

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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| Department | Strategic Planning and Student Administration | | |
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1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1.1. Student feedback forms an important part of the continual quality enhancement of Glyndwr University. Informal student feedback is encouraged through a variety of mechanisms including Student Voice Fora and the student representative system. The Students' Union also provides the 'Tell Glyn' online feedback tool to raise concerns. The Student Complaints Procedure provides the opportunity for students to raise concerns in a more formal way, once these informal methods have been exhausted.

1.2. In all instances, students are encouraged to seek impartial support and advice from the Students' Union by emailing: suadvice@glyndwr.ac.uk or calling: 01978 293371.

1.3. The Complaints Procedure seeks to treat all students fairly and equitably. Students will not be disadvantaged by submitting a complaint in good faith and students can expect all complaints to be handled without fear of reprimand. The University also expects that students who wish to raise issues of concern have met their own obligations in terms of academic commitments and reasonable standards of behaviour.

1.4. The University has established this procedure as part of its commitment to ensuring the standard and quality of its programmes, services, and facilities. Complaint feedback will be used to improve services and facilities where applicable.

1.5. Every reasonable effort will be made to deal with all complaints promptly and efficiently whilst investigating them thoroughly. The 'balance of probability' test will be used to seek to resolve complaints satisfactorily by considering if, based on the evidence, it was more likely than not that the event occurred.

1.6 This procedure will take effect from the academic year 2019/20 and will supersede all previous procedures.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. In accordance with the OIA Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals, the University defines a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university’s actions or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the university.”

2.2. **Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints:** the University defines such complaints as follows:

- Complaints which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive;
- Insistence on pursuing futile or insignificant complaints or unrealistic/unreasonable demands and outcomes as a result of bringing a complaint;
- Unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour when pursuing a complaint;
- Complaints which are driven by malice and designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Complaints which are designed to defame the name or character of another person.

2.3 **Formal Complaint:** A complaint made in writing on the University Student Complaint form.

2.4 **Nominees:** In applying this procedure, a named member of staff of the University may act on behalf of someone else.

PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE:

3.1 The Student Complaints Procedure has three stages: an early resolution stage, a formal stage and a review stage. It is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved at the early resolution stage by facilitating conciliatory discussions between the students and staff concerned. The procedure will be implemented fairly, sensitively and impartially with emphasis on resolving the complaint informally whenever possible.

3.2 This procedure applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate students including those studying for research degrees¹.

3.3 Students studying research degrees with the University of Wales are required to resolve complaints under this University Student Complaints Procedure. Once this procedure has been exhausted, a review can be requested from the University of Wales if the student remains dissatisfied.

3.4 Students studying research degrees with the University of Chester are required to resolve complaints under this University Student Complaints Procedure. The University of Chester will be informed of all complaint matters reaching the formal stages of this procedure and is entitled to have a representative on any panel convened under the formal stages of this procedure. Once this procedure has been exhausted, a review can be requested from the University of Chester if the student remains dissatisfied.

¹Students studying for research degrees of the University of Wales or University of Chester will have recourse to the complaints procedures of those institutions.

3.5 Whenever possible, the time limits stated in this procedure will be followed. There may, however, be occasions particularly during University holiday periods or when complaints raise multiple complex issues, when this may not be possible. If this is the case, all parties will be notified of the reasons for the delay and updated on progress.

Partner Colleges and Organisations

3.6 A student studying for a University award at a partner college/organisation, should use the relevant procedures at that college/organisation to resolve the complaint and should complete all stages of that procedure. It may, however, be necessary for the student to refer matters impacting on quality and standards to the University for consideration.

If the student remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of the partner college/organisation's procedure, the student may either:

- Request a Completion of Procedures letter from the partner college/organisation (which can only be issued once the partner college/organisation has consulted the University) and request a review from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)²
Or
- Refer the matter to the University for consideration under the Review stage of the University's complaints procedure. The grounds for requesting a review at paragraph 5.4 will be considered in the context of the investigations undertaken previously, in accordance with the Partner college/organisation's complaints procedure.

Exclusions from the Complaints Procedure

3.7 The following specific matters will not be considered under the Student Complaints Procedure:

- Anonymous complaints, as difficulties can arise in respect of investigation of the complaint if this was to be permitted;
- Complaints about academic judgment;
- Academic appeals relating to decisions of assessment boards;³
- Allegations of bullying or harassment or misconduct by a member of staff / student;⁴
- Complaints about the Students' Union⁵
- Complaints about the admissions process.⁶

² From September 2015 the range of HE providers that are required to participate in the OIA scheme was extended to include providers offering higher education courses that are designated for student support funding and institutions with degree awarding powers.

³ To be dealt with under the "Academic Appeals: Review of Assessment Board Decisions Procedure"

⁴ To be dealt with under the Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy or Disciplinary Policy for Staff / Student

⁵ To be dealt with under the Students' Union's Complaints Procedure

⁶ To be dealt with under the University's Admissions Complaints Procedure

Deadlines

3.8. This Complaints Procedure applies to all students enrolled on University programmes. Any student who wishes to make a complaint should normally engage with the procedure within forty working days of the incident giving rise to the complaint.

When students have graduated, withdrawn or suspended their studies and wish to make complaints regarding the processes for graduation, withdrawal or suspension, they should engage with the complaints procedure within forty working days of graduation, withdrawal or suspension respectively.

3.9. In respect of those students who have completed their studies but are yet to be conferred an award because of outstanding debt to the University, the deadline for bringing a complaint will be forty working days from the date of the assessment board which confirmed the student's award and not from the date of conferment of the award (either at graduation or in absentia).

3.10. Complaints submitted outside of these deadlines will be considered exceptionally if the student provides evidence of good reason for the delay. The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will determine whether or not the complaint can be considered outside of the deadline.

