STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

Please note: Before submitting this form, please read the Student Complaints Procedure, available from the Student Progress Service, King’s Gate, or see the University’s website at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/regulations/complaints.htm. Complaints received more than 6 months after the event(s) in question will not normally be investigated. This form should not be used for Academic or Disciplinary Appeals.

1. Your Details

Name
Student Number
School
Programme of Study
Year of Study
Name of Tutor / Supervisor
Address (see Guidance note 1).

Telephone
Mobile telephone
Email

2. Complaint

(Please tick the relevant box)

Does your complaint relate to:  Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice
(See note 2b) The Race Equality Policy
The Equal Opportunities Policy
Public Interest Disclosure ‘Whistleblowing’ Policy
Other (please specify below)

Please describe the grounds for your complaint. It would be helpful if you would include the names of all people involved where known. (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary and attach any additional evidence as appropriate)

Have you taken up your complaint with the person(s) involved? YES/NO*
Have you raised the matter with your Head of School/the Head of Service? YES/NO*

*If your answer to either of the above questions is 'no', please explain why and explain with whom within the University, if anyone, you have raised the matter (see Guidance note 2e).

What is the purpose of your complaint?

For what outcome are you hoping?

Continued overleaf
Do you consent to the Student Progress Service investigating your complaint with the individual(s) concerned and all other parties likely to be helpful in providing a solution? (The information provided on this form will be treated as confidential and will not be passed to anyone outside the Student Progress Service without your consent.) (see Guidance note 3) YES/NO*  

* Delete as applicable.

Signature .............................................................................................................. Date ..........................

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**STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM GUIDANCE NOTES**

**Note 1 – Your details**

The University is concerned that any complaints which cannot be resolved with the individual(s) concerned or with the help of the relevant Head of School or Head of Service are investigated carefully. Students who submit a completed Complaint Form may be invited first to discuss the complaint with a member of staff in the Student Progress Service to help clarify its nature. If you are able to provide a telephone number and/or your e-mail address, it will make it easier for the Student Progress Service to contact you. If you do not supply a telephone number or e-mail address, you will be contacted by letter.

No action will be taken in the case of complaints made anonymously.

**Note 2 – Does this procedure apply to you?**

a) This form is designed for use by any student who wishes to make a formal complaint about a service or member(s) of staff or a student within the University where it has not been possible to resolve the problem with the service or individual(s) concerned.

b) The University has complementary policies about expectations in respect of dignity at work and study, racial equality and equality of opportunities (See [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/policy/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/policy/)). Students wishing to make a complaint about actions which are contrary to these policies should do so by completing the student complaint form/procedure. They should also make it clear that their grievance relates to one of these specific policies. Students should follow the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice until the formal stage, at which point the Student Complaints Procedure should be invoked.

c) Academic and Disciplinary appeals will not be considered at any stage under this procedure, but are subject to the Academic Appeals Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure for students respectively. The Head of the Student Progress Service shall determine whether a complaint shall proceed if the subject of the complaint is still under consideration through any other recognised University procedure.

d) Information booklets are produced by student residences (for complaints relating to University accommodation). Local procedures detailed in these documents should initially be followed before making a formal complaint under this Student Complaints procedure.

e) It is expected that you will have attempted to resolve the matter about which you wish to complain by raising it with the individual(s) concerned or that you have consulted your tutor or supervisor, Head of School or other member of staff to assist you. It is your responsibility to raise your concerns at an early stage with those most directly involved and/or with those capable of resolving matters at a local level before making use of this formal complaints procedure.

f) If you decide that you do need to complete this form, you may find it helpful to read the Student Guide, including the Student Charter. These documents explain the level of service you can expect from the University and, in turn, what is expected from you. Both documents are accessible from the following website: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/)

g) You should note that it is important to lodge a complaint as soon as possible after the event in question, as delays are likely to make it more difficult to investigate and resolve them. Complaints received more than 6 months after the event(s) in question will not normally be investigated.

h) This procedure relates to registered students of the University. The Procedure may also be followed by students who have left the University within the last 6 months.

**Note 3 – Your consent**

If the Student Progress Service is to pursue your complaint, it will need to take the matter up with all those concerned and it can only do this with your consent.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

As explained in Note 1 above, once you have made a formal complaint by completing this form, the Student Progress Service will acknowledge receipt of your form within 7 working days and may invite you to a meeting to clarify your complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this initial meeting, the Student Progress Service will proceed with further investigations as quickly as possible. It should be recognised that it can take some time to gather and consider all the necessary information as well as giving both parties the opportunity to comment on any submitted material. The Student Progress Service will endeavour to complete its investigation within 4 months of the receipt of the Complaints Form. Please note that a conclusion cannot be guaranteed within this period, however, you should be informed of the reasons should a longer period of investigation be required. At the outcome of the investigation you will be notified in writing of the result.

