



POINT BLANK

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STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you have a suggestion or a complaint about any aspect of a course or the school generally, please raise it with the person concerned in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should progress the matter through a conciliation stage, and formal first stage and second stage procedures.

2. CONCILIATION STAGE (INFORMAL)

Wherever possible, Point Blank seeks to resolve complaints through a process of conciliation, with complaints procedures operating, in the first instance, at the level at which the matter arose. In most instances this will be with a student's lecturer. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome at this point, or not comfortable with raising it in this way, then they can arrange to meet a member of the Student Services team to discuss the complaint at an informal level. Student Services should be contacted within 20 working days of the original incident or complaint. A meeting will then be arranged within the next 10 working days. A written response will be sent to the student within 10 working days of the meeting, or the student declining the invitation to a meeting.

If the complainant is studying on a Middlesex University validated award and a complaint is deemed to be of an academic nature, then the complaint will be escalated to Middlesex University and investigated in accordance with the regulations at: www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations

3. FIRST STAGE (FORMAL)

If an informal solution cannot be found, then the student can raise a first stage formal complaint addressed to the Head of Registry. This should be submitted in writing. A formal complaint must be raised within twenty working days of an attempt to resolve the matter informally.

A written complaint should:

- Detail any specific concern about the provision of a programme of study or the service provided.
- Indicate the outcome sought (however, complainants should note that the outcome may be different from the one sought).
- Be accompanied by appropriate evidence, where possible.

The student will be invited to meet with the Head of Registry for a second time. Appropriate evidence will be sought from within the department to investigate the complaint. A written response will be sent to the student within 10 working days of the meeting, or the student declining the invitation to a meeting.

The Head of Registry is to provide a summary of the complaint, the findings of the investigation and, where appropriate, an action plan to prevent a reoccurrence of the complaint. If the student is not

satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, the Head of Registry will include in the written response that the student can request a second stage formal investigation. The relevant contact details will be provided in the letter.

4. SECOND STAGE (FORMAL)

If the matter cannot be resolved at the formal first stage, then the student may request, in writing, a second stage formal investigation to be conducted by the General Manager within twenty working days of the first stage formal response from the Head of Registry. The General Manager will further investigate the complaint and will respond to the student within twenty working days of the request for the second stage formal investigation.

5. OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR (HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS ONLY)

Upon completion of the second stage investigation, if the complainant is a Higher Education student, and feels that the issue has not been resolved, then a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. Please ensure you have taken your complaint through all prior stages with the School first, to enable us the opportunity to resolve your complaint. This letter sets out clearly the issues that have been considered, the provider's final decision and the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA.

The Completion of Procedures letter allows Higher Education complainants to take the issue to the 'Office of the Independent Adjudicator'.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Point Blank is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may be able to ask the OIA to review your complaint. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

Once the OIA have received a Completion of Procedures Letter HE students should send a completed and signed OIA Complaint Form (available at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>). The OIA must receive this within 12 months from the date on which the provider gave notice to the student of its final decision on the matter, which will normally be the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

In exceptional circumstances, the OIA may look at a complaint where the internal complaints or appeals procedures have not been completed.

OIA guidance on Completion of Procedures Letters, can be found at <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2246/oia-cop-guidance-note-jan-2019.pdf>

Further details of how to make a complaint to the OIA are included at <http://oiahe.org.uk>

6. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS ONLY)

Higher Education students may alternatively raise a concern with the QAA if your complaint is in relation to a quality-specific issue. Please ensure you have taken your complaint through all prior stages with the School first, to enable us a fair opportunity to resolve your concern or complaint. Upon completion of the second stage of investigation, if you are a HE student and feel your concern has not been adequately addressed, you can raise your concern via the QAA.

What the QAA Can and Can't Investigate:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>

QAA Concerns Scheme: How To Raise Concerns With QAA And How QAA Will Respond:

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/qaa-concerns-scheme.pdf?sfvrsn=c13dfd81_6