3.11 If the student fails:

- to respond to reasonable requests for information in respect of the complaint or
- to attend meetings to attempt to resolve the complaint or
- to communicate with the University in respect of the complaint

for a period in excess of four weeks, it will be deemed that the student no longer wishes to pursue the complaint. No further action will be taken under the procedure and the student will be notified that the matter has been closed as a result of the lack of response. The student will be advised that they can request a Completion of Procedures letter within six weeks of the date of the communication from the University.

Group Complaints

3.12. The Procedure can be used by students for both individual and group complaints. Group complaints can be of a general nature so it may be more appropriate for students to raise these matters with their student representatives or other bodies established for such purposes in the first instance. However, if the relevant representation system has failed to provide a satisfactory outcome, group complaints may be made under this procedure and will be dealt with collectively.

3.13. It is recommended that one student should be identified as spokesperson and correspondent for the group and each member of the group must agree in writing to the spokesperson acting on her/his behalf. All parties to the complaint must be able to demonstrate that they have been personally affected by the matters raised. The complaint form should be submitted and signed by the nominated spokesperson and should be accompanied by a signed list of the other students who wish to raise the complaint. The evidence provided by the spokesperson with the complaint form should be agreed with the group and no further evidence from other parties to the complaint will be permitted following the initial submission.

3.14 If the complaint is found partly or fully justified and an offer of settlement is made by the University, this offer will be communicated to the spokesperson with the expectation that he/she will

share it with other parties to the complaint. Signed acceptance (or rejection) will be required in writing from all parties to the complaint. Students may request a Completion of Procedure letter within six weeks of the University notification of the outcome of the complaint.

3.15 If partial acceptance of the offer is received, the terms of the offer will be applied to those indicating they wish to accept.

3.16 For those students not wishing to accept the offer, the normal criteria and deadlines for progressing complaints to the next stage will apply.

Third Party Complaints

3.17 Complaints must normally be made by students themselves and not by others acting on their behalf, unless written authorisation and a rationale is provided. Permission for third parties to bring complaints will usually be granted only where this is necessary in order to make reasonable adjustment for students with individual needs.

3.18 If a complaint is brought by a student under the age of 18, the University will normally notify the parent/guardian in writing and keep them informed of progress, subject to the student's agreement. Where the student is under the age of 18, the University will permit the student's parent/guardian to act on the student's behalf, provided the student has given her/his agreement in writing.

Complaints to the Vice Chancellor

3.19 If a complaint is made directly to the Vice-Chancellor's Office, it will be acknowledged and referred to the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration who will ensure that it enters the Procedure at the appropriate point. If no attempt has been made by the student to resolve the complaint, the student will be advised to initially pursue the issues raised with the relevant Academic or Operational Department, if that is deemed to be appropriate.

Frivolous, Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

3.20 The University's definition of a frivolous or vexatious complaint is articulated at paragraph 2.2 above.

3.21 The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will have responsibility for identifying complaints falling under the definition of "frivolous, malicious or vexatious". On making this determination, the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will notify the student of this decision and that no further action will be taken in respect of the alleged complaint, giving reasons for that decision.

3.22. The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will have the authority to invoke the Disciplinary Procedure for Students or any other appropriate University procedure in this respect, if that is deemed appropriate.

3.23. The student will be advised of the right to appeal against this decision within ten working days

of the notification of the decision by the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration. The appeal must be made in writing, giving full reasons for the appeal and submitted to the Vice Chancellor who will request a member of the Vice Chancellor's Board to review the decision. The decision of the member of the Vice Chancellor's Board will be final and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued at this point.

3.24 If the appeal is upheld the complaint will be investigated in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.

3.25 If the appeal is rejected no action will be taken to investigate the complaint and the student will be notified of the alternative procedure which is being invoked, where appropriate.

Acceptable Standards of Behaviour

3.26 When bringing a complaint, it is expected that students will behave in a courteous and reasonable manner. If acceptable codes of behaviour are breached, then it may be necessary to invoke other University procedures e.g. Disciplinary Procedure for Students or the Anti -Harassment and Anti -Bullying Policy and Procedure: Students. The investigation of the complaint will be terminated, as the complaint will be deemed to be vexatious in accordance with the definition at para 2.2. The student will be advised in writing if this course of action is being considered and given one opportunity to conform to acceptable codes of behaviour. If this requirement is not complied with and the inappropriate behaviour continues, the student will be notified in writing by the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration that her/his complaint has been deemed to be vexatious. There will be a right of appeal in accordance with paragraph 3.23 above.

Recorded Evidence

3.27 Recorded material is not permitted as evidence in respect of a complaint.

Confidentiality

3.28 All records relating to the complaint will be kept in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations. Due regard will be given to the confidentiality of all parties, with information being shared only for the purposes of investigating complaints. It should be noted that in order to permit appropriate investigation of complaints under this procedure, the content will be disclosed to individuals who are involved in putting the Procedure into effect or whose input may be required to respond to the issues e.g. Faculty staff, the Inclusion Manager, the relevant Student Administration Officers or any persons named in the complaint. By submitting a complaint, the student consents to the disclosure, storage and sharing of information relevant to the complaint within the University at all stages of the Procedure. If this presents a problem for the student, they may wish to seek advice from the Senior Quality and Regulation Officer; however, not providing consent may affect the University's ability to consider the complaint fully. Any information used for monitoring purposes will be anonymised.

3.29 Where possible, full details of the outcome of complaint investigations will be made available to the student but on occasion it may be necessary to take into account the rights of individuals to confidentiality. When this is necessary, the student will be advised of the reason for the non-

disclosure of information unless this in itself would breach the confidentiality of other individuals.

