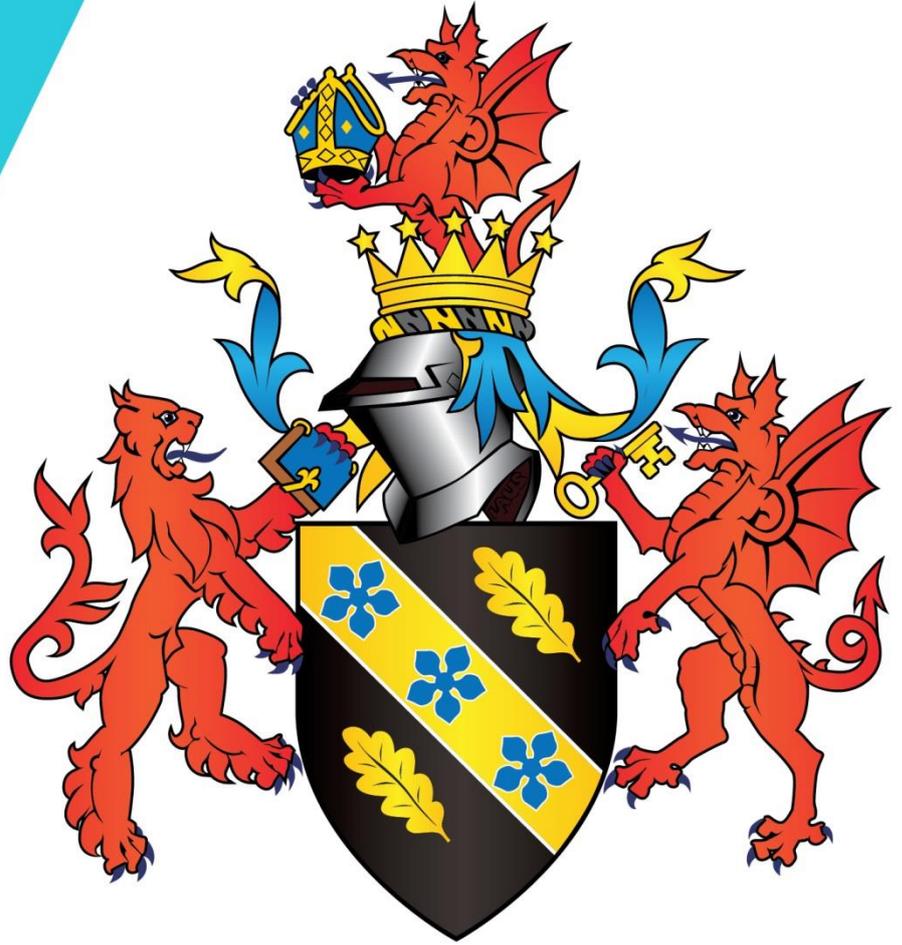




Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Student Guide to Student Complaints, Review of Outcomes, and Academic Appeals

1. Introduction

The University aims to provide an inclusive, supportive and safe learning environment in which all students and staff can flourish and are able to fulfil their personal potential and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The University values feedback and uses this to further enhance all its provision. The University closely monitors complaints and academic appeals so that all reasonable steps can be taken to try and prevent recurrence of issues.

This Student Guide aims to give you information about what to do if things go wrong and you would like to make a complaint, request a review of outcome, or raise an academic appeal.

2. Definitions

'Complaint' covers a wide range of possible issues. For example, you could make a complaint about a service (e.g. accommodation, IT, access to Moodle, library, Counselling, Finance), about the teaching and learning you have received (e.g. as offered by the School or centre, Faculty, or Learning Support Services), or about a member of staff or another student.

A complaint only becomes a complaint if it has not been possible to solve a **problem** or **issue** informally or if an issue is so serious that using an informal route initially is not appropriate.

Generally, complaints are divided up between **academic complaints** (complaints about your teaching and learning experience) and **non-academic complaints** (complaints that are related to your student experience more broadly).

Furthermore, complaints can be about **a service** or about **a person** (e.g. another student or a member of staff).

Finally, complaints can be **informal** or **formal** depending on what process is used to solve them. See also section 3 in this guide.

An issue is **complex** if something is both a complaint and an academic appeal (e.g. you would like to appeal a decision of an Examining Board and complain about your teaching or supervision) OR you would like to raise multiple smaller complaints within one and the same overall complaint.

'Review of outcome' is the term used for when you are not happy with the outcome of a complaint or an academic appeal or other processes and would like the outcome of that formal process to be reviewed.

'Academic appeal', on the other hand, is a far more specific term and is used when students would like to appeal a particular academic outcome (e.g. the outcome of an Examining Board). Academic appeals are always formal. The circumstances in which you can raise an appeal are also much more clearly defined and narrow. Before raising an academic appeal it is therefore important that you check whether you meet the criteria for raising one.

There are different processes and outcomes associated with the different types of complaints and academic appeals and these are outlined in this Student Guide. It is important that you select the right process for the type of complaint or appeal that you have.

