STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Updated: September 2023

INTO LANCASTER

INTO Lancaster is committed to ensuring that students enjoy their experience of studying with us, however we recognise that sometimes there may be aspects of your academic or non-academic journey which you may not be satisfied with.

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

Commitment to our students

INTO Lancaster is committed to responding to student complaints effectively and in a timely manner. We are committed to ensuring that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest at all stages of the process and that an appropriate level of confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the complaints process.

No students will be disadvantaged for making a complaint in good faith.

Explanation of our procedure

For complaints about teaching or academic matters, please follow the procedure set out in Section A below.

For complaints about finance or non-academic matters, please follow the procedure set out in Section B.

Note: This policy is not to be used for academic appeals (appeals against marks awarded during an assessment). The Lancaster University Academic Appeals Regulations can be found here.

A For complaints about teaching or academic matters:

1. For non-urgent or less serious problems related to teaching or academic matters, you should deal with this informally by talking to the relevant tutor or teacher or, if you feel you cannot do this, by contacting the relevant student representative for them to raise the issue at a student representative meeting.

2. For more serious or urgent problems related to teaching or academic matters, or if you are unhappy with the response received after following the informal procedure set out in paragraph 1 above, a formal complaint must be made in writing to your Academic Manager (contact details are found in Appendix 1).

3. You should commence your complaint(s) procedure within three months of the event(s) that will be subject to the complaint occurring. If you have already left INTO Lancaster, you may invoke the complaints procedure within three months of the end of your registration at INTO Lancaster. The formal complaint should set out as much detail as possible about the problem so that the Academic Manager can investigate the complaint. This should include details such as:

    a. Sufficient details to identify the student or students making the complaint.
    b. A clear identification of the service or lack thereof in which the student is dissatisfied.
    c. A description of why the student is dissatisfied.
    d. A summary of what, if any, actions the student has already taken and why these have been unsuccessful in resolving the issue.
    e. If appropriate, any evidence to support the complaint.
    f. An indication of potential resolution outcomes being sought by the student(s).

4. Within **five working days** of receipt of the complaint, the Academic Manager will investigate the complaint. This may involve meeting with you and/or anybody else mentioned in the complaint, including witnesses. You have the right to be accompanied and supported at any meeting by one person, and may be represented where you expressly authorise a third party in writing to act on your behalf. In the event that the investigation will take more than five working days to complete, we will let you know in writing (via email or letter).

5. The Academic Manager will respond to your complaint in writing (by email or letter) within **three working days** of the conclusion of the investigation and will tell you whether the complaint has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the complaint.

6. If you are unhappy with the response to your written complaint, you should appeal in writing to the Academic Director within **five working days** of the date of the response letter, attaching the response letter from the Academic Manager and setting out clearly why you are unhappy with the response. This can be via letter delivered by hand to the Academic Director, or via email (contact details are found in Appendix 1).

7. The Academic Director will review your appeal within **five working days** of receipt of the appeal letter. This may involve meeting with you, the Academic Manager, and/or anybody else mentioned in the appeal or in the original complaint.

8. The Academic Director will respond to your appeal in writing (by email or letter) within **three working days** of the conclusion of the review and will tell you whether the appeal has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the original complaint.

9. (a) For Academic English or International Foundation students:

Students who - having concluded the procedure detailed above – still feel their complaint hasn't been adequately resolved, may bring their complaint to the attention of the VP, UK Operations and Policy, INTO University Partnerships. The student should appeal in writing to the VP, UK Operations and Policy within 5 working days of the date of the response letter, attaching the response letter from the Centre and setting out clearly why they are unhappy with the response. The VP, UK Operations and Policy will review the appeal within five working days of receipt of the appeal letter. This may involve them meeting with the student, the Centre Director, and/or anybody else mentioned in the appeal or in the original complaint. The VP, UK Operations and Policy will respond to the appeal in writing by email within three working days of the conclusion of the review and will confirm whether the appeal has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the original complaint.

9. (b) For Pre Master's students:

Students who - having concluded the procedure detailed above – still feel their complaint hasn't been adequately resolved, may bring their complaint to the attention of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Students will receive a Completion of Procedures letter that will advise of the right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and describe the means to do so. Providing the nature of the complaint falls within its remit, the OIA will make a final decision on the resolution of the complaint. The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. More information about the OIA, including what kinds of complaints it considers, can be found here.

