

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE

CAMBRIDGE

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Approved and adopted by the College's Executive Body on 18 November 2019

1. General Principles

- 1.1 The College is committed to providing high quality education and services for its students, and to high standards of conduct and behaviour amongst all members of its community. It encourages students to take positive action in response to any concerns or dissatisfaction they have by informing the College about them (making a Complaint) and by co-operating with the College to address them.
- 1.2 This Student Complaints Procedure is for all student members of the College.
- 1.3 The College undertakes to treat all Complaints seriously and to handle them in a way that is sympathetic, fair, efficient, and sensitive to the College as a community.
- 1.4 Students are entitled to fair and independent consideration of any Complaint they make. However, the rights of any person complained against or otherwise involved will also be considered. Every effort will be made to ensure that everyone concerned is treated appropriately, and with fairness and dignity.
- 1.5 Personal privacy will be respected. Confidential information will not be communicated without consent, except as specified in these Procedures or in exceptional circumstances, such as reporting an alleged criminal offence to the Police. The College has a [Confidentiality Statement](#) and a [Data Protection Policy for Students](#), as well as other [Data Protection Policies](#), which provide information on how the College uses personal information.
- 1.6 Anonymised records of Complaints that are no longer under active consideration will be held by the Tutorial Office to ensure consistency and to monitor the operation and effectiveness of these Procedures. They may also be considered by the College's Executive Body. During the consideration of a Complaint, all records and documents will be kept confidential and made available only for the purposes of carrying out these Procedures.
- 1.7 Complaints will not be treated as lodged against the College unless that is clearly stated to be the case.
- 1.8 Students will not suffer any reprisal for making a Complaint in good faith. Any student who believes that they have suffered a reprisal should report the matter to their College Tutor immediately.
- 1.9 If a student has been unable to resolve their Complaint satisfactorily under these Procedures, they have the right to apply to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) for an independent review. Details of the [OIA Student Complaints Scheme](#), including the remit of the scheme and the time limits for application, are available online.

2. Making a Complaint

- 2.1 In most cases, students should seek the informal advice of their College Tutor on whether and how they should first attempt to resolve the problem without recourse to these Procedures. Problems can often be resolved quickly and informally in this way. They should also seek advice on whether the outcome or remedy they are seeking is reasonable and achievable, and on whether it would be more appropriate to use a different College or University Procedure (such as those listed in Section 2.4) than to lodge a Complaint under these

Procedures. Alternatively, and in cases that are particularly serious or sensitive (or for which the College Tutor may have a conflict of interest), they may seek advice from the Senior Tutor, the Dean of College, or the Warden of Leckhampton.

Other potential sources of informal advice include:

- i) officers of the College's JCR or MCR;
- ii) officers of CUSU or of the Graduate Union; *and*
- iii) a relevant University body, such as the [Counselling Service](#) or [Disability Resource Centre](#).

