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**A BRIEF GUIDE TO**

**STUDENT CASEWORK REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR PARTNER INSTITUTIONS**

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# **Introduction**

We hope you will find this guide a useful first point of reference in relation to the University’s regulations and procedures for student casework. Our regulations and procedures are available in full here: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/>. If you have any questions then a member of the Student Casework team is always happy to assist; please see ‘Useful Contacts’ below.

# **Responsibilities**

Academic Appeals

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the University’s Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedure.

Section A1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/academic-appeals/>

*However, students should be directed to contact their partner institution with any queries regarding their results and for advice with respect to appeals.  When advising students, partner institutions should clearly communicate to the students that USW appeals procedures are applicable and that quite short timescales are involved.*

Student Complaints

If a complaint pertains to academic matters, the University’s Student Complaints Regulations and Procedure apply. If the complaint relates to a matter that is the responsibility of the partner institution, for example student support services or facilities, then the student will need to access the partner institution’s complaints procedure but will have final recourse to the review stage of the University’s Student Complaints Procedure.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage of complaint** | **Academic matters** | **Services that are the responsibility of the College** |
| **Early Resolution (Stage 1)** | College | College |
| **Formal Stage (Stage 2)** | University | College |
| **Review Stage (Stage 3)** | University | University |
| **OIA Stage** | University | University |

Section A1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/student-complaints/>
*Students should be directed to contact their partner institution with any queries in the first instance to facilitate the opportunity for early resolution. Common sense should prevail as to what is a reportable complaint (see section 3 ‘The Process’ below). Advice and guidance is available from the Student Casework Unit.*

Academic Misconduct

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the University’s Academic Misconduct Regulations and Procedure.

Section A1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/academic-misconduct/>

Student Conduct

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the partner institution’s own disciplinary regulations and procedure.

Section A1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/student-conduct/>

Fitness to Practise

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the University’s Fitness to Practise Procedure.

Section 1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/fitness-practice/>

*Staff are advised to contact the USW Course Leader for initial advice and guidance on how to raise a Cause for Concern at the earliest opportunity.*

Extenuating Circumstances

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the University’s Extenuating Circumstances Regulations and Procedure.

Section A1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/extenuating-circumstances/>

*All submissions must be made through USW, there is no ‘discretion’ at module, course or college level.*

Fitness to Study

Students studying university courses at a partner institution are subject to the University’s Fitness to Study Procedure.

Section 1: <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/fitness-study/>

# **Early Resolution of a Student Complaint**

Students are **required** to attempt early resolution prior to submitting a formal complaint.

However, we do recognise that sometimes a complaint is not suitable for early resolution and in these cases, a complaint can progress directly to the formal stage. The Head of Student Casework must approve this course of action.

What can early resolution look like?

* A face-to-face discussion with the student.
* Asking an appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter that has been raised.
* An attempt to rectify the issue(s) being raised, followed up by written confirmation of the actions being taken.

Why is early resolution beneficial?

* Less stress and anxiety for the student and for anyone who is the subject of a complaint.
* Addressing issues as soon as possible can help avoid minor complaints becoming major ones. For example, early resolution may provide an opportunity for relationships to be repaired before they deteriorate further.
* Sometimes, a member of staff listening to a student’s complaint is all that is needed.
* Recognising that the student is having issues and signposting them to appropriate help may sort the issue.
* It avoids the need for a potentially lengthy investigation, which consumes resource from both the student and the University.
* Ultimately, it can avoid a case progressing to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) or even the courts – which brings the potential for both financial and reputational damage.
* If it is something you can help with, great. If you can’t, tell them what you can do, who can help and consider whether you can do it for them or whether they should speak to that person themselves.

The process

1. A student contacts you with a concern. Always remember that it may be possible to resolve an issue on the spot, or you may need to refer the student on to relevant colleagues within your institution or to the University.
2. Consider what the concern raised is in relation to. For example, it could be a about a member of staff’s conduct or about their experience on the course.
3. Consider whether the concern is relatively straightforward and within your power to resolve with an apology/explanation/alternative solution. If you are not able to resolve the matter directly yourself, is there somebody else who might be able to help? For example, other staff within your institution, or staff at the University such as the Link Officer, Module Leader or Course Leader. Alternatively, you may wish to seek advice from another member of staff.
4. Communication with the student will be required – consider whether a meeting is needed, or whether a letter/email will suffice.
5. Ask the student whether they require support to engage with the early resolution procedure, for example they may have a disability and consequently require some additional help from your Disability Service.
6. Every time you have a meeting with the student, make a record. No need for formal minutes at this stage, just notes – but please bear in mind these may later be used as evidence should a case proceed to the formal stage and beyond.
7. Send any proposed outcome, *once approved by a member of staff with appropriate authority,* to the student in writing. Students must be made aware within this communication that they can submit a formal complaint if they remain dissatisfied; a link to the University’s formal complaints procedure should be included (the link is included in the section ‘Responsibilities’ above).
8. Students will be required to provide evidence of an attempt to resolve their concern at the early resolution stage when accessing the formal stage.
9. We will ask you for details of any concerns\*\* dealt with at the early resolution stage, for inclusion in our annual Student Complaints Report.

