
Document title: Student Complaints Procedure

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Contents:

- A. Student Complaints - principles
- B. Scope of the procedure
- C. Time limits
- D. Advice
- E. Confidentiality
- F. Support and representation: complainants and those who are the subject of a
- G. Complaint Group complaints
- H. The Procedure – informal resolution
- I. The Procedure – Stage One: initial formal complaint
- J. The Procedure – Stage Two: complaint review
- K. Material procedural irregularity
- L. Completion of Procedures
- M. Reasonable adjustments
- N. Inappropriate complaints and complainant behaviour
- O. Monitoring and reporting

Appendix One: Informal resolution

Appendix Two: Complaints of harassment

Appendix Three: Guide to University procedures for students

Guidance Notes for students making a complaint

A. PRINCIPLES

Coventry University Branch at The Knowledge Hub (CU Branch at TKH) is committed to providing high quality services. It welcomes the opportunity to correct mistakes and clarify misunderstandings and to respond positively and constructively on any occasion when you feel the need to express dissatisfaction with a particular service or other aspect of CU Branch at TKH and/or TKH provision. You will always receive a response to your complaint and, if your complaint is upheld, the CU Branch at TKH and/or TKH will, wherever possible, put things right. If a complaint is not upheld, you will be given reasons for the decision. This procedure enables you to know clearly how, where and to whom complaints should be made and from whom you can get help and advice if you need it.

TKH believes that, usually, a complaint can and should be addressed quickly. To enable this to happen you are expected to take the matter directly to the member of staff best able to deal with it as soon as possible. If informal resolution of the matter is not possible you may enter the formal procedure set out in Section I at Stage One, where a complaint needs to be submitted in writing. Should your complaint not be resolved at this stage there is a further stage (Stage Two), referred to in Section J, which provides for an independent review of the outcome of the consideration of the complaint at Stage One. This concludes the CU Branch at TKH Complaints Procedure, subject to any considerations of material procedural irregularity as referred to in Section K.

If a complaint and academic appeal are submitted at the same time and relate fundamentally to the same issue the academic appeal process will be paused until the complaints procedure has been concluded. Once the outcome to the complaint is known this will be used to inform the appeals process.

An appropriate way of framing your complaint is to be very clear about what it is that you are complaining about, why you are not happy with it, and what it is that you would like to see done to resolve this issue for you. If your complaint covers several different issues, please be sure to separate them out, and address the points above for each of them. This helps us to respond properly to your complaint. Please refer to the guidance notes on framing your complaint.

B. SCOPE

This procedure, which can be used for both individual and collective complaints, is designed for complaints from students (including students on leave of absence or on placement) about all aspects of CU Branch at TKH provision, other than those specified below, and enables you to raise matters of proper concern.

This procedure is not to be used for any of the following matters, for which separate policies and procedures exist.

- a) matters relating to assessment performance and issues of academic judgement, except where there is a complaint about service provided which needs to be resolved before an academic appeal decision can be made. CU Branch at TKH reserves the right to reclassify a complaint as an academic appeal or vice versa, if the submission has been made to the incorrect procedure, or the submission falls properly within the remit of one procedure rather than the other;
- b) complaints from third parties – people who are not registered students at CU Branch at TKH;
- c) where your complaint relates to harassment, then it will be dealt with under this procedure, but different timescales will apply. Please refer to appendix three for the timescales and definitions of harassment.

The University will not address anonymous complaints via this procedure.

C. TIME LIMITS

Ideally you should make your complaint as soon as possible, to enable CU Branch at TKH to investigate and respond to your complaint in a timely manner, and you must make your complaint within three months of the matter that prompted your complaint.

CU Branch at TKH is committed to dealing with all complaints as quickly as possible and will follow the time limits set out in this Procedure. However, from time to time there may be valid reason for a delay (e.g. a member of staff who is key to your complaint is on leave or ill). If these circumstances arise you will be informed of any delay and the reason for it.

Where a complaint alleges harassment by staff, the investigation and the response to you will take place within a shorter timescale. See appendix three for details.