- 2.2 Normally, Complaints should only be brought by a student (or students) who are, or have been, directly affected by the matter complained about. Complaints submitted by a student on behalf of another student (or students) may be considered. Complaints may not be submitted to these Student Complaints Procedures by a student on behalf of a member of staff, a fellow, a visitor to the College, or a member of the public.
- 2.3 If the matter of a Complaint is being pursued under a different University or College Procedure then these Procedures will not be initiated. If a different University or College Procedure is initiated for largely the same matter while these Procedures are being carried out, then these Procedures may be paused or discontinued.
- 2.4 Matters that fall clearly under the remit of an alternative procedure will not be considered under these Procedures. Relevant alternative procedures include:
 - i) The College's [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#);
 - ii) The College's [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#);
 - iii) The University's [Student Complaints procedures](#);
 - iv) The University's [Examination Review procedures](#);
 - v) The University's [Harassment and Sexual Misconduct procedures](#); *and*
 - vi) The University's [Student Disciplinary procedures](#).
- 2.5 These Procedures may be used to make a Complaint about the operation or effectiveness of other College procedures, including those College procedures listed in Section 2.4.
- 2.6 Students are strongly encouraged to make a Complaint promptly, so that it can be dealt with efficiently and in a timely manner. If there has been a delay of more than a month, the student should explain the reason for the delay in their Complaint.
- 2.7 Complaints should be clearly marked as submitted under these Procedures, submitted in writing (from a student's University e-mail account) to one of the College Officers as below, and provide a clear and concise summary of the matter of the Complaint.
 - i) Complaints about academic or tutorial provision should be submitted to the Senior Tutor;
 - ii) Complaints about the provision of non-academic College services should be submitted to the Bursar;
 - iii) If a student feels uncomfortable raising a Complaint with the Senior Tutor or Bursar (for example, because they are personally involved in the matter of the Complaint), they should submit the Complaint to the Dean of College;
 - iv) Complaints about the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff should be submitted to the Bursar;
 - v) Complaints about the behaviour or conduct of a Fellow should be submitted to the Master; *and*
 - vi) Complaints about the behaviour or conduct of the Master should be submitted to the Senior Fellow.
- 2.8 The College Officers listed in Section 2.7 may be contacted using the following e-mail addresses: senior-tutor@corpus.cam.ac.uk; bursar@corpus.cam.ac.uk; dean-of-college@corpus.cam.ac.uk; *and* master@corpus.cam.ac.uk. The name and contact details for the Senior Fellow will be provided upon request by any student's College Tutor, or by any College Officer.
- 2.9 The College Officer will acknowledge receipt of the Complaint. If multiple Complaints are received about substantially the same matter at around the same time, then they may be handled together.
- 2.10 The College Officer will consider the Complaint. Complaints will be treated in confidence where circumstances permit, but it may be necessary for the College Officer handling the complaint to consult with other College

Officers and/or key College or University personnel, in order to reach an informed and balanced judgement on whether:

- i) the Complaint is trivial and should not be considered further under these Procedures;
- ii) the Complaint is potentially vexatious and to report it as a Concern for consideration under the College's Student Disciplinary Procedures;
- iii) the matter of the Complaint should be referred for consideration under one of the alternative procedures listed in Section 2.4;
- iv) the Complaint refers to inappropriate conduct or behaviour by a member of the College staff and should be handled by the Bursar as a disciplinary matter outside of these Procedures;
- v) the Complaint refers to inappropriate conduct or behaviour by a Fellow and should be handled by the Master as a disciplinary matter outside of these Procedures;
- vi) the Complaint refers to inappropriate conduct or behaviour by the Master and should be referred for consideration by the College's Governing Body;
- vii) the Complaint concerns an alleged criminal offence and should be reported to the Police; *or*
- viii) the Complaint is appropriate for consideration under these Procedures and should be passed to the Standard Procedures (Section 3) for investigation by the Senior Tutor (for Complaints about academic or tutorial provision), the Bursar (for Complaints about the provision of non-academic College services) or the Dean of College. The College Officer assigned to pursue the Complaint under the Standard Procedures may or may not be the College Officer who received the Complaint.

2.11 The College Officer who received the Complaint will report the decision that has been taken under Section 2.10, and the reasons for the decision, to the student. Normally this will happen within seven days of the receipt of the Complaint.

2.12 The College Officer who received the Complaint will notify the Tutorial Office about the Complaint, and about the decision that has been taken under Section 2.10.

2.13 If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal the decision in writing within seven days. If the Complaint was submitted to the Senior Tutor, Bursar or Dean of College then the appeal should be directed to the Master. The Master will reconsider the original decision and the Master's decision on the appeal is final. If the Complaint was submitted to the Master or the Senior Fellow then a request for an appeal should be submitted to the Secretary of the College's Executive Body. The name and contact details for the Secretary of the College's Executive Body will be provided upon request by any student's College Tutor, or by any College Officer. The Secretary will contact the members of the Executive Body and circulate the appeal submission to them. The members of the Executive Body will elect one of their members as Chair for the appeal process, and will then discuss the appeal either at a meeting or by circulation, as the Chair deems most appropriate in the circumstances. Neither the Master or Senior Fellow, or any person involved in the matter of the Complaint, shall take part in the discussion or decision of the Executive Body. The decision of the Executive Body is final.