Accompaniment at Complaint Hearings

3.30 At any meeting which is part of this Procedure, the student is entitled to be accompanied by an enrolled student, friend, relative, member of staff of the University (or of a Partner college/organisation), a Students' Union Advisor or any person who is needed to support them with any individual needs (e.g. carer, signer). This person may also speak on behalf of the student, provided the student is also present and the Chair has given consent.

3.31 It is not normal practice for the student to be legally represented at meetings forming part of this procedure. If exceptionally, the student wishes to bring legal or professional body representation, the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration must be informed in writing at least 5 working days prior to the Hearing. If a student does intend to be represented or accompanied by a person with legal qualifications, the University reserves the right to have its own legal representative present. Both parties will pay their own costs.

3.32 If prior notification of legal or professional body representation is not given and a student brings a professional body representative or a legally qualified person to a hearing, the hearing will not proceed and will be adjourned.

Consideration under more than one procedure

3.33 Where complaints raised by a student fall under the remit of more than one procedure e.g. the Academic Misconduct Procedure as well as the Complaints Procedure, it may be necessary to suspend the investigation of one procedure until the matter under the other procedure has been resolved. Alternatively, with the agreement of all parties, it may be possible to consider all matters concurrently, in which case it should be explicit where overall responsibility lies for the matters raised and who will determine the final outcome. The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will have the final decision in respect of the method of dealing with such matters.

3.34 The student will be kept fully informed of the procedure under which his/her complaint is being investigated.

3.35 If, following guidance from the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration, it is deemed that another procedure is more suitable for dealing with the issues raised, then the case will be considered under the more appropriate procedure and the student will be informed accordingly.

Complaints made against Members of Staff

3.36 Members of staff about whom complaints are made may be concerned about the process of hearing the complaint. The University recognises that it has a duty to ensure that its staff are also treated fairly throughout the process, and to that end the following support and information will be provided:

- Members of staff will have the right to be supported by their line manager throughout the process. If the line manager is also involved in the complaint, then an alternative senior

- member of staff will be nominated to provide that support;
- Members of staff will be advised at the commencement of the Complaints Procedure of the nature of the complaint;
- Members of staff will have the right to reply to any such complaint at any stage in the process;
- Members of staff will have the same right of access as the student to any documentary evidence presented as part of or in support of any such complaint.

3.37 If any complaint made against a member of staff under this procedure is of a disciplinary nature, it will initially be investigated in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure and if found proven, referred for further action to be taken in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure for Staff. Care will be taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with paragraphs 3.28 and 3.29 above.

Complaints made against non-University Staff

3.38 Where a complaint is made against a non-University member of staff e.g. a member of staff from a placement provider or individual employed through an outsourced service, the University will work with appropriate staff of the alternative employer to resolve the matter, implementing that employer's procedures if necessary.

3.39 Care will be taken to ensure the General Data Protection Regulations are complied with, ensuring that information is shared on a confidential, need to know basis only.

3.40 The student will be kept informed of the procedures being implemented and progress being made with expected timeframes.

Attending Interviews and Panel Hearings

3.41 If the student's normal place of study is not on the Wrexham campus and/or the student has difficulties in attending interviews or panel hearings in person e.g. because of disability or caring responsibilities, arrangements will be made for the student to participate by Skype or video conferencing. In the case of students not studying on the Wrexham campus, where the student wishes to attend the Wrexham campus for interview or panel hearing, consideration will be given to the payment of reasonable travelling expenses.

4. REFERENCES:

4.1 Process Map

See separate flowchart

4.2 External Standards and Frameworks

During the review of this procedure, the following external benchmarks have been taken into account:

- OIA Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals December 2016; OIA Good Practice Framework: Delivering Learning Opportunities

with Others;

- OIA Good Practice Framework: Supporting Disabled Students:
- QAA UK Quality Code UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

4.3 Internal Policies/Procedures

A Complaints Framework has been developed to assist with identifying appropriate policies and procedures when complaints are received. In this respect, attention is drawn to paragraph 3.33 above which explains action to be taken when more than one University procedure needs to be considered. The Complaints Framework can be accessed from the MyUni portal.

4.4 Communication Strategy

4.4.1 This procedure will be implemented from the academic year 2019/20 until further notice. It will be made available electronically to staff and to students from the MyUni Portal (Moodle site). It will also be signposted from Student Handbooks and further guidance for students will be developed with the assistance of the Students' Union.

4.4.2 Training will be provided to staff in respect of the procedure, particularly in respect of early resolution and the formal stage of the procedure. It is expected that programme leaders will participate in this training. Emphasis will be placed on the need for clear records of discussions and outcomes, as these records will be required if the student decides to escalate the complaint to the formal stage of the procedure. Training will also focus on the General Data Protection Regulations and the need for confidentiality whenever possible and on the importance of impartiality and of avoiding any perception of bias by the student.

4.4.3 Where students identify individual needs, the University will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that individual diagnosed needs are accommodated during the implementation of this procedure. This will take into account any accessibility difficulties arising from equality and diversity issues. Reasonable adjustments may be made to the procedure.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.5.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration or her/his nominee will provide an annual report to Academic Board. This will provide statistical and comparative data, comment on the effectiveness of the procedure and make recommendations in respect of good practice and improvements to the student experience.

4.5.2 In the case of complaints resolved at the formal or review stage, the Dean of Faculty or Operational Head, as appropriate, will be responsible for monitoring that any actions/remedies arising from the complaint outcome are addressed in a full and timely manner. The Senior Quality and Regulation Officer will be kept informed of these actions/remedies and will record their progress for inclusion in the annual report. This will ensure that any examples of good practice or lessons learnt are disseminated on a University wide basis.

