Student Complaints Procedure

- The University of Chester **encourages** feedback and complaints as part of its commitment to ensuring that high standards and quality are maintained.
- The University believes that complaints provide **useful feedback** from students and assist in **improving** services and facilities.
- The University follows the **Student Complaints Procedure** to deal with complaints from students. You can find a copy of the Student Complaints Procedure in the Proctor's Office section on Portal

What can I make a formal complaint to the University about?

You can complain to the University about:
- the **provision of programmes** or **part of your programme** of study
- **services** or **facilities** of the University
- **action or lack of action** by the University

Who is responsible for dealing with Student Complaints?

- The Proctor has responsibility for the management of student complaints against the University
- The Proctor encourages you to initially attempt to resolve issues **informally** and can offer advice and guidance on achieving this if necessary

How do I submit a formal complaint to the University?

- All matters of complaint raised under this procedure should be submitted on the Student Complaint Form
- The completed form should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to Student Complaints, Student Services or via email to proctor@chester.ac.uk

What happens next?

- The Proctor will make an initial assessment of your complaint
- If you consider that your complaint can be resolved at the informal stage you will be advised to talk to the relevant Faculty, Department or Support Service concerned. In this case the procedure includes a deadline of **15 working days** for a response to your complaint
- If you are not satisfied with the response at an informal stage you can then ask for your complaint to be elevated to the formal stage
- Your complaint will then be handled according to the Student Complaint Procedure and there are two helpful process flow charts on page 24 and 25 of the Procedure which can help you understand how your complaint will be handled

Outcome of my complaint

- Whether your complaint concerns a general matter or a complaint concerning academic quality the deadline for you receiving a response is **30 working days**
- It may be necessary to extend the time limits in the Student Complaint Process to take account of matters beyond the University's control, such as sickness, leave or other circumstances of staff who are required to deal with or respond to a complaint. You will be informed if there is likely to be any extension

Can I appeal?

- You **can** request a review of the outcome of the response to your complaint if you have grounds to ask for a review

What are the grounds to ask for review of my complaint?

Unhappiness with the outcome at the formal complaint stage is not a sufficient reason for you to request a review.
The reasons to request a review are:

- the Investigating Officer has **not responded** to all the substantive areas of the complaint
- there was **procedural irregularity** in connection with the determination by the Investigating Officer
- **new evidence** has become available which you had not obtained at when you submitted a formal complaint
- that the findings of the Investigating Officer are **not reasonable in all circumstances**

How do I submit a request for review of my complaint?

- You must request a review within **10 working days** from the **date of the response notification**
- Your request for a review should set out the **reasons** for a review and provide **appropriate written evidence**, including a copy of the University's **initial response** and any **additional evidence**
- If **new evidence** is being provided, you should explain why it was **not previously obtainable**
- If you believe that the findings are **unreasonable** you should explain why this is the case

What happens to my review request?

- This is submitted to a Review Officer who will review the complaint and the outcome and will send through a **review outcome response** within **30 working days**

What if I'm still not satisfied?

If you are still not satisfied you may ask the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator** (OIA) to look at your complaint.

The OIA will normally review a case only if:

- all internal university procedures have been exhausted
- a Completion of Procedures letter signifies that this stage has been reached
- You can get guidance on the OIA procedure from the Directorate of Student Services, Student Union, or the OIA web site: www.oiahe.org.uk