

Student Appeal and Complaint Policy

Policy Category	Academic
Document Owner	Chief Customer Service Officer
Responsible Officer	Director, Customer Solutions

Version	Endorsed by	Authorized by	Approved	Effective Date
2.0	Academic Policy and Appeals Committee Executive Group	Academic Board	May 1 st 2018	May 15 th 2018

1. Introduction

Eton University believes that efficient complaint management and transparent review system contribute to a positive study environment. Students can be assured that their academic and non-academic complaints will be address fairly, promptly, and with sensitivity to all parties. No student will be penalized or disadvantaged in any way as a result of filing a complaint.

2. Definitions

Academic appeal: a request made to have an academic decision reviewed (e.g. exam mark, subject grade, academic progression)

Procedural fairness: a fair and proper procedure appropriate to the circumstances, where decisions are made without bias and are supported by evidence and communicated with reasons.

Student complaint: a complaint about a decision, action or behavior that results in a claim that the student has sustained academic or non-academic disadvantage.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all enrolled students, and to those who have completed an application to enrol as a student.

This policy governs student complaints on academic and non-academic matters and reviews of academic and non-academic decisions. This includes dealings with the University’s education agents or any related party who delivers courses or related services on behalf of the University.

4. Principles

Eton University is guided by the following principles in resolving all student complaints:

- complaint and review procedures will be readily available to ensure that staff and students understand their rights and responsibilities
- every effort will be made to resolve complaints informally and promptly at the local level through mediation and negotiation
- parties involved in the complaint resolution process will not be disadvantaged as a result of lodging the complaint, investigating the complaint or responding to the complaint
- the principles of courtesy, respect, confidentiality and procedural fairness will be observed by all parties involved
- there will be no direct financial cost to the student relating to internal review processes
- complaint and review procedures will be applied consistently and transparently
- a student's enrolment will not be interrupted while the complaint process is ongoing
- the complaint and review process will be well documented, and the results will be communicated to relevant parties in a timely manner
 - students will be provided with a written statement of the outcome of any formal complaints, including full details of the reasons for the outcome
 - records of complaints and reviews will be kept for a minimum of five years
- the complaint resolution process will be used by the University to identify areas for improvement in the quality of services and support it provides to students

5. Types of complaint

Eton University differentiates between academic and non-academic complaints.

5.1 Academic Complaints

Academic complaints are complaints related to student's course modules. For example, a student may be dissatisfied with:

- Module's content
- the clarity of an assessment
- the resources or materials required or recommended for a subject
- tutor's assignment feedback
- the final grade provided

5.2 Non-Academic Complaints

Non-academic complaints are complaints about the services and/or facilities provided by Eton University, or about non-academic decisions made by the University. Examples of non-academic complaints can include dissatisfaction with:

- a decision to deny a request for a refund under the University's Enrollment and Attendance Policy
- a decision to impose penalties for the non-payment and late payment of fees
- the administration of admission, enrolment, examinations and graduation
- services or facilities

- health and safety management

Non-academic complaints also include complaints about unfair treatment committed by another member of the University community which may include:

- discrimination
- harassment
- victimisation
- vilification
- bullying

6. Complaint Resolution

Consistent with the principles of this policy, and taking into account that some types of complaints are addressed according to specific policies and procedures, the University's approach to complaint resolution generally involves:

6.1 Informal Discussion

Complaints should be resolved informally within 10 working days whenever possible through discussion between the student and the person directly responsible for the decision or behaviour that is the subject of the student's complaint. The complaints should be raised promptly via email, phone or direct conversation. It is the responsibility of both parties to explore options for resolving the issue as soon as possible after it has been raised and to do so in respectful manner.

It is acknowledged that in some circumstances, students may not feel comfortable raising their complaint directly with the person who is the subject of the complaint. Advice on taking the first steps towards resolving a complaint informally is available from the Program Director (academic complaints) or Campus Director (non-academic complaints).

There is no compulsion to resolve complaints informally. Students have the option of requesting a formal review as the first step in the complaint resolution process.

6.2 Formal Complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or if the student is dissatisfied with the initial decision regarding the matter, they may ask for a formal review of their complaint by completing a Formal Complaint Form. The completed form must include a clear statement of the grievance, including all relevant facts, supporting documents and must specify the resolution the student is seeking. These will be reviewed and decided by:

- the Program Director (or delegate) for academic matters
- the Campus Director (or delegate) for non-academic matters and residential matters

The student will be notified in writing of the outcome, including full details of the reasons for the decision, within 10 working days of their formal complaint being lodged. Students will be notified of any delays which may occur during the process.

6.3 Internal Review

A student may request a review of the outcome of their formal complaint within 20 working days of receiving the written response if they believe that the results are unfair or incorrect on one of the following two grounds:

- the process has been incorrectly followed and/or criteria incorrectly applied, or
- new evidence is available which was not available to the original decision maker.

Appeals on the grounds that the student disagrees with the outcome will not be heard.

A student can request a review of a decision by forwarding a completed Review (Appeal) Form to the Student Complaints Officer (education@eton-university.us) including the following:

- the decision and circumstances the student is requesting be reviewed, and
- an outline of how the policies and procedures have not been followed, and/or additional, new, evidence to support the claim, and the student's desired outcome.

The Student Complaints Officer will forward the request to the Chief Customer Officer who will assess the submission and take one of the following options:

- refer the Review back to a formal complaint (under 6.2)
- refer the Review to the appropriate senior staff member for a decision (e.g. the Vice Chancellor or delegate, or Program Director) to independently investigate the request for a review, or refer the Review to the Student Appeals Panel.

The student will be notified in writing of the outcome, including full details of the reasons of the decision, within 10 working days of their appeal request being lodged. The Student Complaints Officer will notify student of any delays, which may occur during the process.

7. Record Keeping

The University keeps appropriate records of all complaints, including documentation relating to formal complaint and reviews for at least five years, and allows parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records consistent with the provisions of the Privacy Policy.