3. Standard Complaints Procedure

3.1 The College Officer designated in Section 2.10 viii will investigate the Complaint. They may meet with the student and/or any other persons involved or affected, and, where appropriate, may ask to see any relevant information or materials.

3.2 The College Officer shall decide, on the basis of their investigation, whether:

- i) the Complaint is justified, proven and reasonable, and to adopt or implement straightforward measures to address or correct it;
- ii) the Complaint is unjustified, unproven and/or unreasonable, and to dismiss the Complaint;
- iii) the Complaint may be justified and reasonable, but the matter is complex so it requires an investigation that is either on a longer timescale or wider in scope than is appropriate under the Standard Complaints Procedures, and to refer the Complaint for consideration under the Extended Procedures;

- iv) the Complaint is justified, proven and reasonable, but the College Officer is unable to decide, determine or implement measures or actions to effectively address it, and to refer the Complaint for consideration under the Extended Procedures; *or*
- v) information coming to light during the investigation has revealed that it is not appropriate to pursue the matter of the Complaint under these Procedures because of one of the reasons given in Section 2.10 i) to vii) and to act or refer the matter in accordance with that section.

3.3 Measures to address the Complaint may include one or more of the following:

- i) a written apology;
- ii) a written explanation of the matter and any circumstances surrounding it;
- iii) actions put in place to put the matter right;
- iv) actions put in place to prevent the same matter recurring in future; *and/or*
- v) compensation, either financial, or by the provision of additional or alternative academic, tutorial, domestic or other services.

3.4 The College Officer shall notify the student and the Tutorial Office of the decision taken under Section 3.2, the reasons for their decision, any measures taken to address the Complaint under Section 3.3, and any remedy to be applied. Normally this shall happen within fourteen days of the Standard Procedures being initiated.

3.5 If the student or any respondent is dissatisfied with the decision taken under Section 3.2, they may appeal the decision within seven days of the notification by writing to the Master, or to the Senior Fellow where the Master has a conflict of interest. The Master or Senior Fellow will follow the Appeals Procedure outlined in Section 5.

3.6 If the student or any respondent is dissatisfied with the decision taken under Section 3.3, they may appeal the decision within seven days of the notification by writing to the Master, or to the Senior Fellow where the Master has a conflict of interest. If the student is dissatisfied because a decision taken under Section 3.3 has not been implemented or delivered in a timely or appropriate manner, they should write to the Master (or to the Senior Fellow) within twenty-eight days of the notification. The Master or Senior Fellow will follow the Appeals Procedures in Section 5.

4. Extended Complaints Procedure

4.1 If the Master has a conflict of interest, the Senior Fellow will substitute for the Master.

4.2 The Master will invite the student to provide a written statement that should include:

- i) a detailed description of the matter of the Complaint, including times, dates and places where relevant;
- ii) the names of any specific person(s) or department(s) involved, and/or against whom/which the Complaint is being made;
- iii) the name(s) and contact details of any witnesses;
- iv) any documentary evidence to support the Complaint;
- v) details of any detriment or disadvantage that the student has suffered as a result of the matter of the Complaint;
- vi) details of any actions that the student has taken to attempt to address the matter of the Complaint;
- vii) if appropriate, the action that the student would like the College to take, or the remedy or compensation they are seeking;
- viii) if appropriate, the name of a person who has agreed to act as the student's adviser and/or representative, and who shall normally have been consulted during the preparation of the written statement. Normally this person will be the student's College Tutor, but it may be any member of College.