B For finance or other non-academic complaints:

10. For non-urgent or less serious problems related to finance or any non-academic complaint, students should contact the relevant member of the Student Services team (contact details are found in Appendix 1) or contact the reception desk and asking to speak to a member of the Student Services team. If you prefer, you can contact the relevant student representative for them to raise the issue at student representative meetings.

11. For more serious/urgent problems related to finance or other non-academic matters, or if you are unhappy with the response received after following the informal procedure set out in paragraph 1 above, a formal complaint must be made in writing to the Head of Student Services. This can be via letter delivered by hand to the Head of Student Services, or via email (contact details are found in Appendix 1). The Head of Student Services will then appoint an appropriate person, who has not been previously involved in the matter, to investigate the complaint (the 'Investigating Officer').

12. The formal complaint should set out as much detail as possible about the problem so that the Investigating Officer can investigate the complaint. This should include details such as:

    a. Sufficient details to identify the student or students making the complaint.
    b. A clear identification of the service or lack thereof in which the student is dissatisfied.
    c. A description of why the student is dissatisfied.
    d. A summary of what, if any, actions the student has already taken and why these have been unsuccessful in resolving the issue.
    e. If appropriate, any evidence to support the complaint.
    f. An indication of potential resolution outcomes being sought by the student(s).

13. Within **five working days** of receipt of the complaint, the Investigating Officer will investigate the complaint. This may involve meeting with you and/or anybody else mentioned in the complaint, including witnesses. In the event that the investigation will take more than five working days to complete, we will let you know in writing (by email or letter).

14. The Investigating Officer will respond to your complaint in writing (by email or letter) within **three working days** of the conclusion of the investigation and will tell you whether the complaint has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the complaint.

15. If you are unhappy with the response to your written complaint, you should appeal in writing to the Centre Director within **five working days** of the date of the response letter, attaching the response letter from the Investigating Officer and setting out clearly why you are unhappy with the response. This can be via letter delivered by hand to the Centre Director, or via email (contact details are found in Appendix 1).

16. The Centre Director will review your appeal within **five working days** of receipt of the appeal letter. This may involve them meeting with you, the Investigating Officer, and/or anybody else mentioned in the appeal or in the original complaint.

17. The Centre Director will respond to your appeal in writing (by email or letter) within **three working days** of the conclusion of the review and will tell you whether the appeal has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the original complaint.

18. (a) For Academic English or International Foundation students:

Students who - having concluded the procedure detailed above – still feel their complaint hasn't been adequately resolved, may bring their complaint to the attention of the VP, UK Operations and Policy, INTO University Partnerships. The student should appeal in writing to the VP, UK Operations and Policy within 5 working days of the date of the response letter, attaching the response letter from the Centre and setting out clearly why they are unhappy with the response. The VP, UK Operations and Policy will review the appeal within five working days of receipt of the appeal letter. This may involve them meeting with the student, the Centre Director, and/or anybody else mentioned in the appeal or in the original complaint. The VP, UK Operations and Policy will respond to the appeal in writing by email within three working days of the conclusion of the review and will confirm whether the appeal has been upheld, and if so, what action will be taken to address the original complaint.

18. (b) For Pre Master's students:

Students who - having concluded the procedure detailed above – still feel their complaint hasn't been adequately resolved, may bring their complaint to the attention of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Students will receive a Completion of Procedures letter that will advise of the right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and describe the means to do so. Providing the nature of the complaint falls within its remit, the OIA will make a final decision on the resolution of the complaint. The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. More information about the OIA, including what kinds of complaints it considers, can be found here.

Appendix 1: Staff contact details

For teaching or other academic matters

Role	Name	Email
Centre Director	Nicholas Sargent-Small	Sargent - Small, Nicholas <n.sargent-small@lancaster.ac.uk>

For finance or other non-academic matters

Role	Name	Email
Centre Director	Nicholas Sargent-Small	Sargent - Small, Nicholas <n.sargent-small@lancaster.ac.uk>