

# Student Complaints Procedure

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# Student Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

The University of Kent's Student Complaints Procedure sets out the way in which a complaint can be made by a student and the procedures for investigating and responding to a complaint.

The University is committed to providing all students with a high-quality education and student experience. However, we recognise that there may be instances where students have legitimate complaints regarding their course, the services or facilities provided by the School or the University. We take all such complaints seriously, deal with them in confidence, and ensure that students will not be disadvantaged for raising a complaint.

This procedure is designed to ensure that all student complaints are heard and responded to in a manner that is timely, fair, transparent, and based on the consideration of relevant evidence. As far as is reasonably possible, we will safeguard the interests and well-being of any student making a complaint and, when relevant, staff who may be named or otherwise involved in a complaint.

This procedure has been developed in accordance with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education's [Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals](#).

The Student Complaints Procedure is overseen by Senate and operated by the Student Conduct and Complaints Office who are responsible for investigating complaints raised and recording and storing student complaint files. Members of staff indicated in this procedure are University of Kent staff, unless specifically stated otherwise. Where a complaint is raised in regard to a KMMS service or facility the student will be referred to the [KMMS Student Complaints Procedure](#).

This procedure is distinct from the procedure for [Academic Appeals](#) and, in some rare instances, a complaint may overlap with an Academic Appeal. Where this applies, the Student Conduct and Complaints Office will adopt a proportional response in order to ensure that the requirements of both procedures are enacted in the best interests of all parties. The Student Conduct and Complaints Office reserve the right to defer the investigation of a complaint until the Academic Appeal has been resolved and vice-versa.

## General Principles

The University of Kent will ensure that the Student Complaints Procedure is:

**Accessible** – we aim to be responsive to the needs of students and provide clear information, advice, and support, with access to representation by the [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) for Medway Students.

**Clear** – we will give a clear definition of a complaint and explain the complaints process in clear language, which is easy to understand and well sign-posted.

**Timely** – we will give clear time limits in which to bring complaints to the attention of the University and will identify those complaints that require swift resolution. We will normally complete all complaints within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal complaint. However, there may be circumstances which mean that the complaint may take longer, for example, liaison with other departments or external agencies. Should there be any delay in the complaint process you will be advised and kept up to date.

**Fair** – we will ensure that all staff involved in the decision-making are independent, trained in complaint investigation, and well-resourced, and that each party is given an equal opportunity to present their case. Students will not be disadvantaged as a result of bringing a complaint.

**Independent** – decisions will be taken by people without perceived or actual conflicts of interest at all stages.

**Confidential** – a complaint will be treated with an appropriate level of confidentiality and will normally only be disclosed to those involved in its investigation.

**Action Taken** – the University of Kent will ensure appropriate action is taken and will use this process to improve the student experience.

A student raising a complaint to the University is expected to:

- Be respectful and courteous in the submission of a complaint and in the subsequent investigations.
- Seek a resolution that is reasonable, constructive, and proportionate.
- Provide a full explanation of the complaint in a timely fashion, along with supporting evidence.
- Co-operate with this procedure as far as they are reasonably able.

## What is a Complaint?

We have adopted the following definition for a student complaint from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education's ['Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals'](#)

*"An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University."*

Examples of a complaint include:

- Failure by the University to provide a satisfactory service.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the University.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided by a partner University/college.
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the University.
- Infringement of a student's right to freedom of speech within the law.
- Infringement of a research student's right to academic freedom, as detailed in Ordinance 39.
- Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the University (please note that your complaint may be referred to an appropriate third party for resolution).

A separate Early Resolution complaints procedure is available for students wishing to report accommodation issues or concerns in relation to their tenancy with the University. Students can find more information about this at [Accommodation - University of Kent](#).

## Who Can Make a Complaint and Timescales

Complaints can normally be made by registered students on a University of Kent programme or award, including students on approved periods of interruption or recent graduates.

Normally complaints raised should be submitted within three months of the incident taking place, however, the University recognises that there may be circumstances that prevents

a student from submitting a formal complaint within this timeframe. Complaints raised outside of this timeframe will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Alumni or Third-party complaints in relation to historical allegations of serious staff misconduct can be submitted outside of the stated timeframes and may be considered in line with the Student Complaint Protocol (Annex A). Historical allegations in relation to current students will be considered under the Student Discipline Procedure.