4.3 The Master shall appoint a Panel to consider the Complaint.

4.4 None of the panel members will have any personal or managerial involvement with the Complaint. There will normally be at least one male and one female member of the Panel, which shall consist of:

- i) a Chair, who shall be a Fellow of the College in class A or C;

- ii) an additional Fellow of the College in class A or C;
 - iii) a student or staff member of the College, or an additional Fellow of the College in class A or C, as deemed by the Master as most appropriate in the circumstances.
- 4.5 The Master shall appoint a member of staff as Secretary of the Panel. The Secretary shall arrange any meetings, and communicate on behalf of the Panel with the student and any witnesses, respondents and other relevant people. The Secretary shall be present throughout the proceedings of the Panel, shall take minutes of the Panel meetings, record the reasoned decision of the Panel, and provide an anonymised summary of the Panel proceedings to the Executive Body and the Tutorial Office. The Secretary shall not take part in any decision-making process.
- 4.6 The Panel shall determine its own procedure. The Chair of the Panel may request that the Complaint be investigated and delegate an appropriate Fellow or member of staff, who shall not be a member of the panel, to carry out the investigation. The Chair of the Panel may request the disclosure of documents by the student or any person or department concerned. The Chair of the Panel may arrange for the Panel to hear representations about the Complaint. The student will present their case, and any respondents will have a right to reply. Witnesses or others making statements will be heard at the discretion of the Panel, or their written evidence shall be presented to the Panel by the Chair. The student (and any other person concerned) may speak in person or be represented. At least one week's advance notice of any meeting shall be given to the student, and to all relevant persons or representatives, and all documents will be provided at least a week in advance.
- 4.7 The Panel shall discuss the Complaint and decide whether:
- i) the Complaint is justified, proven and reasonable, and to adopt or implement one or more of the measures listed in section 3.3 to address or correct it;
 - ii) the Complaint is unjustified, unproven and/or unreasonable, and to dismiss the Complaint; *or*
 - iii) information coming to light during the Extended Procedures has revealed that it is not appropriate to pursue the matter of the Complaint under these Procedures because of one of the reasons given in Section 2.10 i) to vii) and to act or refer the matter in accordance with that section.
- 4.8 Following the meeting, the Secretary of the Panel will communicate in writing the decision(s) of the Panel taken under Section 4.7, the reasons for the decision(s), any measures taken to address the Complaint, and any remedy to be applied, to the student who made the Complaint, any person or College department that was the subject of the Complaint, and to any person or department required to take action in response to a decision of the Panel.
- 4.9 If the student or any respondent is dissatisfied with the decision taken under Section 4.7, they may appeal the decision within seven days of the notification by writing to the Master. The Master will follow the Appeals Procedure in Section 5.
- 4.10 If the student or any respondent is dissatisfied with the decision taken under Section 4.7, they may appeal the decision within seven days of the notification by writing to the Master. If the student is dissatisfied because a decision taken under Section 4.7 has not been implemented or delivered in a timely or appropriate manner, they should write to the Master within twenty-eight days of the notification. The Master will follow the Appeals Procedure in Section 5.

5. Appeal Procedure

- 5.1 If the Master has a conflict of interest, the Senior Fellow will substitute for the Master.
- 5.2 In considering whether to allow an Appeal submitted under Section 3.5 or 4.9, the Master shall consider if, on the face of it, at least one of the following criteria has been satisfied:
- i) the procedures in this document were not followed properly;

- ii) relevant information was not considered;
- iii) there was bias or a reasonable perception of bias during the procedure; *or*
- iv) the decision reached was unreasonable or inappropriate.

- 5.3 In considering whether to allow an Appeal submitted under Section 3.6 or 4.10 the Master shall consider if:
- i) the measures to be taken to address the Complaint may be construed as inadequate or inappropriate;
 - ii) the measures to be taken to address the Complaint have not been implemented in a timely manner; *or*
 - iii) a remedy to be given in response to the Complaint has not been delivered in a timely manner.
- 5.4 The Master will decide whether to allow the Appeal and will notify the student or respondent accordingly. If the Master decides to deny the Appeal then no further Appeals will be allowed.
- 5.5 If the Master decides to allow the Appeal then the Master will refer the matter to the College's Executive Body for consideration. No person involved in the Standard or Extended Procedure should sit on the Executive Body as it discusses the issue. The Secretary of the Executive Body will notify the student or respondent of the outcome of the Appeal. The decision of the Executive Body is final and no further Appeals will be allowed.