# **Changes to the Regulations And Procedures for the 2021/22 Academic Year**

Academic Appeals

* Change of title from Associate Registrar: Student Casework to Head of Student Casework (A, B and C)
* Correction of reference from Student Conduct Regulations to Student Conduct or Fitness to Practise Procedures (A2)

Academic Misconduct

* Change of title from Associate Registrar: Student Casework to Head of Student Casework (A, B and C)
* Change of reference from Student Administration to the Student Casework Unit’s Academic Misconduct team as appropriate (A, B and C) as a result of the move of this team into the Student Casework Unit.
* Clarification that matters could be dealt with via the Student Conduct Procedure or Fitness to Practise Procedure (A4 4.4)
* Clarification that students are always referred to the Student Development and Study Skills Service following an outcome of poor academic practice (B4 4.5)
* Update to the membership of the Academic Integrity Committee to include a member from USW partner institutions and a member from IT Services (B7)
* Change of ‘Quercus Plus’ to ‘student record system’ to make it clearer to students (Tariff of Penalties)

Extenuating Circumstances

In December 2020, the OIA published a new good practice framework on ‘Requests for Additional Consideration’. The University’s Extenuating Circumstances Regulations and Procedure were subsequently reviewed and revised to take account of the new framework, as follows:

* Removal of the cap on the number of times a student can self-certify and enhancements to the procedures around self-certification (A2 2.5-2.8 and B4 4.1-4.7)
* Amendments to the Fit to Sit Policy and introduction of the terminology of ‘withdrawing a fit to sit declaration’ in line with OIA guidance (A2 2.12 – 2.14)
* Amendments to the non-exhaustive list of what the University would usually consider as extenuating circumstances (B1 1.1)
* Amendments to the examples of what will not be considered as extenuating circumstances (B1 1.2)
* Clarification on the timing of claims that can be submitted (B2 2.4)
* Clarification of types of claims which are ‘late’ or ‘post-board’ (B2 2.6)
* Amendments to the examples of what would be considered acceptable evidence (B3 3.4)
* Clarity on the number of self-certification claims that will lead to monitoring/action, ie, ‘more than two’ (B4 4.4 and B9 9.5)
* Clarity on how more than two claims will be monitored and how students may be referred to other procedures. (B4 4.5)
* Amendment to the wording on the course of action made by the Academic Registrar for university-wide, campus, or faculty specific major events or issues (B5 5.1)
* Clarification that students are able to use the procedure to make an individual claim if specific circumstances mean they benefit less than others from a course of action agreed by the Academic Registrar for a large number of students (B5 5.2)
* Amendments to the Procedure on fit to sit declarations and withdrawing a fit to sit declaration (B6)
* The addition of certain time-limited conditions as being appropriate for consideration under the claims for long-standing conditions (B7 7.6)
* Clarification that where the medical evidence provided, or the frequency of claims raises concerns about a student’s fitness to practise, their case may be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Procedure (B9 9.4)
* Additional point that multiple claims using self-certification may lead to the student’s situation being reviewed and further action may be suggested/required (B9 9.5)
* Amendment to include new ‘student route regulations’ as well as ‘Tier 4’ (B9 and B10)
* Minor updates to referral information for support services (B9 9.9)
* The addition of two further grounds for review (B11 11.1)

Student Complaints

* Change of title from Associate Registrar: Student Casework to Head of Student Casework (sections A, B and C).
* A change to the allocation of responsibilities between the University and its partner institutions. If a complaint pertains to academic matters, the University’s Student Complaints Regulations and Procedure will continue to apply. However, if the complaint relates to a matter that is the responsibility of the partner institution, for example student support services and facilities, then the student will need to access the partner institution’s complaints procedure but will have final recourse to the review stage of the University’s Student Complaints Procedure (A1 1.3)
* Correction through removing ‘Regulations’ when referring to the Student Conduct Procedure and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (A2 and A3)
* Correction of ‘Dignity at Study Procedure’ to ‘Dignity at Study Policy’ (A2 2.3)
* Addition of an ‘admissibility of complaints’ section to clarify explicitly that issues which have previously been considered under the Student Complaints Regulations and Procedure and/or the Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedure cannot subsequently be reconsidered as a student complaint at a later date. The second point can already be found and cross-referenced under section A2 2.20 of the Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedure (A3 3.25 and A3 3.26)
* Clarification that the investigation will be based on a Checklist of Issues agreed between the Student complainant and the Investigating Officer (B3 3.5)

# **Useful Contacts**

Student Casework Unit

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| **Role** | **Incumbent** |
| Head of Student Casework | Siobhan Coakley |
| Principal Student Casework Officer | Charlotte Lawrence  |
| Senior Student Casework Officer (Student Complaints and Extenuating Circumstances [review stage only]) | Joshua Gibbs |
| Senior Student Casework Officer (Academic Misconduct and Academic Appeals) | Gwen Jones |
| Senior Student Casework Officer (Student Conduct and Fitness to Practise) | Ryan James |

For all key contacts, please email studentcasework@southwales.ac.uk

USW Link Officers

It is expected that USW and partner college staff will liaise with their allocated partner link officers to ensure they are kept updated and informed.

A definitive list is kept by USW Quality team (email: quality@southwales.ac.uk)