

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE A GUIDE FOR UWS REGISTERED STUDENTS

UWS is committed to providing the highest level of service for its students and members of the public who may have contact with the University. However, the University recognises that, on occasion, issues, concern and problems can be raised by students or members of the Public.

If you have an issue, concern or problem you are encouraged to raise it with the School, Professional Services Department or Partner Institution in which the issue arose. The purpose of this frontline resolution is to attempt to resolve your problem as quickly as possible. However if after trying to resolve the problem you are still not satisfied, then you can submit a complaint to Student Administration.

There are a number of guides at <http://www.uws.ac.uk/complaints/> to help you understand the complaints process:

- Complaints Guide for UWS students
- Complaints Guide for members of the public
- The University's complaint handling process

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- failure to provide a service;
- the quality and standard of any service we provide;
- the quality of our facilities or learning resources;
- unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a student or staff member;
- the quality and standards of administrative processes;
- dissatisfaction with University policies.

Your complaint may involve more than one aspect of the above, more than one department, or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service;

- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice;
- a request under Freedom of Information or Data Protection legislation;
- requests for compensation only;
- an appeal about academic decisions on assessment or admission;
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal;
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent review of the complaint.

Please note that we will not normally treat information received through the University's feedback mechanisms as complaints. However if other University procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by the services of the University can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will need their personal written consent. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

Although you can send your complaint to us by email or phone, we would advise you to submit your complaint on the UWS Complaint Form. This is available at: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/complaints/>

This is to your benefit as it not only allows you to fully identify the substance of your complaint but it also allows you to clearly identify the outcomes you are seeking from the complaint investigation. This will help greatly with the investigation.

You should also include any relevant supporting documentation. Please note that in most cases without evidence, or supporting documentation, we cannot consider unsubstantiated complaints.

You can email your completed form and the supporting documents to complaints@uws.ac.uk OR send the form and the evidence to Student Administration, Paisley Campus, High Street, Paisley, PA1 2BE.

Once we have your form and your evidence we will decide how best to progress the investigation. Student Administration or the Investigating Officer may be in contact with you through email or phone to ask for any further information which we believe would help us with the investigation.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your written consent to complain for you.

Further assistance is also available via Academic Services.

In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please contact Student Administration:

Student Administration
Paisley Campus
PA1 2BE
complaints@uws.ac.uk

What happens when I have complained?

When a complaint is received by Student Administration, it will usually be dealt with as a Stage 1 Complaint. Student Administration will administer the process but the actual investigation will be done by a senior member of staff in the relevant School, Professional Services Department or Partner Institution.

The normal timescale is that a Stage 1 investigation should where possible be completed in 5 working days. At the end of the investigation, you will receive the results of the investigation from the Stage 1 Complaint Investigator in the School, Professional Services Department or Partner institution.

If after going through a Stage 1 complaint investigation you are still not satisfied, the complaint can progress to Stage 2. Again, Student Administration will administer the process and will select an investigator independent of the relevant School, Professional Services Department or Partner institution. A Stage 2 Investigation should where possible be completed in 20 working days. At the end of the process you will receive a letter from Student Administration explaining the result of the Stage 2 complaint investigation.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it. The final outcome letter sent to you by Student Administration will provide you with SPSO contact details.

Please note that SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person: SPSO 4 Melville Street Edinburgh EH3 7NS	By Post: Freepost SPSO*
Freephone:	0800 377 7330
Online contact:	www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website:	www.spsso.org.uk
Mobile site:	http://m.spsso.org.uk
*Note: Single line address – no stamp required.	