



Non-Academic Complaints Policy

Publication:	External (public)
Date approved:	17 June 2026
Approving body:	Senate
Date of next review:	June 2028
Review frequency:	Every 2 years
Policy/Regulation Owner:	Christina Chan, Head of Academic Registry Services

1. Overview and Purpose

- 1.1** The non-academic complaints procedures allows the formal raising of concerns by registered UEA students undertaking taught or research programmes regarding matters which are the responsibility of the University, but which do not directly relate to a student's programme of study, its associated academic facilities nor to an academic result, such as marks.
- 1.2** We take students' concerns seriously at UEA and the Procedure within these Regulations is designed to enable their effective consideration and the enacting of timely remedies as appropriate. If a more appropriate route exists to consider the substantive concern, the student will be advised to engage with the relevant alternative procedure. This policy is designed to be easy to use, timely, transparent and consistent in its treatment of cases.

2. Scope

- 2.1** For the purposes of this policy, we refer to students as 'you' and the University as 'we/us'. This policy applies to:
- (a) Students who are currently registered at the University; and
 - (b) Former students where:
 - the non-academic complaint relates to an issue that arose during their period of registration with the University; and
 - the complaint is submitted within 90 calendar days of course end date or the date of withdrawal from study.
- 2.2** Students on validated or accredited programmes at partner institutions wishing to submit a complaint should use the relevant procedures at their place of study.
- 2.3** This complaint process comprises three parts:
- 2.3.1** an informal stage;
 - 2.3.2** a formal Stage One, in which the Stage One Non-Academic Complaints Panel (NACP) considers the complaint;
 - 2.3.3** a formal Stage Two, which you may follow only if the correct procedures were not followed at formal Stage One.
- 2.4** You may complain about any aspect of your experience for which the University is responsible, but which does not form part of the delivery, management or assessment of

your academic experience. Examples of the sorts of things about which you might complain would include:

- Standard of University accommodation
- Experience of University catering
- Library Services
- Experience of Student Services
- Experience of an academic related Service such as Student Academic Services – Academic Registry
- The University's response to the behaviour of fellow students in the University.

Adherence to approved policy and regulations is fundamental to the effective operation of the University. This policy has been developed in alignment with sector best practice to promote consistency, accountability, and compliance with relevant standards. Observing the policy ensures that decisions and actions are informed, equitable, and aligned with institutional values.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Non-Academic Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction by a student about a service, facility, action, omission, or standard of provision for which the University is responsible, which does not relate to the delivery, management, assessment, or outcome of an academic programme.
Informal Stage	The initial stage of the complaints process during which a student seeks resolution directly with the relevant service area or through the Student Conduct and Complaints team before submitting a formal complaint.
Stage One Complaint	A formal non-academic complaint submitted that will be considered by the Non-Academic Complaints Panel (NACP) after informal resolution has been attempted.
Stage Two Complaint	A formal review of a Stage One complaint, limited to consideration of alleged procedural irregularities in the Stage One process.
Non-Academic Complaints Panel (NACP)	The panel responsible for considering eligible Stage One Non-Academic Complaints and determining whether the complaint should be upheld and any appropriate remedy applied.

Stage Two Non-Academic Complaints Panel (NACP2)	The panel responsible for considering eligible Stage Two complaints where a procedural irregularity has occurred during Stage One consideration.
Procedural Irregularity	A failure to follow the procedures set out in this policy, including a failure to properly consider relevant evidence.
Completion of Procedures Letter	The final written outcome issued by the University confirming that its internal complaints procedures have been exhausted, allowing a student to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	The independent body that reviews student complaints about higher education providers in England and Wales once the provider's internal procedures have been completed.
Working Day	Any day on which the University is open for normal business, excluding weekends, public holidays, and University closure days.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1** The Student Conduct and Complaints team at the Academic Registry (ACR) is responsible for supporting the administration of this policy including the provision of guidance to staff and complainants, and tracking of service level data and other statistical information for reporting to relevant Committees for consideration in line with the University's governance requirements.
- 4.2** The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints responds to OIA complaints from students who have exhausted the University's internal complaints procedures.

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1** You will not be unfavourably treated for submitting a non-academic complaint. If you believe that you have been less favourably treated as a result of submitting a case, you should contact the Director of Student and Academic Services and include evidence of problems that you have experienced.
- 5.2** The University expects that you will not engage in frivolous or malicious complaints. If an appeal or complaint is found to have been brought with mischievous or malicious intent, this may provide grounds for disciplinary action against you.
- 5.3** The University will operate in accordance with its Equal Opportunities Policy when applying the Non-Academic Complaints policy.