Complaints related to the Consumer Rights Protection Law issues can be made by prospective students that applied to study at the University of Kent, prospective students that have accepted an offer to study at the University of Kent and enrolled students.

Complaints will normally be dealt with completely within 90 calendar days of the acceptance of a formal complaint by the Student Conduct and Complaints Office. The University of Kent's Student Conduct and Complaints Office will aim to complete the Formal Stage within 60 Calendar days of an Investigating Officer being assigned. The Student Conduct and Complaints Office reserves the right to make any reasonable extension to this timescale during the vacation periods and will inform the student of any such extension.

### Collective or Group Complaints

Complaints will normally be made by individual students, but where appropriate, groups of students are permitted to make a collective complaint where the subject matter is the same or similar. In such circumstances, the group (more than two students) should appoint a spokesperson. Due to the complexity these, group complaints consisting of more than two students will be automatically progressed to the Formal Stage of this procedure.

### Anonymous Complaints

The University does all it can to ensure that students who raise concerns are supported appropriately. However, it is important to note that the University may not be able to act on complaints that are made anonymously. This is because the University is under an obligation to deal with allegations in a fair and reasonable way and in accordance with the rules of natural justice. Natural justice means that adjudication is unbiased and given in good faith and that each party is aware of the arguments and documents given by the other. In cases of doubt as to whether to raise a complaint a student can seek confidential, independent advice from the Students' Union [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) for Medway students.

### Third-Party Complaints

A complaint from a third party will only be accepted on behalf of a student from a Students' Union Advice Centre representative or other third-parties if we receive written authority from the student for them to act on their behalf. Should a complaint be received from a third party, the student (if identified) will be contacted regarding their complaint by the Student Conduct and Complaints Office.

### Complaints Regarding Serious Staff Misconduct

Complaints regarding serious misconduct or sexual misconduct by university staff will automatically be escalated to the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints and considered in line with the separate protocol set out in Annex A. Details of any complaint about a member of staff may be shared with them so that they can respond to any allegations made against them. This will be done in line with Data Protection Law, and this will be discussed with the reporting individual before any documentation is shared. Students who wish to report incidents anonymously or wish to report historical incidents are encouraged to do so via [Report&Support](#). If a historical report regarding a member of staff is received through the Student Complaints Procedure, it may be referred to the protocol set out in Annex A.

## Right to be Accompanied

Students are able to be supported at any meeting regarding their complaint by a member of staff, member of a Students' Union [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) or another student at the University. It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend. The meeting organiser must be made aware of any additional attendee at least 2 days before the meeting.

The Student Complaints procedure is not a legal process; therefore, a student does not require a legal representative to access the procedure. A student may only be accompanied by a legal representative if they have received express agreement from the University. Requests for a legal representative to be present at meetings should be submitted to [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk) as soon as practicably possible. Please note that the appointment of legal representation may delay the complaints process.

## Reasonable Adjustments

The University will make reasonable adjustments to this procedure where it is reasonable to do so to prevent a student from experiencing less favourable treatment because of a disability or impairment. In such cases, the University's Student Support and Wellbeing team may be consulted.

## Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

The Student Conduct and Complaints Office reserves the right to reject any complaint without full consideration if it is considered frivolous or vexatious.

Examples include:

- Complaints that are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive.
- Insistence on pursuing unmeritorious complaints.
- Seeking unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes.
- Insistence on pursuing what may be a meritorious complaint in an unreasonable manner.
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.
- Complaints that repeatedly contain abusive or offensive language.

If the Student Conduct and Complaints Office consider that the student's complaint falls into one or more of the categories, the student will be advised that the complaint will not be considered further, and a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.

## Suspension or Termination of a Complaint

The Student Conduct and Complaints Office, in consultation with other departments and if necessary, will determine if the complaint overlaps with other regulations or policies and to determine how to progress the complaint, if at all. In exceptional circumstances, the Student Conduct and Complaints Office may terminate a complaint at any stage, for example, where the student's behaviour in relation to the complaint or investigation is deemed unacceptable or disruptive, or where a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or malicious. In such cases, the University may also invoke the Student Discipline Procedure.

## Early Resolution

The focus of Early Resolution is to support an attempt at resolving a student complaint prior to a formal complaint being submitted. Early Resolution can involve the student either speaking with an appropriate member of university staff, such as an Academic Advisor or Engagement Support Officer within their Division. Complaints at this stage can be submitted face-to-face,

by phone, in writing, or by email. Normally a discussion between the appropriate member of staff and the student will then take place.