Send this form, with full details and evidence relating to your complaint, to:

The Head of the Student Progress Service  
Newcastle University  
King’s Gate  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
Or email: student-progress@ncl.ac.uk
STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure, applies to all complaints submitted after 1 September 2009.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint: A written application to the University where a student wishes to make a formal complaint about a service or member(s) of staff or another student within the University where it has not been possible to resolve the problem with the service or individual(s) concerned.

Complaint Officer: A Student Progress Officer appointed to process a submitted complaint and to advise the Complaint Adjudicator, where appropriate. The Complaint Officer is authorised to reach conclusions on cases unless the matters raised are deemed to be particularly serious. Advice on the Student Complaint procedure can be obtained from the Complaint Officer.

Complaint Adjudicator: If it is not possible for the Complaint Officer to reach a decision or if the issues raised are, in the view of the Complaints Officer, particularly serious, the case shall be referred to a Pro Vice Chancellor who will act as a Complaint Adjudicator. The appointed Complaint Adjudicator will have no previous involvement or close connection to the case.

Complaint Committee: The Complaint Adjudicator may co-opt further independent members of academic or administrative staff as deemed appropriate to consider the case. The members of a Complaint Committee will have no previous involvement in or close connection to the case.

INTRODUCTION

1. Before having recourse to the Complaints Procedure, a student should make every effort to resolve a problem with the individual(s) concerned or consult his/her tutor or supervisor or Head of School for help and advice. Only when these steps have failed, or when the student has good cause for not pursuing these means of resolving the issue, should the Complaints Procedure be invoked. Submission of the Complaints Form initiates the formal Complaints Procedure.

2. The University has complementary policies about expectations in respect of dignity at work and study, racial equality and equality of opportunities (See http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/policy/).

3. Students wishing to make a complaint about actions which are contrary to any one of these policies shall do so by completing the student complaint form/procedure. The student should clearly indicate any specific policy on which the complaint is based.

Complaints and appeals relating to Student Disciplinary Procedures and Academic Appeals shall not at any stage be considered under this Complaints Procedure. Appeals resulting from Student Disciplinary Procedures are dealt with under separate arrangements. The Complaints Procedure shall not apply to cases in which an individual wishes to appeal against an academic decision; in such instances the applicant should follow the Academic Appeals Procedure for Students. The Head of the Student Progress Service may determine whether a complaint should be handled under alternative University procedures. The Head of the Student Progress Service shall determine whether a complaint shall proceed if the subject of the complaint is still under consideration through any other recognised procedure.

No action may be taken in the case of complaints made anonymously. Students shall not be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint in good faith.
PROCEDURE

3. a) The complainant shall complete the Student Complaint Form available from the Student Progress Service and submit it for the attention of the Head of the Student Progress Service. The form should be submitted together with any additional information or evidence which backs up the complaint.

b) Complaints received more than 6 months after the event in question will not normally be investigated.

c) In accordance with the principles of openness and best practice, the University will apply a presumption in favour of disclosure of all case documents to the parties to the complaint. This will be done in an orderly and consolidated way at an early and appropriate stage in this procedure and, in particular, to do so in advance of any step in the procedure which may affect the determination of the complaint. This presumption may be displaced only for compelling reasons.

4 The Head of the Student Progress Service or nominee (referred to subsequently as the Complaints Officer) shall acknowledge receipt of the Complaint within 7 days of the receipt of the completed Complaints form. The purpose of the first stage of the procedure is to ascertain the nature and details of the complaint. For this purpose the Complaints Officer may invite the complainant to a meeting to clarify the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or representative at this meeting and at any other meetings under this procedure. The friend or representative may make representations with the permission of the Complaints Officer.

5. The purpose of the second stage of the procedure is to gather all material evidence relating to the complaint and for the Complaints Officer either to reach an immediate decision on the complaint, or where the Complaints Officer considers the issues raised to be particularly serious, to refer the complaint to a Complaint Adjudicator for determination.

6. Subject to the written consent of the complainant, and sufficient evidence, the following provisions apply:

   a) The Complaints Officer will arrange for the complaint to be considered

   b) In order to investigate the complaint, the Complaints Officer will consult initially the relevant Head of School or Head of Service, tutor or equivalent colleague, and also seeking information as necessary from anyone else likely to be helpful in resolving the matter, including the complainant. Information may be sought in writing, via oral interview or both.

   c) Once all necessary information has been gathered, the Complaints Officer shall decide whether it is possible to reach a final decision on the complaint. Any decision will be communicated in writing to all parties to the complaint, with a summary of reasons for the decision.