Outcome is the term used for the result of a complaint, academic appeal, or review of outcome process. Each policy and procedure details the range of possible outcomes associated with each process. It is important to check the range of outcomes so that you don't expect an outcome that a particular procedure cannot deliver.

Although in most instances it will be clear whether an issue is a complaint or an appeal or a review of outcome or appeal, if you are not sure it is important that you seek advice as selecting the correct process is important.

You can seek advice from a member of staff in your Faculty (e.g. your personal tutor), staff within the Student Services Department, or from the Students' Union. Similarly, in case of complex complaints or where it seems that an issue could be both a complaint and an appeal, it is very important that you seek advice as selecting the wrong process will delay an outcome. Choosing the wrong process may also mean that your case will be rejected, for example if it does not meet the criteria.

3. Student Charter and Student Code of Conduct

The Student Charter outlines what you can expect from the University and the Students' Union and what the University expects from you. A copy of the Student Charter can be found **here**.

The Student Code of Conduct outlines what behaviour is expected by the University from its students and summarises what action the University takes in cases of misconduct. A copy of the Student Code of Conduct can be found **here**.

The University's Dignity at Work statement summarises what all who work at the University can expect in terms of behaviour from everyone within the University community. A copy of the University's Dignity at Work statement can be found **here**.

4. Informal resolution

Often issues can be solved informally, without using any formal procedures. If it is at all possible to solve a problem informally, then this is very much the preferred option. You will be asked as part of a formal process whether an informal resolution was attempted. However, when you think that an informal approach has not solved the issue or when an informal approach is clearly not appropriate, the University has a range of policies available to ensure that you can bring a complaint formally to the University's attention.

Please note that in the case of academic appeals you can only ever choose a formal process. You cannot informally challenge the decision of an Examining Board, Unfair Practice Panel, or Extenuating Circumstance Panel.

5. Where do I go to solve a problem or issue about a service informally?

Issue	Please approach – Generic contact details for all campuses
Finance - fees	fee@uwtsd.ac.uk
IT&S	IT Service Desk on Myday; 0300 500 5055; ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk
Library	library@uwtsd.ac.uk
Moodle	moodle@uwtsd.ac.uk
Operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Catering • Creche • Estates • Sports Centre 	operations@uwtsd.ac.uk
Student Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers • Counselling • Learning support • Financial Support (hardship fund, scholarships and bursaries) 	studentservices@uwtsd.ac.uk
Teaching and Learning	your Faculty, School or centre
Registry	registry@uwtsd.ac.uk

If you are not sure where to go or if issues are more complex and involve more than one unit, please approach your Faculty, the Student Services Department or your Students' Union (union@tsd.ac.uk). It is important that we know about your issue so that we can try to help and support you.

If you approach a service about an issue, the following is what you can expect:

1. A **time-line** for addressing the issue and an update when it is not possible to meet that deadline;
2. **Contact details** for the academic or professional unit so that you know how to liaise in relation to your issues. Often you will also be given a contact name of the person who deals with the issue for you;
3. **Information** about what to do if issues are not addressed to your satisfaction.

6. Where to go for support and advice if things go wrong?

Staff in the University are happy to try and help you to solve an issue informally where such an approach is appropriate. They are also available to support you through formal processes. Try to avoid approaching a whole range of different members of staff at the same time to find a solution for a problem as this can lead to confusion and actually delay getting your issue solved. When you have been given a contact name, please liaise with this person only.

Although it is generally best to try and solve an issue with the unit and / or person that you have an issue with, you can always also approach your Faculty or the Student Services Department or go to your Students' Union for advice about what to do and for support about raising an issue and / or finding a solution. They

can also help you to discuss formal processes and ensure that you choose the correct process. Choosing the incorrect process and / or not completing the appropriate form will lead to delays and could mean that your case is rejected.

7. Where can I find information and what policies, procedures and forms are there?

Information about all complaints and academic appeal formal processes can be found on **Myday**. You will also find all policies, all procedures and all relevant forms there.

For questions about academic complaints, review of outcomes, appeals, policies and procedures: **aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk**

For questions about non-academic complaints, review of outcomes, policies or procedures: **secases@uwtsd.ac.uk**

List of policies and procedures:

Complaints:

- Student harassment and bullying policy
- Student Complaints procedure

Review of outcome:

- Review of decision on interruption or suspension of studies
- Review of decision not to approve adjustment requests
- Review of Special Cases Committee decisions
- Review of complaint outcome
- Review of Disciplinary Panel outcome or precautionary measure
- Review of Fitness to Study Panel outcome or precautionary measure
- Review of Fitness to Practise outcome or precautionary measure
- Review of Academic Appeal outcome in respect of a decision of an Examining Board

Academic appeals:

- Appeals against extenuating circumstances decisions
- Appeals against unfair practise decisions
- Academic Appeal procedure in respect of decisions by Examining Boards

Administrative appeals:

- *Appeal against attendance monitoring decisions (for Tier Four Students)*

Complaints against your behaviour and conduct:

- Student Disciplinary Policy (non-academic misconduct)
- Student Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Fitness to Practise Policy
- Unfair practice procedure
- Student harassment and bullying policy

Please consult Myday to see which **forms** are used for each policy and procedure.