In some cases, service departments operate distinct complaints procedures, such as accommodation. In such cases these Early Resolution complaint procedures will take precedent. The Students' Union [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) can offer support and impartial advice.

Early Resolution of complaints will be recorded by the Department or Division. Agreed notes from any meetings may be added to a student file as evidence of the complaint and subsequent resolution and will be shared with the Student Conduct and Complaints Office should a formal investigation take place.

If a complaint cannot be resolved through Early Resolution, then a formal complaint can be made, and the student will be directed to the formal procedure as soon as possible.

## **Formal Complaint**

If a complaint cannot be resolved through Early Resolution or it is not appropriate for the complaint to be considered at the Early Resolution stage, a student may submit a formal complaint by completing a Student Complaints Form or by contacting the Student Conduct and Complaints Office. Copies of the form can be found at the end of this procedure.

A Complaint Form should provide the nature of the concern as concisely as possible.

- Any supporting evidence.
- The actions the student has taken to try and resolve the complaint through Early Resolution (if appropriate).
- The outcome/resolution the student is requesting.

The completed form and any supporting documentation should be submitted by email to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office at [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk). Incomplete forms may be returned to the student. Students can seek advice on completing the form or submitting a complaint with appropriate supporting evidence from the Students' Union [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) for Medway students.

The Student Conduct and Complaints Office will normally acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 5 working days. If Early Resolution has not been attempted by the student, the Student Conduct and Complaints Officer may refer the complaint back to the Early Resolution stage of this procedure.

The Student Conduct and Complaints Office will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a Student Conduct and Complaints Officer who will normally be independent and have no previous knowledge of the complaint.

A record of all meetings, whether face-to-face or conducted remotely, will be taken, and held in the student complaint file. Digital recordings of any meetings are not normally permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances/ reasonable adjustment requirements, and it is agreed in advance with the Student Conduct and Complaints Office.

Where necessary the Student Conduct and Complaints Officer may seek advice from specialist services, including legal services. Where there are equality and diversity considerations specialist advice will be sought at the earliest opportunity.

The Student Conduct and Complaints Officer will produce a written report and, where appropriate, include supporting evidence and recommendations. The report will be submitted to the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints for comment, to ensure that the

correct procedures have been followed and all concerns raised in the complaint have been responded to.

The report will then be submitted to the appropriate Director of Division or Professional Services Department, or nominee, for consideration. The outcomes of student complaints will remain provisional until approved by the appropriate Director or nominee.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint but does not meet the grounds for review the Student Conduct and Complaints Office will provide the student with an explanation and close the matter and issue the student with a Completion of Procedures Letter within 28 calendar days of the outcome being provided.

## **Review**

If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint investigation on the grounds stated below, they can request a Review of the complaint outcome by submitting a Review Request Form by email to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office at [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk).

Requests for a complaint review will be considered if one or more of the following grounds are met:

- There has been a procedural error or other irregularity in applying the Procedure when the Complaint was considered at the Formal stage.
- There is new evidence that could not be made available when the Formal Complaint was submitted that could have affected the outcome of the complaint.

The outcome decision was upheld or partially upheld but the decision or the proposed remedy was unreasonable or disproportionate. The request should be submitted in writing, including any supporting evidence, to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office, within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of the complaint.

The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints will assess the Review Request using the criteria above and decide as to whether the request is based on permitted grounds and is eligible to be considered.

If it is considered that the request for a Review meets one or more of the grounds, the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints will allocate a senior member of staff from the University of Kent who has not previously been involved, to conduct a Review. The purpose of conducting the review is to consider whether the grounds stated have merit. A Review will not normally involve a fresh, full investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the Formal stage before it can be escalated to Review.

If it is believed that the grounds for a Review have not been met, the student will be informed, and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued within 28 calendar days of the decision.

The outcome of a Review will be that the reviewer can either:

- Dismiss the case.
- Conclude that the Review is upheld, and recommendations will be made.
- Conclude that the complaint will be returned to a new Student Conduct and Complaints Officer to consider the new evidence submitted.

The decision taken by the Reviewer is final. The final decision of the Review will be communicated to the student in writing, with reasons, usually within 28 calendar days from the review request being accepted.