   d) If it is not possible to reach a decision as in (c) above, or if the issues raised are, in the view of the Complaints Officer, particularly serious, the Head of the Student Progress Service shall refer the matter to a Pro Vice Chancellor who will act as a Complaint Adjudicator. ¹The Complaint Adjudicator shall be supported by the Complaints Officer. The Complaint Adjudicator may co-opt further independent members of academic or administrative staff as deemed appropriate, including the Welfare Officer or another independent officer of the Student Union to form a Complaint Committee. The Complaint Adjudicator and members of the Complaint Committee, if appointed, shall have no previous involvement in or close connection to

¹ If the complaint concerns the Student Progress Service or a Pro Vice Chancellor, the Academic Registrar, will make arrangements for senior officers from other parts of the University to deal with this matter.
the case. The Complaint Adjudicator, with or without a Complaint Committee shall investigate the complaint and may seek any such information as appears to be necessary to reach a decision. A record shall be maintained of the proceedings.

e) The Complaint Adjudicator shall determine whether a complaint hearing is to be convened. If a complaint hearing is convened, the Complaint Adjudicator may invite the complainant, and any other relevant parties, to a hearing. Any persons invited to attend a hearing by the Complaint Adjudicator may be accompanied by a friend or representative, who may make representations with the permission of the Complaint Adjudicator. The Complaint Officer will ensure that the complainant is given reasonable notice of the date of the hearing and will provide the complainant, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with any further relevant case papers (see para 3 (c)) in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, together with written advice about the general nature of hearings. The conduct of the hearing shall, unless otherwise provided in this procedure, be for the Complaint Adjudicator to decide.

f) Appropriate action shall be taken in the light of the outcome of the investigation. The action will be intended to resolve the matter but may include the initiation of formal disciplinary action against a member of staff or a student under the University's disciplinary procedures.

g) On the completion of the investigation the Complaints Officer shall notify the complainant and other parties to the complaint in writing of the outcome and of any consequential action to be taken. This will include a summary of the reasons for the decision.

h) A complaint will normally be determined within 4 months from receipt of the complaint form. Please note that a conclusion cannot be guaranteed within this period, however, you should be informed of the reasons should a longer period of investigation be required.

7. If the complainant has failed to consent to the matter being investigated, no further action shall be taken, but the Student Progress Service shall keep a confidential record of the details of the complaint. In such cases:

   a) in the absence of an investigation, the University will not be able to act on the complaint;

   b) the record of the complaint shall be labelled: "In accordance with the wishes of the complainant, this complaint has not been investigated but will remain on a confidential file within the Student Progress Service for a period of twelve months as detailed in Section 7 of the Student Complaints Procedure"

   c) a complainant may subsequently lodge a request for the matter to be investigated by notice in writing to the Head of the Student Progress Service within 3 months of the date of receipt of the complaint. This time limit may not be extended.

8. If the Head of the Student Progress Service considers a complaint vexatious or frivolous, the complainant shall be advised that the complaint is dismissed as unfounded. Students shall not be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint in good faith. However, if a complaint is found to be malicious, the complainant may be subject to the University’s disciplinary procedure.
9. APPEALS

A complainant may seek a review of the outcome of their complaint only on the ground of procedural irregularity on the part of the Complaints Officer, Complaint Adjudicator or Complaint Committee.

A complainant wishing to lodge an appeal about the outcome of a complaint which has been investigated shall do so in writing, addressing the appeal to the Academic Registrar, within 14 days of notification of the outcome of the investigation. The Academic Registrar will normally complete the review of an appeal within three weeks following its receipt. S/he may dismiss an application which does not provide a *prima facie* case on the specified ground.

If the Academic Registrar, having reviewed the original complaint file and sought any evidence as appears to be necessary to reach a decision, considers there to be grounds for the appeal, s/he may make appropriate arrangements to have the complaint reconsidered. Any further action or outcome will be decided by the Academic Registrar and will be final.

There is no further appeal within the University. Provision for independent external review is made through the existence of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The Independent Adjudicator’s role is to review the application by the University of its own internal procedures. Further information about the Adjudicator’s role is available from [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). A leaflet can also be obtained from the Student Progress Service, King’s.

If your complaint relates to University Student Housing you may also refer your complaint to the UUK Code Management Committee at: [http://www.uukcode.info](http://www.uukcode.info).

10. MONITORING

The Head of the Student Progress Service shall make an annual report to University Teaching and Learning Committee of all complaints investigated under this procedure, including:

- The number of complaints made, and upheld or rejected;
- The nature of the matters raised and any remedial action recommended and taken;
- The ethnic origin, gender and other data relating to the complainants for diversity monitoring purposes.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information which a complainant, or anyone else, provides to the Student Progress Service, to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, or to other officers dealing with the matter in the course of an investigation of a complaint, shall be treated as confidential, subject to the need to divulge information to investigate a case and any requirements of the Data Protection Act. It is equally important that the complainant also respects the need for confidentiality throughout the complaints process.

Further Information

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Student Progress Service, King’s Gate or from the Student Advice Centre in the Union Society.