D. ADVICE

You can receive advice as to the operation of the procedure from the TKH Registry
You can seek advice, advocacy and representation from the TKH Students' Union

E. CONFIDENTIALITY

CU Branch at TKH will deal with complaints discreetly and sensitively and you will be treated without discrimination or disadvantage. Any complaint will be dealt with in as confidential a manner as is practical; however, any evidence submitted as part of the complaint will be made available to both the complainant and those members of staff who need to see it in order for the complaint to be considered. In some cases a duty to breach confidentiality may exist, typically where necessary to do so for the safety of you or of other people.

If there is any aspect of your complaint or evidence which you feel must remain confidential you must discuss this with the Investigating Officer at interview. CU Branch at TKH cannot guarantee that this will be possible and highlights that in cases where some information is restricted, due to a request for confidentiality, CU Branch at TKH may not be able to ensure that full consideration is given to each case. The Investigating Officer will be able to advise you of the position in relation to your request.

Please be aware that we *may* not be able to disclose outcomes about actions taken in respect of staff due to our obligations in respect of confidentiality in employment matters.

F. SUPPORT AND REPRESENTATION: COMPLAINANTS AND THOSE WHO ARE THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT

You have the right to be accompanied to a meeting or represented at that meeting by a member of the TKH Students' Union, or by a fellow enrolled student, other than where an alternative arrangement would be a reasonable adjustment agreed by CU Branch at TKH in response to a diagnosed disability.

Students accessing this procedure are usually adults, and the CU Branch at TKH contract is with the student. In the light of this, CU Branch at TKH expects that students would deal with their own case, unless for good reason they are unable to do so. The Students' Union may act on a student's behalf.

In an exceptional case where a third party does represent a student, full written consent is required from the student for this to take place (unless the student is incapacitated and unable to give consent), and to allow CU Branch at TKH to disclose any information necessary to deal with the case. Consent from CU Branch at TKH may be withdrawn at any time if the third party's behaviour is not appropriate, and CU Branch at TKH will only communicate to one party at a time.

If a complaint is made against an individual, that individual will also have the right to be accompanied and/or assisted by another member of the CU Branch at TKH community in any related investigation.

When a complaint is made against an individual, even at informal stage, that individual should be notified of the complaint. Such notification must be given before any further action takes place in relation to the complaint unless to do so would prejudice any other formal CU Branch at TKH process or external criminal investigation and in which case notification must then be given as soon as is reasonably practicable having taken into consideration the particular circumstances of the matter. At the informal stage any decision to delay notification to the individual can only be made by the Registry who must record the reasons for the delay. Where a complaint has moved straight to (or progressed to) the formal stage, a decision to delay notification can only be taken by the Director of CU Branch at TKH.

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated directly to any individual who is the subject of the complaint by the Investigating Officer following the issue of the decision to the student.

G. GROUP COMPLAINTS

If more than one student wishes to submit a complaint about the same issue they must:

- a) nominate one or two students who are submitting the complaint to whom CU Branch at TKH should respond and who will inform the rest of the group as to the progress and outcome of the complaint;
- b) enclose a list of the names, student registration numbers and signatures of all students who are party to the submission of the complaint.

H. THE PROCEDURE – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

The best way to deal with most complaints is for the student to raise the issue promptly with the relevant staff locally in the area where the issue arose, and CU Branch at TKH expects that you will do this before making a formal complaint. Guidance on approaches to informal resolution for both students and staff can be found in appendix one.

I. THE PROCEDURE – STAGE ONE: INITIAL FORMAL COMPLAINT

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your attempt to resolve the matter directly with the member of staff concerned, you should contact the Registry.

If you wish to pursue a formal complaint, then you must complete an official Complaint Form and submit it within five working days of receipt of the said response. You can obtain a Complaint Form from the Registry. Advice on how to complete the Form can be obtained from the Registry.

You must sign and date the Complaint Form and ensure that it:

- a) outlines the complaint;
- b) describes what you have done already to resolve your complaint and gives details of the response you have received (you should include a copy if in writing);
- c) explains why you remain dissatisfied, and;
- d) explains the outcome you want.