If the outcome of the Review is that a complaint is upheld, a student can still request a Completion of Procedures letter and one will be issued within 28 days of the request being made.

If the outcome of the Review is referral back to the formal stage and the complaint is not upheld, a completion of procedures letter will be issued 28 calendar days of the decision being issued.

## Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Once all stages of this procedure have been exhausted, the student has the right to refer the case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) for further review. An application to the OIA must be submitted within 12 months of the issue of a Completion of Procedures Letter. Full details regarding the OIA's rules and guidelines are available at their website.

## Students on Placements

A complaint about a student's experience on a placement may relate to:

- matters falling under the jurisdiction of the University.

or

- matters more properly falling under the jurisdiction of the host institution or company.

While advice on which procedure is appropriate should be sought from the Placement Supervisor, matters related to placement learning will normally fall under the jurisdiction of the University of Kent and the following procedure should apply:

- In the first instance a complaint should be considered at Early Resolution with either the appropriate member of staff or with the Placement Supervisor. This may be done by the student(s) concerned, another student, the Placement Supervisor or another academic member of staff acting on behalf of the student(s) making the complaint.

Academic complaints should be submitted following the procedure of the institution in which the student is based.

A complainant remaining dissatisfied, who has exhausted the complaints procedure of the partner institution, may then submit a request for Review.

Partner institutions may process complaints on non-academic grounds according to their procedures for doing so without recourse to the University of Kent. Where complaints are made with respect to services provided by the University of Kent, the University of Kent's complaint procedure for students should be used.

A non-academic complaint means any specific concern, other than one relating to an academic matter, made by a student with regard to services provided by the institution against which the complaint is made.

If the student(s) remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the academic complaint further, the matter should be put in writing in line with the above procedures. However, as the placement organisation will need to be consulted, this may necessitate a longer timescale, and this will be communicated to the student.



## Procedure for Complaints Regarding Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

The Apprentice and (host) employer should try to resolve any dispute through Early Resolution in the first instance. If a student wishes to submit a complaint to their host employer regarding their Higher and Degree Apprenticeship they can seek independent advice from the National Apprentice Helpline, 08000150400, and/or the [Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](#) for Medway students.

Complaints from Apprentices regarding the University should be raised in line with this procedure.

## Complaints in Relation to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships Employment

An employment relationship can give rise to concerns or problems in relation to some aspects of the employment, including relationships with colleagues, working conditions or contractual terms.

Complaints that an Apprentice may have in relation to the employment aspect of the apprenticeship should be raised in accordance with the (host) employer's own internal grievance procedure. If the Student requires support with this process, they can contact the University or the Students' Union Advice Centre.

## Recording and Monitoring

We are committed to continuous improvement and constructive handling of complaints to ensure that similar situations do not re-occur. Complaints are monitored by the Student Conduct and Complaints Office to identify trends, areas of good practice and where improvements could be made to university practices. This information will also be used to review and continuously improve the Student Complaints Procedure.

The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints will use complaint records to submit a termly report to Deputy Vice Chancellor of Education and Student Experience and appropriate Boards and committees. Annual Reports will be submitted to the Graduate School Board and Education Board on an annual basis.

Recommendations within this report shall be used to enhance the quality of the student experience. Such reports will not contain any personally identifiable data.

A summary of actions taken in response to student complaints raised to the OIA will be made available to the University of Kent's Council Periodically.

## Version Control Statement

|                           |  |                  |              |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|
| Version: 1.0              |  |                  |              |
| Document title:           | Student Complaints Procedure           |                  |              |
| Author Name:              | Head of Student Conduct and Complaints |                  |              |
| Approved date:            | 12 December 2023                       |                  |              |
| Approved by:              | Student Experience Board               |                  |              |
| Date of Review:           | July 2027                              |                  |              |
| Procedure applies from    | 1 January 2024                         |                  |              |
| Amendments since approval | Detail of Revision:                    | Date of Revision | Approved by: |

## Annex A Formal Complaint Form

Please contact the Student Conduct and Complaints Office if you wish to receive this form in an alternative format.