4.5.3 An action plan will be developed by the Dean of Faculty and Associate Dean or the Operational Head to ensure that any recommendations made by the Investigating Officer or Review Panel are allocated to specific staff members for action and deadlines for implementation are set. In the case of recommendations specific to academic teams, the action plan will become part of the Annual Monitoring Report and will also be monitored through the Faculty Boards on a regular basis.

4.5.4 A Learning from Complaints Forum will be convened annually to which Investigating Officers and Review Panel members will be invited. This forum will enable staff to share good practice in respect of the resolution of complaints and capture precedent for future reference.

4.5.5 **Partner colleges and organisations** – as an important aspect of monitoring the quality of the University's awards, partner colleges and organisations will be expected to provide the following:

- A copy of the partner college/organisation's Complaints Procedure and to advise the University of any changes subsequently made to it;
- An annual summary of any formal complaints received from students studying for the University's awards, detailing how they have been dealt with through the partner college/organisation's formal complaints procedure.

4.6 Support Services

4.6.1 Help and advice is available to students via the Student Information Desk, this is the first stop shop for all student support related enquiries, advice and information. When specialist advice and support is required the Student Information Desk will sign post students to the most relevant service. Students are able to access support and assistance in a wide range of areas find further details can be found here: <http://wgu.ac.uk/studentsupport/> or via MyUni Portal>Student Support.

4.6.2 Impartial support and advice can be sought from the Students' Union by emailing: suadvice@glyndwr.ac.uk or calling: 01978 293371.

4.6.3 Students who declare mental health issues as part of the complaints process will be advised of internal and, where appropriate, external support services available. If a student appears unable to engage effectively with the complaints procedures, the University may suggest that the student appoints a representative. If deemed appropriate by the Quality and Regulation Manager, consideration of the complaint may be suspended until the student has accessed appropriate support.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

5.1 PROCEDURAL STEPS: STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

5.1.1 Prior to raising a complaint, students are reminded of the University feedback mechanisms available to them e.g. the student representative system and Student Voice Fora. The Students' Union also provides the online 'Tell Glyn' tool to raise concerns. There is an expectation that students will engage with these processes before progressing a concern through the complaints procedure. The Students' Union can be contacted for advice and guidance on suadvice@glyndwr.ac.uk or 01978 293371.

5.1.2 In order to raise a complaint students are required to complete the student complaint form (available on Moodle under Student Administration). Completed forms are to be submitted to the Senior Quality and Regulation Officer via complaints@glyndwr.ac.uk within 40 working days of the event/ action or inaction that is the cause of the complaint.

5.1.3 Each matter of concern raised as part of the complaint must be evidenced, such evidence may include programme specifications, module handbooks, programme handbooks, emails, hand-outs, Moodle announcements etc. Concerns that are not supported with appropriate evidence are unlikely to be considered, unless a sufficient reason for lack of evidence can be provided.

5.1.4 Following the submission of a complaint, students may be required to meet with the Senior Quality and Regulation Officer in order to discuss the cause(s) for concern, the supporting evidence and the outcome(s) being sought. The Senior Quality and Regulation Officer will determine the most appropriate stage at which the complaint will be accepted into the procedure.

5.2 Early Resolution (Informal Local Resolution)

5.2.1 The Senior Regulation Officer will facilitate a resolution at local faculty level as appropriate. This will normally involve the student meeting with the Dean of Faculty or the Dean's nominee e.g. Associate Dean. Further investigation may be required to obtain additional information before a resolution is reached.

5.2.2 Exceptionally, if the nature of the complaint indicates that it would not be possible for the Dean of Faculty or the Dean's nominee to act impartially, the complaint may be progressed immediately to the Formal Stage of the procedure, with the approval of the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration. The student will be notified of this decision in writing.

5.2.3 Students can be supported at Early Resolution meetings by a student representative or a Students' Union Advisor if required. Additional support or assistance can also be sought from the Student and Campus Life team. Any requests for reasonable adjustments will also be considered.

5.2.4 Every effort should be made by all parties to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issues raised. In some instances, an explanation, alternative outcome or an apology may resolve the matter.

5.2.5 The member of staff dealing with the complaint should normally provide the student with a written response to the complaint within twenty working days of it being raised. However, reasonable

extension to this timescale may be necessary during University holiday periods, when complaints raise multiple complex issues or as a result of circumstances beyond the University's control, in which case the student will be kept informed of progress.

5.2.6 The written response will detail whether or not the complaint has been upheld and what proposed outcome is being offered. The response will also detail any lessons that can be learnt from the matter(s) raised, with the aim of improving the overall student experience.

5.2.7 Records of all meetings held with the student and other parties will be maintained, including documentation detailing the proposed outcome and the student's responses, as these may be required if the student remains dissatisfied and requests that the complaint is dealt with under the Formal Stage of the procedure.

5.2.8 Should the student remain dissatisfied with the outcome at the Early Resolution Stage, he/she will be informed of the right to refer the matter for consideration at the next stage of the procedure and the deadline for doing so.

5.3 Formal Stage (Investigation)

5.3.1 A student complaint will not be accepted directly into the Formal Stage of the procedure unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so (see para 5.2.2 above) and the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration has approved this course of action.

5.3.2 If a student remains dissatisfied with an outcome at the Early Resolution Stage, he/she should detail which matters of the complaint they remain dissatisfied with to the Senior Quality and Regulation Officer by emailing complaints@glyndwr.ac.uk within ten working days of being notified of the outcome of the Early Resolution Stage of the procedure.

5.3.3 Evidence must be provided to support a request to progress the complaint to the Formal Stage and the outcome(s) sought must be clearly outlined.

