the concern/complaint does not prevent the student from raising a new concern/complaint about other matters, but further concerns/complaints about the same matter will not be considered. New concerns/complaints from students whose behaviour has previously been deemed unreasonable or unacceptable will be treated on their merits. Restrictions imposed in respect of an earlier concern/complaint will not automatically apply to a new matter.