Please note that the boxes will expand on typing.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>First name(s)_</b>   | <b>Title</b> |
| <b>Surname</b>  |              |
| <b>Student login</b>  |              |
| <b>Student ID number</b>  |              |
| <b>Programme of Study</b>   |              |
| <b>Year/Academic stage</b>  |              |
| <b>Division</b>   |              |
| <b>Address for Correspondence (include postcode)</b>  |              |
| <b>Email Address for correspondence</b>   |              |
| <b>Please set out below the KEY POINTS of your complaint.</b><br><b>Key point 1:</b><br><br><b>Key Point 2:</b><br><br><b>Key Point 3:</b><br><br><b>Other Key points:</b>  |              |
| <b>What documented evidence do you have to support your complaint? Please give details and attach any supporting documents.</b>   |              |
| <b>Who did you approach to resolve your complaint informally? What action, if any, was taken to remedy your complaint? Please note that this information will be checked with the relevant Academic School, Division or Department.</b> |              |

| Date   | Name | Action taken | Outcome      |
|--|------|--------------|--------------|
| <p><b>What prevented the complaint being resolved informally?</b></p> <p><b>Key point 1:</b></p> <p><b>Key Point 2:</b></p> <p><b>Key Point 3:</b></p>   |      |              |              |
| <p><b>How do you propose that your complaint could be resolved to your satisfaction?</b></p> <p><b>Key point 1:</b></p> <p><b>Key Point 2:</b></p> <p><b>Key Point 3:</b></p>  |      |              |              |
| <p><b>Declaration</b></p> <p>I declare that the information given in this Review Form is a true statement of the facts and that I would be willing, if required, to answer further questions related to it.</p> <p>I agree to the University of Kent using my personal data to process the complaint, in accordance with the Student Conduct and Complaints Privacy Notice, which can be found in full at <a href="#">Student Complaints - Help - University of Kent</a></p> <p>I agree that if required my complaint and accompanying documentation may be shared with the University Insurance Office and University Insurers.</p> |      |              |              |
| <b>Signature:</b>  |      |              | <b>Date:</b> |

*Please return the completed form to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office by email to [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk). Your complaint form will be acknowledged within five working days.*

## Annex B Review Form

Please contact the Student Conduct and Complaints Office if you wish to receive this form in an alternative format. Please note that the boxes will expand on typing.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>First name(s)_</b>  | <b>Title</b> |
| <b>Surname</b>   |              |
| <b>Student login</b>   |              |
| <b>Student ID number</b>   |              |
| <b>Address for Correspondence (include postcode)</b>   |              |
| <b>Email Address for correspondence</b>  |              |
| <b>Please indicate your reason for requesting a review</b>   |              |
| There has been a procedural error or other irregularity in applying the Procedure when the Complaint was considered at the formal stage. (please include details below)  |              |
| There is new evidence that could not be made available when the Formal complaint was submitted that could have affected the outcome of the complaint. (please include details below)   |              |
| The outcome decision was upheld or partially upheld but the decision or the proposed remedy was unreasonable or disproportionate. (please include details below)   |              |
| <b>How do you propose your complaint could be resolved?</b>  |              |
| <b>Declaration</b>   |              |
| I declare that the information given in this Review Form is a true statement of the facts and that I would be willing, if required, to answer further questions related to it. I agree to the University of Kent using my personal data to process the complaint, in accordance with the Student Conduct and Complaints Privacy Notice, which can be found in full at <a href="#">Student Complaints - Help - University of Kent</a> |              |
| I agree that if required my complaint and accompanying documentation may be shared with the University Insurance Office and University Insurers.   |              |
| <b>Signature:</b>  | <b>Date:</b> |

Please return the completed form to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office by email to [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk). Your complaint form will be acknowledged within five working days.

## Annex C– Student Complaints Regarding Serious Staff Misconduct

### Student Complaints Regarding Staff Misconduct Procedure

#### Scope

Protocol for managing allegations of serious staff misconduct made by students against members of university staff.

#### Guidance

The University has established procedures for dealing with complaints made by students and for dealing with allegations of misconduct against members of staff (Ordinances). The following is intended to provide guidance for those involved in dealing with complaints made by students that involve allegations of serious misconduct against members of university staff and which therefore need to be handled with reference to both the student complaints and the staff conduct procedures.

#### Reporting an Incident(s)

A complaint can be submitted to the Student Conduct and complaints Office, to a member of staff at the University or submitted via [Report&Support](#).