5.4 All personal information will be processed by the University in accordance with data protection legislation. Any information that you supply will be treated with due discretion and on a 'need to know' basis.

5.5 First Steps to Try to Resolve Concerns: Informal Stage

5.5.1 You should seek an informal resolution of your concerns before you start the formal Stage One Procedure. Informal explorations of possible ways to resolve a matter will not prejudice the consideration of a later formal submission.

5.5.2 You should contact the department responsible for delivering the service with which you are dissatisfied, to explain your concerns and expectations. If you are uncertain as to where to raise a concern, or where a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved, you may contact the Student Conduct and Complaints team (studentcomplaints@uea.ac.uk) to explore the possibility of an informal resolution.

5.5.3 If informal steps do not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you may submit a formal complaint under Stage One of the Procedure and include any supporting documentation. Your Stage One complaint form and evidence must be received no later than 20 working days after the issue had initially given rise to your concerns. Complaints submitted after this deadline with good reason for the delay may still be considered. You should contact the Student Conduct and Complaints team if you are unable to meet this deadline.

5.5.4 The decision by the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints as to whether your late Stage One complaint should be accepted shall be final and not subject to appeal.

5.5.5 If you do not engage with the informal Stage procedure after raising concerns, and/or do not confirm whether you are satisfied with any informal resolution on offer, your complaint shall be closed and withdrawn from this procedure after 20 working days with effect from the date on which you ceased to respond to messages from the Student Conduct and Complaints team. The Student Conduct and Complaints team will send you a minimum of two reminders before your complaint is closed.

5.6 Formal Stage One: Submitting a Stage One Non-Academic Complaint

5.6.1 You must submit a completed Stage One Non-Academic Complaint [form](#) to the Academic Registry and upload any evidence with your submission. The form will be sent to the Student Conduct and Complaints team to process.

5.6.2 The formal consideration of your Stage One non-academic complaint may be suspended where appropriate, pending clarification from you that you have tried to resolve the matter informally, before beginning the formal Procedure. In the event

that you have not completed the Informal Stage to resolve your concerns, the Student Conduct and Complaints team will, in the first instance, seek an informal resolution by liaising with the relevant department(s) at the University and suspend the consideration of your Stage One Non-Academic complaint:

- (a) If you accept the informal resolution offered by the department(s), your complaint is deemed to be completed and resolved. The Student Conduct and Complaints will issue a letter to confirm that your case will be closed; or
- (b) If informal steps do not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, the Student Conduct and Complaints team will resume the next steps for your complaint to be considered as described below.

5.6.3 You may decide to withdraw a complaint at any time prior to its consideration by the NACP.

5.6.4 Stage One Complaints that meet the grounds for consideration (see para 2.3) and have exhausted the informal Stage shall be considered by the Non-Academic Complaints Panel (NACP), which shall meet with a frequency that ensures that the time between submission and consideration by the Panel does not exceed 20 working days for any case (normally this will require monthly meetings).

5.6.5 The Panel shall comprise: a manager from the Student Conduct and Complaints team (Chair), another ACR Manager (or another manager who is not connected to the complaint) a student representative and an ACR Administrator as Secretary. Where the complaint involves the Student Conduct and Complaints team, membership of the NACP will not be drawn from Student Conduct and Complaints team.

5.6.6 The Student Support Conduct and Complaints team will provide the NACP with the documentation submitted by you under Stage One and a summary of the case.

5.6.7 The Student Conduct and Complaints team will, within 5 working days of receipt of the Complaint, write to you acknowledging receipt. If your case is eligible for further consideration, the team will inform you of the date of the next meeting of the NACP at which your case will be considered and the date by which you should normally expect to be advised of the Panel's decision.

5.6.8 You shall be advised of the outcome of your Stage One Complaint within 10 working days of the date of the NACP meeting. Where the complexity of your case prevents this, you shall be notified of the delay.

5.7 An NACP will uphold complaints where any of the following are found:

- a) Correct procedures were not followed.

- b) You experienced unfair or inequitable treatment.
- c) You experienced undue delay in the delivery of a service or the provision of a response to an earlier enquiry.
- d) The University failed to deliver an appropriate level of service.
- e) You received inadequate or inaccurate advice or guidance.
- f) Your experience was at odds with the level of service that you might reasonably expect.

5.8 The possible remedies to an upheld complaint will, by the nature of complaints, be too individual to summarise here. The remedies shall be determined by the NACP, will not involve any adjustment to academic outcomes (since academic outcomes must be addressed through the Academic Appeals and Complaints route.) Where a concession would be needed to allow the proposed remedy to apply, the Chair of the relevant NACP should seek advice from the relevant Head of Academic Registry Services or Associate Director for PGR as appropriate.