5.3.4 A senior officer in Strategic Planning and Student Administration will review a request to progress concerns to the Formal Stage of the Procedure to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Student Complaints Procedure. The complaint will be progressed to the Formal Stage of the procedure provided that the following criteria are met:

- Clear attempts have been made to resolve the complaint under the Early Resolution Stage of the procedure or exceptional reasons for not doing so have been identified;
- The request has been received within ten working days of the notification of the outcome at the Early Resolution Stage of the procedure. This deadline will only be extended in exceptional circumstances, for which evidence must be provided, and the application for extension to the deadline will be considered by the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration;
- Evidence in support of the complaint progression request has been provided or good reason for this omission has been supplied;
- The matters raised and evidence provided suggest it would be possible for a materially

different outcome to be achieved by investigating the complaint at the Formal Stage of the procedure;

- The complaint is not determined to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious in accordance with paragraphs 2.2 and 3.20 to 3.25 above;
- The complaint is not brought by a third party unless written authorisation and rationale is provided (para 3.17) or the student is under the age of 18 and permission has been given by the student in writing (para 3.18).

5.3.5 The complaint will not be accepted into the Formal Stage of the Procedure if the criteria are not met and the student will be advised accordingly in writing through a Completion of Procedures letter.

5.3.6 If the Senior Officer in Strategic Planning and Student Administration determines that the complaint meets the requirements of the Complaints Procedure, it will be accepted into the process and all deadlines specified within this procedure thereafter will apply from the date of the acceptance of the formal complaint into the procedure. The student will be notified of this acceptance in writing.

5.3.7 If the complaint is accepted into the Formal Stage of the procedure, the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will nominate a senior academic or operational member of staff, not previously involved in the complaint, to act as Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer will be drawn from a pool of trained and experienced staff.

5.3.8 The Investigating Officer may meet with relevant parties including the student to obtain further information and will have access to information already considered during the Early Resolution Stage. It is a requirement that staff will meet with the Investigating Officer to assist with her/his enquiries when requested. The Senior Quality and Regulation Officer or a Quality and Regulation Coordinator will be in attendance at all meetings convened by the Investigating Officer to take notes of the meeting.

5.3.9 The Investigating Officer will make every effort to conclude the investigation within twenty working days of appointment. If this is not possible, the student will be advised in writing of the reason for the delay and the deadline by which it is expected that the investigation will be completed.

5.3.10 The Investigating Officer's report will contain details of the methodology used to investigate the complaint and will reach one of the following conclusions:

- That the complaint has been partially or wholly upheld in which case a proposed remedy/outcome will be offered OR
- That the complaint has not been upheld as there are no grounds or evidence to support it and as a result no further action will be taken.

5.3.11 When the complaint is not upheld but as part of the investigation opportunities for the implementation of good practice are identified, these matters should be included in the report but it should be emphasised that these are suggestions for improvement only and do not indicate that there were any failings on behalf of the University.

5.3.12 When the complaint has been partially or wholly upheld, the Investigating Officer will identify the remedial action necessary to resolve the matter. The following list provides examples of the remedies which may be appropriate but are not exhaustive and are not mutually exclusive:

- An apology to be offered;
- Improvements or alterations made to support, teaching or services to improve the student experience in future;
- Compensation offered for inadequate support, teaching or services;
- Compensation offered for the distress and inconvenience which may have been caused.

5.3.13 When, in the opinion of the Investigating Officer, the circumstances of the complaint may have had an impact on the assessment of the student, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board for further consideration under the Academic Appeals/Review of Assessment Board Decisions Procedure.

5.3.14 When the investigation is completed, the Investigating Officer will send the report to the relevant Dean of Faculty or Operational Head and the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration (or her/his nominee). The report should make recommendations for resolution of the complaint, highlighting any recommended changes to processes to avoid the repeat of the situation and/or to improve the student experience.

5.3.15 The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration (or her/his nominee) will discuss the report with the relevant Dean of Faculty or Operational Head to ensure that all aspects of the complaint have been adequately investigated and to review the feasibility of the recommendations proposed and their implementation. If the recommendations include financial compensation, it may also be necessary to consult the Director of Finance.

5.3.16 If the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration (or her/his nominee) determines that the complaint has not been fully investigated or in her/his opinion the findings or recommendations are unreasonable, the report will be returned to the Investigating Officer for further consideration.

5.3.17 When the Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration (or her/his nominee) is satisfied with the Investigating Officer's report she/he will ensure that an outcome letter is sent to the student on behalf of the Investigating Officer.

5.3.18 If one or more of the grounds specified in paragraph 5.4.1 below are met, the student may request a review within ten working days of the date of the Formal Stage outcome letter. Dissatisfaction with the outcome or remedy offered at the Formal Stage is not sufficient grounds to request a review.

5.3.19 If the student does not have grounds to request a review under this procedure or decides not to take this course of action, then the internal procedures will be deemed to be completed. If the outcome was that the complaint was upheld or partially upheld, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued on request from the student within six weeks of the date of the notification of the formal stage outcome. If the complaint was not upheld a Completion of Procedures letter will automatically be sent to the student.

5.4 Review Panel Stage

Determination of Grounds for a Review

5.4.1 A request for a review will only be accepted if one or more of the following grounds is met:

- There has been a material irregularity at the Formal Stage of the procedure which has evidently affected the outcome;
- There is evidence that not all of the relevant facts were considered during the Formal Stage investigation;
- There is new evidence which may affect the Formal Stage outcome and there is good and reasonable cause why this information was not provided at the time of the Formal Stage investigation.

5.4.2 When a complaint has been investigated under the procedure of a partner/college organisation and the student remains dissatisfied, the student may refer the complaint for a review under this stage of the University procedure, provided that one of the grounds stated above is met.

