

## Making a Complaint

### A Guide for Members of the Public

#### Introduction

The University is committed to providing the highest level of service, both for its students and for other members of the public who may have contact with the University.

#### *What is a complaint?*

When we talk about a 'complaint', we mean an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the University, its staff, students or contractors.

#### *Who can complain?*

Complaints can be raised by any person who receives, requests or is directly affected by, the services the University provides.

There will be occasions where someone is reluctant or unwilling to make a complaint on their own. Please note that you cannot make a complaint on someone else's behalf unless you are legally responsible for the complainant or unless the complainant is unable to make the complaint themselves (e.g. for reasons of disability). The University will consider anonymous complaints if there is enough information in the complaint to enable the University to make further enquiries. If the complaint does not provide enough information to support further action, the University may decide not to pursue the matter. The University will, however, give consideration to the issues raised.

#### *What can I complain about?*

We are strongly committed to maintaining an effective complaints procedure which allows all members of the community to make legitimate complaints. We aim to investigate all complaints fairly, consistently and confidentially.

Problems or concerns that you may wish to bring to our attention under the complaints procedure could relate to:

- the quality of our facilities and resources;
- the quality and standards of services available to you;
- treatment by or attitude of a student or staff member;
- the failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative process

We expect that most complaints from members of the public will be dealt with under this procedure. However, there are some exceptions, for which the University has separate processes. These include, but are not restricted to:

- a routine, first-time request for a service
- a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act

- a request for compensation only
- an insurance claim
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
- an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where the University's procedure has been completed and a decision has been issued

Prospective students who have complaints about how their application was administered should use the complaints procedure and contact:

Academic Registry, Abertay University, Bell Street, Dundee DD1 1HG Tel. 01382 308000  
 Email: [complaints@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@abertay.ac.uk)

However, **prospective students** who wish to appeal a decision taken in relation to their application to study at the University should contact:

Student Recruitment, Abertay University, Bell Street Dundee DD1 1HG Tel. 01382 308000

### ***Further Information***

Please contact: Academic Registry Abertay University Bell Street Dundee DD1 1HG Tel. 01382 308000 Email: [complaints@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@abertay.ac.uk)

## **The Complaints Handling Procedure**

The Complaints Handling Procedure is made up of two stages: Frontline Resolution; Investigation.

### **Frontline Resolution**

Most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. Ideally, complaints should be raised at the time of the first occurrence. Where possible, your concerns should be discussed with the relevant staff member, programme tutor, student programme/school representatives, school office, or relevant service. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email. If you later formalise your complaint, you will be asked to demonstrate the steps you took to resolve the matter informally.

We aim to resolve all complaints subject to the frontline resolution process as close as possible to the initial point of contact and within **5 working days**.

### **Investigation**

If you are not satisfied with the response at the frontline resolution stage, you should submit a formal complaint in writing to the above address, using the Complaint Investigation Request Form, which is available from Academic Registry.

All sections of the form must be completed accurately and, where possible, include any supporting documentation. You should also state your preferred outcome or identify a satisfactory resolution.

Your submission will be acknowledged within **3 working days** and an Investigating Officer will carry out an investigation of your complaint.

There may be a number of possible outcomes, including:

- The complaint being resolved through mediation;
- The complaint being upheld;
- The complaint being dismissed on the grounds of there being no case to answer, or where the complaint is judged to be malicious or vexatious.

Where possible, the University will aim to resolve your concern and provide you with a final written response within **20 working days** of your initial submission at the investigation stage. You should expect to be kept informed if, for whatever reason, the University is unable to meet this deadline.

### **Still Dissatisfied?**

If you are dissatisfied with the University's final decision or handling of the complaint, you may take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), who will consider your case for an independent review. **Please note that the SPSO will only consider cases where complaints have been issued within a 12 month period.** Further details can be found from the SPSO website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

### ***Who to contact***

We recognise that, sometimes, members of the public might want an explanation of a University decision or policy or other matter without wishing to make a formal complaint about the matter. The University is happy to deal with such enquiries outwith the formal complaints procedure and requests of this type should be made to:

Academic Registry, Abertay University, Bell Street Dundee  
DD1 1HG Tel. 01382 308000 Email: [complaints@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@abertay.ac.uk)

However, if you wish to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, please contact:

Freedom of Information

Academic Registry

Abertay University

Bell Street

Dundee

DD1 1HG

Tel. 01382 308000

Email: [foi@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:foi@abertay.ac.uk)