5.9 NACPs shall be able to agree compensatory payments to be made in relation to upheld complaints, up to a limit of £1,000. If it is felt that such compensation would provide an insufficient remedy, the Chair of the relevant NACP should seek advice from the Director of Student and Academic Services or nominee, who will liaise with the relevant budget holder as appropriate.

5.10 In all cases the Secretary to the NACP shall write to advise you of the outcome of the consideration of your case, including any remedies, in accordance with 5.6.8 above. You will be advised that a Stage Two Complaint would only be eligible for further consideration if you believe that correct procedures were not followed at Stage One.

5.11 If you do not intend to pursue a Stage Two Complaint on procedural grounds, you may treat the Stage One outcome letter as a Completion of Procedures notification and if you wish, exercise your entitlement to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

5.12 Formal Stage Two: Submitting a Stage Two Non-Academic Complaint

5.12.1 A Stage Two Non-Academic Complaint will only be eligible for consideration where there was a procedural irregularity at Stage One. This includes your claim that evidence was not fully and properly considered. Where a Stage Two Complaint is submitted on grounds other than procedural irregularity it shall not be considered by a Panel and you will be advised to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

5.12.2 You must submit a completed Stage Two Complaint [Form](#), and upload any supporting documentation, no later than 10 working days after the date on which you were formally advised of the Stage One outcome.

- 5.12.3** Complaints submitted after this deadline with good reason for the delay may still be considered. You should contact the Student Conduct and Complaints team if you are unable to meet this deadline.
- 5.12.4** The decision by the Director of Student and Academic Services or nominee as to whether your late Stage Two complaint should be accepted shall be final and not subject to appeal.
- 5.12.5** You may decide to withdraw a complaint at any time prior to its consideration.
- 5.12.6** The Student Conduct and Complaints team will, within 5 working days of receipt of the Complaint, write to you and acknowledge receipt.
- 5.12.7** Stage Two Complaints that meet the grounds for consideration (see 5.12.1) shall be considered by the Stage Two Non Academic Complaints Panel (NACP2), which shall meet with a frequency that ensures that the time between submission and consideration by the Panel does not exceed 20 working days for any case.
- 5.12.8** The Panel shall comprise: The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints, or a more senior member of University Professional Services staff where no Head is available (Chair); another Head of Academic Registry Services or other senior member of University administrative management not connected to the detail of the complaint; a student representative and an ACR Coordinator/Administrator as Secretary. Where the complaint involves the Student Conduct and Complaints team, membership of the NACP2 will not be drawn from Student Conduct and Complaints staff.
- 5.12.9** The Student Conduct and Complaints team will provide the NACP2 with the documentation submitted by you under Stage One and a summary of the case.
- 5.12.10** The Student Conduct and Complaints team will, within 5 working days of receipt of the Complaint, write to you acknowledging receipt. The team will also inform you of the date of the next meeting of the NACP2 at which your case will be considered and the date by which you should normally expect to be advised of the Panel's decision.
- 5.12.11** In normal circumstances you shall be advised of the outcome of your Stage Two Complaint within 20 working days of the date of receipt. Where the complexity of the case prevents this, you shall be notified of the delay.
- 5.13** A Stage Two Complaint shall be upheld where there is evidence that correct procedure was not followed at Stage One.

- 5.14** Where a Stage Two Complaint is upheld, the Panel shall consider the substance of the case in accordance with paragraphs 5.7-5.9 above, determining such remedy as the Panel regards appropriate.
- 5.15** Where there is no evidence that correct procedure has not been followed, the Complaint shall be rejected and there shall be no further right of complaint within the University.
- 5.16** The outcome letter referenced in 5.12.11 above shall serve as a Completion of Procedures letter and you will be advised of your entitlement to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator should you be dissatisfied either with the rejection of the Complaint, or in cases where the Complaint is upheld, with the proposed remedy.

6. Compliance and Monitoring

- 6.1** Service levels provided by the Student Conduct and Complaints team are monitored continuously and data on whether we meet customer service standards are available on request from the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints.
- 6.2** The number of complaints and any emerging trends are reported annually to the University's Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate in line with the University's governance requirements.

7. Related Documents

Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure

Equal Opportunities Policy

Data Protection Policy

UDIPP

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework

8. Revision History

Version number	Approval date	Approval mechanism	Details of change
1	17/06/26	Senate (endorsed by SEC 27/05/26)	Regular review, transfer to new policy template, full details of review recorded in change log