8. What to think of before you make a complaint, request a review of outcome or raise an appeal?

It is important to think about a number of things before you submit a complaint, raise an appeal, or request a review of outcome.

- a) Make sure that you choose the correct process and use the correct form;
- b) Read the relevant policy and procedures and ensure that you meet any criteria so that your appeal or request for a review of outcome is not immediately rejected;
- c) Ensure that you are fully aware of what the policy can and can't do. This is especially important if your issue potentially is also a criminal offence;
- d) In the case of complex issues, make sure that you think carefully about what is your main complaint and what processes you need to use;
- e) Please seek advice either through your Faculty, the Student Services Department, or the Students' Union;
- f) Ensure that you enclose all relevant and required evidence to support your case;
- g) Ensure that if you have tried an informal approach you detail on the form what you have tried and why the issue was not satisfactorily resolved;
- h) Detail what the desired outcome would be;
- i) Indicate if you have a disability that needs to be taken into account during the formal procedure;
- j) Make sure that your contact details are correct;
- k) Ensure that you are within the time-lines indicated. This is especially important for reviews of decisions and academic appeals. See also section 12.

Do **not** just send a letter, cc'ing in as many staff as possible. Formal complaints, requests for a review of outcome and appeals will need to be received on the appropriate form and sent to appropriate unit as specified on the form.

9. Third parties, groups and legal representation

It is not possible for a third party (e.g. a parent, partner, friend) to raise a complaint or academic appeal or request a review of outcome on your behalf. The only exception are student complaints which can be channelled through the Students' Union.

Support is, of course, allowed during a formal process as detailed in the policies and procedures.

Complaints can be raised by a group of students but please note that when a form is submitted on behalf of a group, each student must indicate (e.g. through the addition of their electronic signature or email sent in support with the paperwork) that they are part of the group and agree fully what has been submitted.

Regulations about legal representation are detailed in each of the policies and procedures.

10. How does the university deal with complaints, review of outcomes, and appeals

In relation to its complaints, review of outcomes and appeals procedures, the University applies principles of natural justice and takes into account the latest guidance and best practice as well as all relevant legislation (e.g. equal rights and human rights legislation as well as data protection legislation). It monitors all complaints, appeals and requests for review and their outcomes so as to ensure that, as appropriate, lessons are learned and the University continues to enhance its provision for all its students.

During formal processes the University carefully weighs up its duty of care to all parties involved and support is offered to all parties during formal procedures.

If you have submitted a formal complaint, request for review or academic appeal, you can expect the following:

- a. **Transparency** as to what is happening and why this is happening;
- b. A copy of or link to the **policy or procedure** that the University uses in your case;
- c. A **time-line** as to when you can expect to hear about the next stage and / or outcome;
- d. A main **contact name** to contact if anything is not clear;
- e. **Clear information** in relation to any meeting;
- f. **An explanation** if there are any delays;
- g. **An outcome** in writing within a specified time-line.

Timelines for all the different stages of formal processes are outlined in the policies.

A meeting may be set up to explain an outcome and you may also request a meeting if the outcome is not clear to you and you have questions.

11. What if I am not happy with the outcome?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can request a review of outcome as detailed in section 7 of this Student Guide. It is **not** possible to request a review of the outcomes of appeals against extenuating circumstance decisions, appeals against unfair practice decisions and appeals against attendance monitoring decisions.

You need to make sure that you meet the criteria to request a review of outcome. You also need to be aware that there often is a specified time period within which you can request a review of outcome. This deadline will be specified in the outcome letter.

Once all internal procedures have been completed (i.e. all internal review of outcome and/or appeal possibilities have been exhausted), a completion of procedures letter is issued. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your case, you can approach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Details about this step are given to you in the completion of procedures letter. You cannot approach this external body until all the University's internal processes have been completed.

12. What if a complaint is made about me?

A complaint and / or allegation can be made about your behaviour and conduct, for example, when an allegation of academic or non-academic misconduct is raised against you. If this is the case, the University will approach you and let you know that an allegation has been made what informal or formal processes and procedures are followed.

As part of the procedures and depending on the severity of the alleged offence, the University may, as a precautionary measure and because of its duty of care to all within the University community, decide that a temporary suspension of study or series of other measures are needed. If this is the case, the University will explain this to you fully and per its regulations.

All the things that students can expect from the University when they raise a complaint, request a review of outcome or raise an appeal, (as outlined in section 10), you can also expect if a complaint and / or allegation is made about you.

13. Support and advice during formal processes

All students are entitled to receive support and advice during formal processes. Students can approach the Student Services Department and / or the Students' Union for support and advice. The Student Services Department will provide advice and guidance and arrange for additional support if required. The Students' Union will provide representation and guidance and provide independent support through the process