If your form does not contain all of the required information it will be returned to you and you will be asked to provide the correct information.

You must send or deliver the Complaint Form to the Registry who will acknowledge receipt and forward the form to the relevant Head of School/Service. At this point the Head of School/Service will determine if an early resolution is possible and contact you, in writing within five working days to tell you how they will resolve your complaint.

If early resolution is not possible, an Investigating Officer will be appointed to consider your complaint and will acknowledge its receipt within five working days. They will then undertake an investigation into the complaint. You and any person against whom you have made a complaint will be interviewed as part of this investigation.

Once the investigation has concluded the relevant Head of School/Service will provide you with a written response as soon as possible but not later than 30 working days after receipt of the Complaint Form (see also Section C, Time Limits). If the complaint is upheld or partially upheld, you will be informed what action is to be taken. If the complaint is not upheld you will be given reasons for the decision.

J. THE PROCEDURE – STAGE TWO: COMPLAINT REVIEW

If you remain dissatisfied with the response and wish to take the matter further, you must complete a Complaint Review Form and submit it to the Registry within ten working days of the receipt of the response.

You must sign and date a Complaint Review Form, which includes a statement explaining why

you remain dissatisfied, and to which you must also attach:

- a) a copy of the your original Complaint Form;
- b) a copy of the response made by the Head of School/Service;
- c) what the desired outcome to your complaint is.

The Registry will:

- a) acknowledge receipt within five working days;
- b) send a copy to the relevant Head of School/Service within five working days, who must send a copy of their investigation file to the Registry within five working days;
- c) convene a Panel and send all documentation to Panel members and the complainant seven working days after receipt of the file. The complainant should then request any additional information from the Registry a further five working days;
- d) convene a meeting of the Panel no later than forty working days of the submission of the request for review.

It should be noted, however, that the Complaints Review Panel at Stage Two will only be convened in circumstances where Stage One has been completed. The purpose of the review is not to reinvestigate a complaint but to ensure that procedures have been followed at the initial investigation stage.

The constitution of the Panel will be as follows:-

- a) The TKH President
- b) The Director of CU Branch at TKH
- c) the President of the Students Union, or in his / her absence a Vice-President;
- d) The Head of the relevant School/Service, or a senior member of staff designated by the Head of School/Service.

Those appointed to the Panel will not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Panel will call such members of the CU Branch at TKH and TKH community as may be appropriate to assist the progress of the review.

You will have the right to a personal hearing in the course of the review, as will any individual against whom a complaint is made. You may be accompanied, or represented, by a member of the University community, and if you are under the age of eighteen you must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult. If you are unable to attend you may nominate a representative to attend on your behalf, provided that the representative is also a member of the CU Branch at TKH University or TKH community. Both the student requesting review and those responding to the complaint will be present at the Hearing at the same time, and both parties will hear all of the evidence presented to the Committee and have the opportunity to comment on it. Where agreed, a student's presence at a Panel may be through virtual means such as video or telephone conferencing.

The Panel will review the complaint and make a determination, which will be communicated to you and all other relevant parties, normally within seven working days. If this timescale is to be extended for any reason, you will be advised of this in writing

K. MATERIAL PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITY

In this context ‘**material procedural irregularity**’ means that CU Branch at TKH has not complied with its own procedures in the handling of your complaint, and that the irregularity was such that it could have made a significant difference to the outcome of the consideration of your complaint.

When the outcome of the Stage Two review is communicated to you, you have ten working days to submit in writing to the Registry any challenge to the decision on grounds of material procedural irregularity in the handling of your complaint. If you do this CU Branch at TKH will defer the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter until this has been considered.

Your right to challenge on grounds of material procedural irregularity is conditional upon the receipt by the Registry of clear evidence of material procedural irregularity in the prior consideration of your complaint. This must be received by the Registry within 10 working days of the date of the outcome of the Stage Two Review. Subject to the Registry (upon consultation with the Director CU Branch at TKH) being satisfied as to the existence of evidence of material procedural irregularity as defined above, the irregularity will be reported to the TKH President with advice in relation to appropriate further action. The TKH Presidents decision in relation to further action will be confirmed to you in writing within 20 working days of your full submission to the Registry.

L. COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES

Subject to any request for review on grounds of material procedural irregularity the outcome of the Complaint Review will conclude the University’s consideration of the complaint. The University will issue an official Completion of Procedures letter as confirmation.

M. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The University will make reasonable adjustments at any stage of the proceedings to accommodate the needs of students with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race).

N. INAPPROPRIATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINANT BEHAVIOUR

CU Branch at TKH is committed to considering matters of proper concern raised by students. However, you should not make a complaint if you do not have evidence to support your complaint, or if the complaint is malicious, vexatious or frivolous (see Appendix Two for definitions of these terms). In exceptional circumstances, if a complaint is felt to be unacceptable on one of these grounds, then it will be referred to the TKH Legal Services where a decision will be made on whether the complaint may proceed. If TKH judges that your complaint should not proceed, you will be notified of this in writing, together with the reasons why. You should also note the section in Appendix Two which sets out the University’s approach when dealing with unacceptable behaviour on the part of a complainant.

O. MONITORING AND REPORTING

CU Branch at TKH will monitor the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure in such a way as to assist in the maintenance and continuous improvement of service standards. An annual report will be produced by the Registry on the number of Student Complaint cases and how they were handled.

APPENDIX 1

INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

Informal Resolution: A Guide for Students and Staff

The best way to deal with most complaints is for the student to raise the issue promptly with the relevant staff locally in the area where the issue arose. It is important that students with an issue of informal complaint are able to air their concerns and to feel that they have been listened to.

Staff might take a number of approaches to responding to issues raised, for example:

- by face to face discussion with the student
- by providing more information and/or an explanation to the student
- by investigation and providing a response
- by finding or suggesting solutions
- by being empathetic and understanding when there is no apparent solution
- by giving an apology on behalf of the CU branch at TKH and/or TKH where it is appropriate to do so
- by asking an appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter
- By suggesting mediation.

Questions for staff to consider might include:

- Do I understand the outcome that the student wishes to achieve?
- Can this outcome be achieved? If delivering it is outside my authority, who would be the appropriate person to refer this to?
- Is this a straightforward case, or do I need to take advice?
- Can this be resolved immediately?
- Can I suggest any alternative solutions?
- Is an explanation or apology appropriate?
- Will this need investigating, and if so, am I the right person to do it? And if I am not, who will be?
- Is this a case that might benefit from mediation?
- Is there anything that I or another member of CU Branch at TKH and/or TKH staff needs to do to stop a situation reoccurring for this student or for another student?

In any case where a student is referred on to another member of staff, the person referring should make that contact and ensure the student knows who she or he has been referred to.

Where early resolution is not appropriate or possible, or where a student remains unhappy after attempts at early resolution, the student should be signposted to the formal procedure, and advised to note the time limits within that procedure, and the service offered by the Students' Union in terms of advice and support.

Where proportionate the student should be provided with a written outcome. An email to the student confirming the outcome of the discussion is often a brief and effective way of doing this. It should capture the actions taken to consider the concern, and any decision or outcome.

Referral to other TKH procedures

Where the subject matter of an academic appeal could be more appropriately considered through a different process, submission will be referred to the relevant procedure. In these cases the outcome will be classed as Appeal Referred and the Registry Will notify the student and the relevant Head of School that the appeal has been referred to another procedure for consideration.

Appendix 2

Deadlines for complaints about issues of harassment by staff

You will receive a response from the Registry or relevant Head of School as quickly as possible but no longer than ten working days after you have made a formal complaint.

Harassment and Respect

Harassment can be any unwanted attention or behaviour that a person finds objectionable or offensive and which makes them feel threatened or uncomfortable, leading to a loss of dignity or self-respect. It is not the intent of the harasser but the impact on the recipient that defines harassment.