5.4.3 Within ten working days of the Formal Stage outcome letter the student should complete the Review Stage Student Complaint Form and submit it to complaints@glyndwr.ac.uk with any written evidence, detailing the reasons for the request for a review.

5.4.4 Within seven working days a senior officer in Strategic Planning and Student Administration will consider the request for a review, determine whether or not it meets the criteria outlined in para 5.4.1 above and notify the student accordingly. The result of this review will be that either:

- No grounds for a review have been established in which case the Senior Officer will advise the student of this decision via a Completion of Procedures letter; Or
- Grounds for review have been established in which case a Review Panel will be convened to consider the matter further.

5.4.5 If grounds for a review have been established, the Senior Officer in Strategic Planning and Student Administration will notify the Investigating Officer that the complaint is progressing to Review Stage of the procedure, request a written report of the Formal Stage investigation and advise that she/he will be required to present that report at the Review Panel hearing.

Convene a Review Panel

5.4.6 A Review Panel will normally be convened within twenty working days of the review being accepted by the Senior Officer. This timescale may need to be extended during University holiday periods in which case the student will be kept informed of the reason for the delay and the likely length of that delay.

5.4.7 The Review Panel membership will consist of the following:

- Chair: a senior member of academic staff approved by Academic Board to act as a Chair on panels,
- A senior member of academic or operational staff;
- A member of the Students' Union.

- An officer of Strategic Planning and Student Administration.

All panel members will be independent of the student and his/her subject area and will have no previous involvement in the case. The Director of Strategic Planning and Student Administration will nominate a member of Strategic Planning and Student Administration staff to act as Secretary.

Remit of the Panel

5.4.8 The Complaint Review Panel is empowered to determine that:

- The decision of the Investigating Officer at the Formal Stage of the hearing will be upheld, in which case the student will be provided with reasons for that decision;

OR

- The decision of the Investigating Officer at the Formal Stage of the hearing will not be upheld and to substitute its own determination and remedies in respect of the complaint.

Documentation and Preparations for the Meeting

5.4.9 At least five working days before the Panel meeting, the student will be notified of the date and arrangements for the meeting and provided with relevant documentation. The student will be asked whether she/he will be accompanied at the hearing and whether or not she/he wishes to call any witnesses. Documentation will consist of the student's complaint form with accompanying evidence, the request for a review form, the investigating officer's report, copies of relevant procedures and academic regulations and any other documentation requested by the Chair of the Review Panel. In the interests of transparency, all documentation seen by the Panel will also be made available to the student.

5.4.10 The student will not be permitted to submit new evidence at this stage unless (in accordance with para 5.4.1 above) good and reasonable cause why the evidence was not provided at the Formal Stage of the procedure has been provided.

5.4.11 Guidance in respect of accompaniment at the Panel meeting can be found in paragraphs 3.30 to 3.32 above.

5.4.12 The Chair of the Panel will determine which members of staff are required to attend the Panel meeting to provide evidence. The Secretary will notify these staff members that their attendance is required at least five working days before the meeting.

5.4.13 The Chair of the Panel will determine whether the witnesses which the student wishes to call are appropriate. If the witnesses are permitted, the student should be notified and it will be the student's responsibility to liaise with the Secretary to determine timings and to provide the witnesses with details of the arrangements for the review meeting.

Attendance at Meeting

5.4.14 If the student advises that she/he will attend a hearing but does not do so and no reason or apologies are provided, the hearing will continue in her/his absence. If reasons are provided, the Chair will decide whether or not to grant a postponement. Evidence of mitigation will be requested and presented to the Chair for approval. If approved by the Chair, a postponement will be granted but on one occasion only.

5.4.15 If the student is unable to attend a hearing for exceptional reasons, she/he must advise the Panel Secretary no later than 48 hours before the hearing. Where possible, an opportunity may be provided for the case to be heard through electronic means and/or the student will be invited to present a written statement for consideration by the Hearing Panel.⁸

5.4.16 If the student advises that she/he will not be attending the hearing or no reply is received following one reminder, the hearing will proceed in her/his absence.

5.4.17 Where every opportunity has been offered to allow the student to attend the Complaints Hearing, but she/he is still not able/declines to attend, the Hearing may proceed without her/his attendance.

Procedure at the Panel Meeting

5.4.18 It is anticipated that normally, the investigating officer and the student will be present in the meeting simultaneously and will remain in the meeting to hear all evidence from witnesses, withdrawing when the Panel is deliberating on the evidence heard. However, if in the opinion of the Chair of the Review Panel, it would assist with the gathering of evidence or protecting confidentiality, both parties may be requested to withdraw while witnesses are questioned.

5.4.19 The Investigating Officer will be invited to summarise her/his investigation and outline the reasons for her/his decision at The Formal Stage. The student will be then be invited to present her/his complaint and to respond to the Investigating Officer's report.

5.4.20 Witnesses may be called who may be questioned by the Panel. With the permission of the Chair, the student and the Investigating Officer may question the witnesses.

5.4.21 When all evidence has been heard, the student and Investigating Officer will withdraw and the Panel will deliberate in private.

Decision of the Review Panel

5.4.22 Normally, the decision of the Complaints Review Panel will be communicated to the student and to the Faculty/Operational Department in writing within seven working days of the meeting. Where the Panel is unable to reach a decision or it is not possible to adhere to the deadline (for example, if an adjournment in the proceedings is necessary) all parties will be kept informed of progress and provided with reasons for the extension of the timescale.

⁸ Paragraph 3.41 may also be applicable.

5.4.23 If the complaint is not upheld, as part of the review, opportunities for the implementation of good practice will be identified; these matters should be included in the Completion of Procedures letter and any subsequent report but it should be emphasised that these are suggestions for improvement only and do not indicate that there were any failings on behalf of the University.

