

Student Complaints Procedure

This Code of Practice for Student Complaints was authorised by the College Council in 2003. It is amended from time to time. Students may obtain a paper copy on request from the Tutorial Office. As with all institutions of higher education in England, student complaints are subject to review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

1. Introduction

1.1 The College welcomes comments and suggestions from students. Students wishing to make a suggestion or comment about the functioning of the College, including educational and academic arrangements, the conduct of Senior Members or staff, the provision of domestic and financial services, and the services or activities of the student representative bodies (KCSU and KCGS), may do so informally by contacting the person in charge of the relevant area (see Appendices 2 and 3), or where it seems appropriate by raising the matter with their Tutor or the Senior Tutor.

1.2 Occasionally, however, a student may wish to make a complaint, in which case he or she should do so by following the code of practice set out below.

1.3 The College expects that normally complaints will be dealt with informally in the first instance.

1.4 Students with a complaint should seek to bring it to the attention of the College using the procedure outlined here as soon as possible following the occurrence of a problem: normally within two weeks and except where there is good reason within one calendar month.

2. Scope of Complaints

This code of practice covers complaints about matters under the control of the College (including the conduct of KCSU and KCGS) that affect the progress, wellbeing, or circumstances of an individual student. It does not cover complaints relating to the following matters:

2.1 Complaints about the behaviour of another student in the College. If you believe that another student is in breach of College rules, including causing unacceptable noise or disturbance, please see the [Student Disciplinary Policy](#) for details on how to proceed.

2.2 Any complaint that includes an allegation that a criminal offence has been committed should normally be reported by the complainant to the police, and may be so reported by a College Officer to whom it becomes known. In so far as there is no conflict of interest the College will seek to offer informal advice and support in such cases, and the complainant may wish to seek legal advice.

2.3 Complaints about matters of College policy should normally be raised through the student members of the College Council or other relevant College committee (see Appendix 4).

2.4 Complaints about the behaviour of contractors working for the College should not be taken up directly with the individual concerned, but should be made either through a Tutor or directly to the College Officer responsible for the contract (generally the Domus Bursar).

2.5 Complaints about the behaviour of an individual staff member or Fellow, including allegations of harassment or bullying, should be made under the Complaints against Fellows and Staff Members Procedure (below).

2.5 A student may wish to complain about a matter that is not within the control of the College but within that of another institution, e.g. another College or the University (including complaints relating to University examinations and results). If you are unclear about where responsibility lies, you may seek advice from any of the persons listed in Appendix 1 about how to proceed and you may ask your Director of Studies, your Tutor, or the Senior Tutor to take up the matter on your behalf.

Complaints Against Fellows and Staff Members

All students, Fellows and members of staff belonging to the College are expected to treat others with respect.

[Read more](#)

3. Principles

3.1 The College recognizes that it has a duty to provide fair and objective procedures for examining and resolving complaints, and to ensure that its procedures are free from partiality arising from personal or institutional conflict of interest or other sources of bias.

3.2 No student will be disadvantaged by having raised a complaint, but the College expects that students will not make trivial, frivolous, vexatious, or malicious complaints.

3.3 Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of a complainant. However, where a complaint is of a personal nature against an individual, it is likely that the complainant's identity might have to be revealed at some stage in all but the most exceptional cases in order for there to be a fair investigation. The College will endeavour to inform an individual complainant of the extent to which his or her identity is likely to be revealed at each stage of the process.

3.4 If any student is required to attend in person as part of the investigation into a complaint, he or she is entitled to be accompanied by another member of the College; this could be a

Tutor, Director of Studies, another Senior Member, or a student, including one of the officers of the KCSU or KCGS.

4. Informal Procedure

4.1 Students who experience a problem with any service provided by the College, with KCSU or KCGS, or anything else within the control of the College, should first raise the matter with the individual or individuals directly concerned. A student who feels unable to do this for any reason should consult one of the persons listed in Appendix 1 who will give advice about how to proceed.

4.2 If informal discussion does not resolve the situation satisfactorily, the person responsible for the area to which the complaint relates (see Appendices 2 and 3) should be approached, either directly or, if preferred, through the complainant's Tutor. A prompt response can be expected.

5. Formal Procedure

5.1 In a case where the student feels that the nature of the complaint is too serious to be dealt with by him or herself or through a Tutor informally, or where an approach under paragraph 4.2 has not produced a satisfactory conclusion, a formal complaint may be made in writing to the Senior Tutor, who will acknowledge receipt and will conduct an investigation, or will appoint another Senior Member of the College to do so. If the complaint involves the Senior Tutor, or if the Senior Tutor has dealt with the matter at an earlier stage, then the formal complaint should be addressed to the Vice-Provost, who will either conduct the investigation, or will appoint another Senior Member of the College to do so.

5.2 When submitting a formal complaint, the complainant should provide a full description of the grounds for complaint and copies of all documents relevant to the case, and should indicate the form of remedy that he or she is seeking, without prejudice to the final remedy determined.

5.3 The Senior Tutor (or the Vice-Provost, where appropriate), having received a confidential report from any investigation carried out on his or her behalf, shall prepare a considered response to the complaint. He or she should seek the views of anyone to be named in this response. The response should be as full as possible, while respecting the reasonable confidentiality of those involved. It should normally be completed within 40 days and any subsequent remedy should normally be implemented with the minimum of delay.

6. Appeals

6.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to a formal complaint (see 5.3), he or she may, within two weeks, lodge an appeal, in writing, with the Secretary to the College Council, stating the basis of the appeal (including the nature of the original complaint, the response under the formal procedure, and why this is considered unsatisfactory).

6.2 The Provost will determine whether the appeal falls under closed or open Council business, as defined in the Statutes. It is to be anticipated that complaints concerning KCSU or KCGS will normally be open business.

6.3 The Council will consider the appeal. It will summarily reject any appeal that relates to the academic assessment of a student or to a disciplinary matter, which are covered by other Council procedures. The Council may reject an appeal summarily if the conditions of paragraph 6.1 have not been met, if it considers there is no prima facie case, if the complaint appears trivial, frivolous, malicious, or vexatious, and if it relates to matters that have already been subject to an appeal of this kind.

6.4 If the Council finds that a student has abused this procedure by making a frivolous, malicious, or vexatious complaint, it may ask the Lay Dean to impose an appropriate penalty.

6.5 If the appeal is not summarily rejected, the Council will establish an investigating committee. In cases determined by the Provost to be closed business, the investigating committee will consist of three persons, none of whom should be a member of the Council, selected from a panel of Fellows, appointed annually by the Council. In cases determined by the Provost to be open business, it will consist, in addition, of a junior member who is not a member of the Council or an officer of KCSU or KCGS, selected from a panel appointed annually by the Council. The Council will exclude any person who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage. The Council may also, if it thinks it appropriate, ask a legal professional who is not a resident Senior Member of the College to advise the investigating committee. The committee will investigate the complaint ab initio and make a report (which may include recommendations) to the Council.

6.6 The Council will consider the report of the investigating committee. No member of the Council who has been involved with a complaint at an earlier stage should be present when a decision on the appeal is made. The decision of the Council will be communicated to the complainant by the Secretary.

7. Review of Procedures

7.1 The Senior Tutor's Office will maintain records of the nature and number of complaints dealt with under these procedures, preserving the confidentiality of the complainants.

7.2 The College Council will review the procedures from time to time.