Harassment, for these purposes is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying is harassment which is not based on race, sex or any other personal factor. As with other forms of harassment, it can be defined as words, actions or other conduct which ridicules, intimidates or threatens and affects individual dignity and well-being. It may take many forms and may not be easy to recognise.

As articulated by our corporate value of inclusiveness, CU Branch at TKH and TKH recognises the diverse nature of our staff and student community through a proactive approach to equality and diversity, embracing a culture of mutual respect. We do not tolerate discriminatory practices or harassment of any kind. In line with our values, we work to continue to deliver a positive environment for the conduct of all our activities, where all members of our community treat one another with mutual respect and dignity.

Through our policies and practices we work to ensure that all students and staff are welcome in our community and do not face discrimination with regard to any aspect of their identity.

CU Branch at TKH and TKH strives to promote the health and well-being of all of our staff and students and provides a number of mechanisms to support this. These measures include our proactive approach to equality and diversity, our in-house health provision for staff and our students and our counselling service.

Appendix 3

Guide to TKH Procedures for Students

CU Branch at TKH and TKH has designed policies and procedures to aid you during your time here. It is important that you are aware that these rules, policies and procedures exist and you utilise them if necessary.

To ensure that you use the correct procedure for a given situation this brief guide aims to give an overview of what each procedure relates to.

You can seek advice on how the procedures operate from the Registry.

Policies can be viewed at:

www.tkh.edu.eg/policies

Academic Appeals

You should use this if you wish to appeal against an assessment decision **and** you are able to provide evidence on one or both of the following grounds: Unconsidered Extenuating Circumstances or Material Procedural Irregularity on the part of the CU Branch at TKH.

The Student Complaint Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with a service provided by TKH or a member of staff and you have already made an attempt to resolve your problem with the relevant School or Service, you can make a formal complaint under the Students Complaints Procedure.

Student Disciplinary Regulations

CU Branch at TKH and TKH has Regulations governing the conduct of students, including issues such as harassment and bullying. If you feel that a student has behaved in a way which breaches these Rules, and you wish to raise this, please seek advice the Registry.

Academic Misconduct Regulations

If an allegation of plagiarism or other infringement is made against you this will be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Regulations.

Guidance Notes for Students

Making a complaint

- 1) Ensure that you have read the student complaint procedure, making note of the circumstances in which you cannot use the complaints procedure;
- 2) If you wish to pursue a formal complaint then you must complete an official Complaint Form, sign and date the form, then submit it to the Registry.
- 3) You should retain a copy of the completed form and any evidence you submit with it;
- 4) If a group of students wish to raise a complaint it is acceptable for this to be done in one or two student names. The named student must undertake to inform other students who are party to the complaint of any responses received from CU Branch at TKH. Included with the complaint should be a list of all students who are party to the complaint and must include their full name, TKH registration number and a contact email address as well as signing to say that they support the content of the complaint and they agree to their name being submitted as part of the complaint;
- 5) It is important to be clear and concise when completing your complaint form, and to provide any evidence which supports your claims. You must state what you wish the outcome of your complaint to be;
- 6) This is a confidential process but if the complaint is about a member of staff they will be told of the complaint and its content;
- 7) You should make your complaint in good faith. If you make a complaint which you know to be untrue, unfounded or malicious you are likely to be disciplined. You should note the policy on unacceptable complainant behaviour in which can be found at www.tkh.edu.eg/policies
- 8) If at any point the subject of the complaint becomes part of a police investigation the complaints process will be suspended until such time as the police investigation has been completed;
- 9) Please note that CU Branch at TKH is not able to accept a complaint from a third party on your behalf – for example from your parents, unless you are under 18 years of age. If CU Branch at TKH receives a complaint from a third party they will be told that the student must raise the issue themselves. Occasionally a student who may be incapacitated, through illness for example, may request that their nominee act on their behalf with the University;
- 10) If after reading these notes and the procedure you are still unsure what to do please contact the Registry who will be happy to assist you..

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*****Disclaimer:** The Knowledge Hub Universities reviews the policies on regular basis if needed for work flow and business purposes.

Version Log	Date	Signature of the President of TKH
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