5.4.24 If the complaint has been partially or wholly upheld, the Panel will identify the remedial action necessary to resolve the matter. The following list provides examples of the remedies which may be appropriate but are not exhaustive and are not mutually exclusive:

- An apology to be offered;
- Improvements or alterations made to support, teaching or services to improve the student experience in future;
- A fee waiver / reduction offered for inadequate support, teaching or services;
- Compensation offered for the distress and inconvenience which may have been caused.

5.4.25 If, in the opinion of the Panel, the circumstances of the complaint may have had an impact on the assessment of the student, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board for further consideration under the Academic Appeals/Review of Assessment Board Decisions Procedure.

5.4.26 The decision of the Complaints Review Panel is final and represents the completion of the University's internal complaints procedures. The student will be notified of the Complaints Review Panel's decision through the issue of a Completion of Procedures letter.

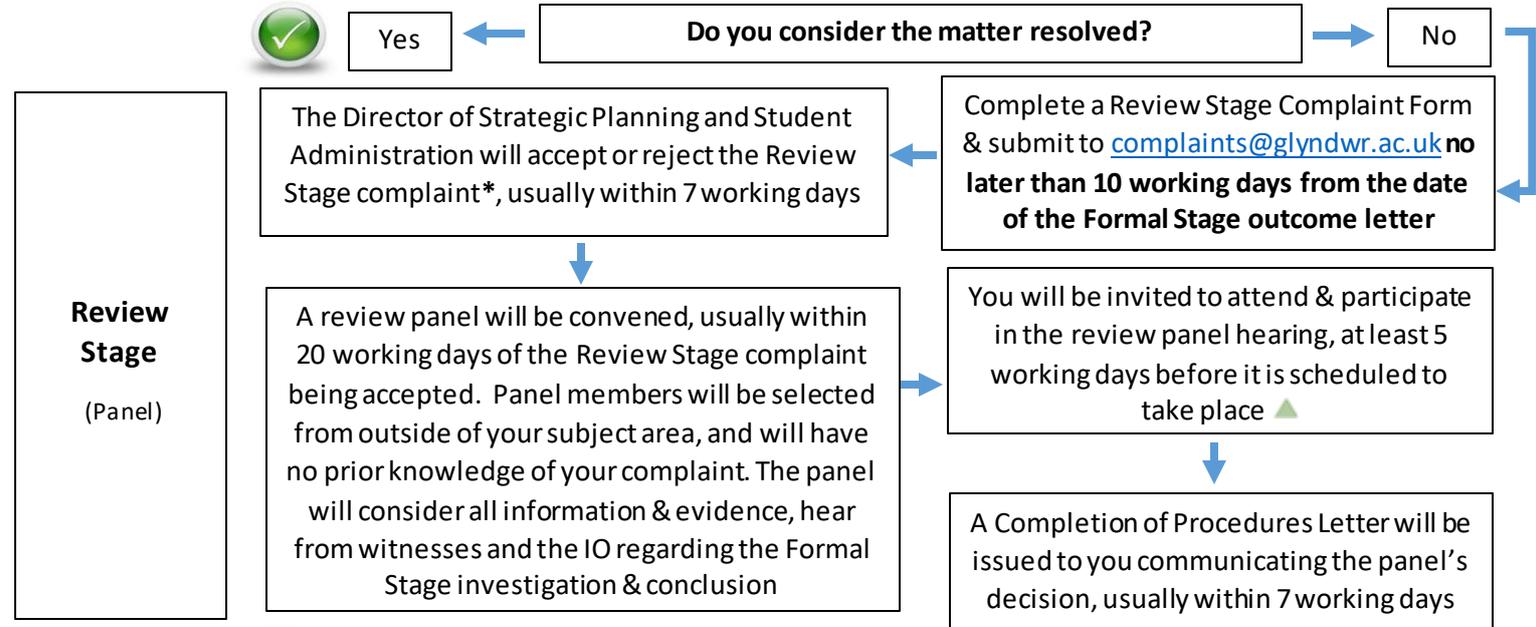
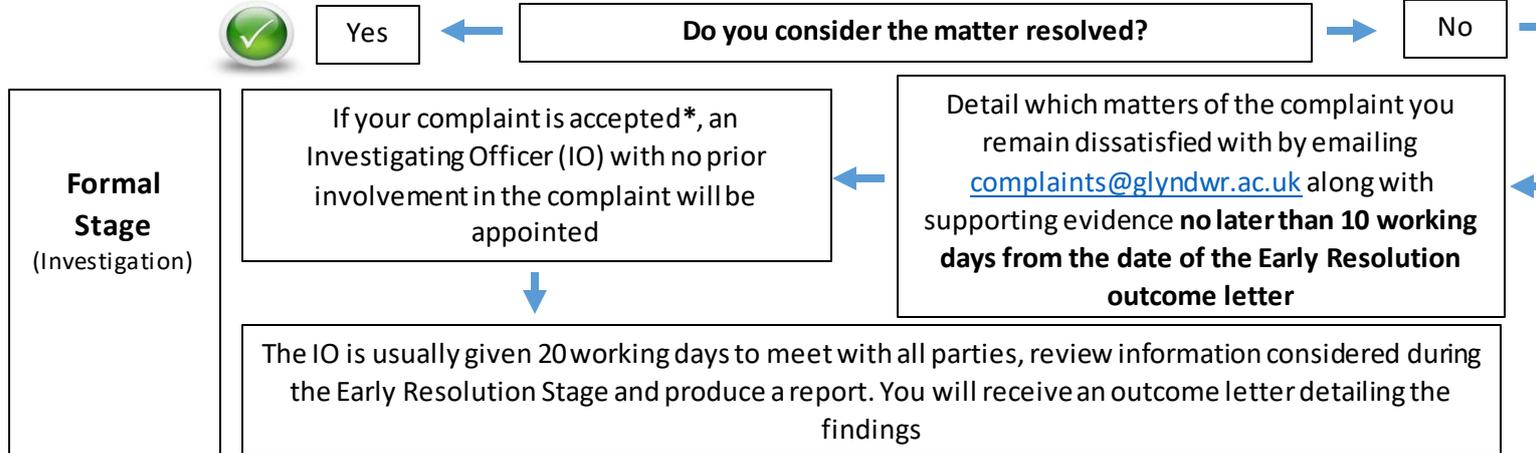
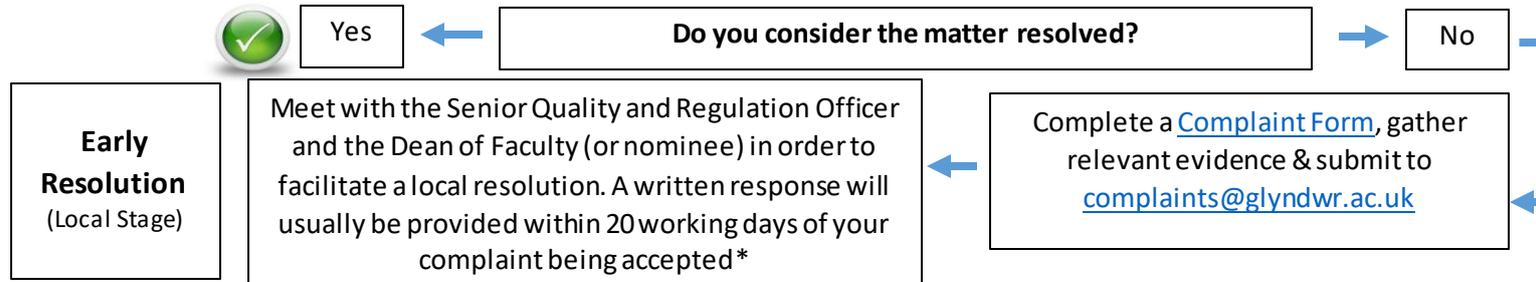
6. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

