

Operational Guidance for formal Student Committee Hearings

1. Roles

- **The Committee** is made up of three senior University employees who are convened to reach a fair and impartial outcome of the case. Committee members are drawn from a panel of suitably experienced colleagues who undergo training where relevant in relation to their role in the named procedure.
- **The Committee Chair** has overall responsibility for the management of the hearing. This includes:
 - Liaising with the Committee Secretary to determine what evidence is available and required, and whether evidence submitted by University colleagues or Student Complainant/Responder is suitable for inclusion at the hearing;
 - Deciding whether any request for a deferral to the Committee should be permitted and, if so, on what terms;
 - Determining if any requested reasonable adjustments can/should be put in place;
 - Deciding whether any witnesses should be asked to provide witness statements and/or attend the hearing in person;
 - Determining whether any questions raised by University colleagues or Student Reporter (where relevant) during the hearing are relevant and should be put to the Student Responder.
- **The Committee Secretary** is a member of Student Progress Service, whose role is to undertake the administrative tasks associated with the Committee hearing, but will not be involved in determining the outcome decision.
- **The Case Officer** is a member of Student Progress Service who has undertaken the internal University investigation and presents the findings at the Committee hearing. They present the evidence and can provide guidance on University rules and regulations to support the Committee members in their investigation and determination on the evidence presented.

2. General notes

- If any student present at the hearing perceives any bias or conflict on the part of any member of the Committee, they may request a review of the Committee membership by emailing the Committee Chair.
- The Committee will ensure that the Student Responder is able to see and hear all evidence relevant to the case and presented during the hearing. The Student Responder will be given the opportunity to respond to any evidence taken into account by the Committee.
- The Committee will determine facts using the civil standard of proof. What this means is that the Committee will need to decide whether they are satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, something is more likely than not to have happened for it to be taken as fact. In doing so, the Committee may have to determine the credibility and reliability of those giving evidence.

3. Practical issues

- All Student Responders and, where relevant, Student Reporters may be accompanied to the hearing by a friend or supporter. Please see the [guidance document on the role of a friend/supporter](#) for more information about the role they will take in the meeting.
- All attendees (except witnesses and friends/supporters) will receive a copy of all relevant papers at least 7 working days in advance of the Committee hearing. Any papers submitted as

evidence after this time will only be admitted for consideration with the approval of the Committee Chair.

- Requests for reasonable adjustments for the Committee hearing from any attendee must be submitted to the Chair, via the Committee Secretary, at least 24 hours in advance of the Committee hearing
- The Committee members will meet prior to the hearing to discuss the case and decide on questions and issues to be addressed
- During the hearing, the Committee will consider the evidence, receive submissions in writing or in person and consider all other relevant circumstances.
- Notes will be taken by the Committee Secretary, but these will not be word for word. Video/Audio recordings of the hearing are not permitted by any attendee, unless the Chair of the Committee has explicitly provided written permission in advance of the hearing for recordings to take place.
- Where applicable, any Student Reporter will be given the opportunity to present an Impact Statement to the Committee for consideration.
- Once the Committee is content that all aspects of the case have been covered, the Case Presenter will be given the opportunity to make closing/final comment(s) on behalf of the University.
- Once the Committee is content that all aspects of the case have been covered, the Student Responder will be given the opportunity to make a statement and outline any mitigating circumstances for the Committee to consider.
- Once the Committee is content that all aspects of the case have been covered, any friend/supporter of the Student Responder will also be given the opportunity to make a statement/comment.
- While the Committee considers their decision, only the Committee members and the Committee Secretary may be present. All other attendees will be asked to leave the meeting.
- The Committee Chair will offer to verbally communicate the decision of the Committee to the Student Responder and Case Officer immediately following the deliberation. At this point, there will be no further discussion about the decision. The outcome will be formally confirmed by letter (emailed to the Student Responder), as soon as is practicable after the Committee hearing has taken place, followed by a Statement of Reasons, usually within 14 days of the date of the hearing.
- The Statement of Reasons will be written by the Committee Chair, but all Committee members will be given the opportunity to provide input.
- The formal confirmation of the decision and the Statement of Reasons will be made available to the Student Responder, and where applicable, to any Student Reporter.
- The Student Responder and, where applicable, any Student Reporter will be given information in writing about how to appeal the outcome of any Student Committee hearing.