If the complaint is in relation to sexual misconduct the student should always be referred to the Wellbeing Manager (Sexual Assault and Harassment) via the Student Support and Wellbeing Team. **PRIOR TO ANY INVESTIGATION COMMENCING.**

Complaints of a non-specialist nature must be passed immediately to the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints.

The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints will acknowledge the complaint and where appropriate signpost the student to relevant support services. If the student does not wish to engage with support services a meeting will be held with a Student Conduct and Complaints Officer so that the student can be advised of any appropriate procedures/identifying risk.

#### Complaint Investigation

The Head of Student Conduct and Complaints will provide the Director of Division or Director of Professional Service Department (PSD) in which the member of staff works a copy of the formal complaint. The Director of Division or PSD Director must inform the relevant HR member of staff of the complaint against a member of staff and send a copy of the full complaint.

Where the complaint is against the Director of Division or PSD Director in which the member of staff works, the Head of Student Conduct and Complaints consult with the relevant EG member and will then refer the case to the appropriate investigator.

The Director of Division or PSD Director will consider the complaint and the information and evidence provided and may meet with the student. The Director of Division or PSD will then meet with the member of staff to explain the complaint and to give the member of staff an opportunity to respond.

If the Director of Division or PSD Director has questions/clarification for the student, this may be obtained from the student directly with the support of Student Support and Wellbeing (if appropriate).

If the Director of Division or PSD Director can find no evidence to support an allegation of misconduct or believes there has been a misinterpretation of events, they will inform the student of the outcome along with the reasons for this decision.

If the student remains dissatisfied, they can request a review of the decision on the same grounds as set out in the Student Complaints Procedure. Requests for a review will be submitted to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office and will follow the review steps as set out in the Student Conduct and Complaints Procedure.

The Director of Division or PSD Director must ensure that a written record is kept of their initial investigation and decision and the decision should be shared with the Student Conduct and Complaints Office.

The Formal Complaints stage will normally be completed within 60 working days.

If, once an initial investigation is completed, the Director of Division or PSD Director believes that there is evidence of misconduct, they will inform the member of staff and the student in writing that a full independent investigation will be carried out into the concerns raised, in line with the appropriate Ordinances. This signifies the end of the Student Complaints Procedure, and the student will be informed of this by the Student Conduct and Complaints Office. A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.

### Independent investigation under Ordinances

Once it has been agreed that a full independent investigation will be carried out the Director of Division or PSD Director will also decide whether the member of staff should be suspended in accordance with Ordinance 44: Suspension whilst an investigation is undertaken. Any decision to suspend a member of staff will be regularly reviewed in conjunction with the HR PP. Should any suspension be put in place or removed, where appropriate to do so, and in line with data compliance the student will be informed of that decision.

The Director of Division or PSD Director, in conjunction with the HR PP, will ensure an investigation is carried out in accordance with Ordinance 39: Conduct, including, where necessary, appointing a completely Independent Investigating Officer.

The Investigating Officer will be responsible for informing the student of the investigation process and will keep the student up to date with the progress of the investigation. When the investigation is complete a report will be provided to the Director of Division or PSD. The Investigating Officer will have no prior knowledge of the case.

If the outcome of the investigation into the complaint is that there is no case to answer, the Director of Division or PSD Director will inform the member of staff and student of the outcome/decision. The Investigation outcome is final.

If the outcome of the investigation into the complaint against the member of staff is that there is a case to answer, the Director of Division or PSD Director will inform the student that the investigation has identified grounds for the case to be considered further in conjunction with the HR PP and convene a disciplinary panel to hear the case in accordance with Ordinance 39: Conduct.

The Panel will decide whether or not disciplinary or any other action is warranted.

The HR PP will inform the Director of Division or PSD Director of the outcome of the hearing including any disciplinary action. The Director of Division or PSD Director will advise the student of any remedial action, if appropriate to do so, considering data protection requirements.

The student is unable to appeal or request a review of the Panel decision.

## Support Available for Staff Who Are the Subject of a Complaint

Advice and support for staff is available from the member of staff's Line Manager, designated HR representative, Occupational Health, Trades Union, or Staff Representative.

## Support for Students Who Have Submitted a Complaint

[Kent Union Advice Centre](#) or [Greenwich Students' Union \(greenwichsu.co.uk\)](http://greenwichsu.co.uk) for Medway students.

[Student Support and Wellbeing Team](#)

[Student Conduct and Complaints Office](#)