Glyndŵr University participates in the Office of the Independent Adjudicator scheme for the independent review of student complaints. Once all the relevant procedures above have been exhausted and a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued by the University, if a student remains dissatisfied, she/he may request that the OIA reviews the case. This must be done within the OIA's specified deadline which currently is within twelve months of the date of the University's Completion of Procedures Letter. A Complaint Form can be downloaded from the OIA website www.oiahe.org.uk (or you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form). The address of the OIA is:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator,
Second Floor,
Abbey Gate,
57-75 Kings Road
READING,
RG1 3AB
Tel: 01189 599813
e-mail: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

Issue arises
 Make the staff member most directly concerned aware of the issue as soon as it occurs, as formal complaints raised outside of 40 day deadline may be ineligible

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| Feedback Mechanisms | Raise issues via the 'Tell Glyn' reporting function on Moodle | Ask your Student Representative to raise your concerns at the Student Voice Forum (SVF) and ensure you receive a response in person or via the SVF minutes on your programme's Moodle page | Seek support from a Students' Union Advisor |
| | | Yes | No |



Do you consider the matter resolved?

If **No**: Within 12 months of the date on the Completion of Procedures Letter, you may [submit a request](#) for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to review the University's handling of your complaint.

* Please see below the grounds upon which a complaint may **not** be accepted:

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| Early Resolution: |
| Feedback mechanisms have not been utilised and there is no good reason for this |
| Anonymous complaints |
| Complaints about academic judgement |
| Academic appeals relating to decisions of assessment boards ** |
| Allegations of bullying or harassment or misconduct by a member of staff** |
| Complaints about the Students' Union ** (linked to from https://www.wrexhamglyndwrsu.org.uk/main-menu/your-union/governance) |
| Complaints about the admission process ** (linked to from https://www.glyndwr.ac.uk/en/Howtoapply/Admissionspolicies/) |
| Complaints of a frivolous, malicious or vexatious nature |
| Complaints which are received out of time - Complaints about something that happened more than 40 days ago may be rejected |
| Complaints brought by a third party, unless written authorisation and a rationale is provided or the third party is representing a student under the age of 18 |
| **Separate policies and procedures address these specific issues |

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| Formal Stage: |
| No attempt has been made to resolve the issue through the Early Resolution Stage |
| More than 10 working days have passed since the Early Resolution outcome letter was issued |
| No evidence is provided in support of the complaint and there is no good reason for this |
| Matters raised and evidence provided suggest it would not be possible for a materially different outcome to be achieved by investigating the complaint at the Formal Stage of the procedure |
| Complaints of a frivolous, malicious or vexatious nature |
| Complaints brought by a third party, unless written authorisation and a rationale is provided or the third party is representing a student under the age of 18 |
| Where a complaint is not accepted into the Formal Stage of the process, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued |

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| Review Stage: |
| More than 10 working days have passed since the Formal Stage outcome letter was issued |
| No grounds for a review have been established i.e.: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence that the outcome of the Formal Stage was affected by a material irregularity • There is no evidence that the Formal Stage failed to consider all relevant facts • New evidence is provided in support of the review request no good reason is provided as to why this was not provided during the Formal Stage investigation |
| Where a complaint is not accepted into the Review Stage of the process, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued |

▲ If you do not attend a panel review hearing, it will go ahead in your absence unless you provide reasons, acceptable to the Chair of the panel hearing, for a postponement to be granted. A postponement will be granted on one occasion only.

If you are unable to attend the hearing for exceptional reasons, you must advise the panel secretary a minimum of 48 hours before the panel is scheduled to take place.