



Academic Quality Framework

Student Academic Complaints Procedure

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1. Context

The University recognises that situations may arise whereby students consider that the management and/or delivery of their programme of study is not in accordance with approved procedures. In this regard the University provides a pathway to allow students to raise such concerns and complaints.

This Student Academic Complaints Procedure provides an opportunity for such complaints to be addressed internally and informally in the first instance. It is recommended that such complaints should be addressed as near to their source as possible. Students are encouraged to initially seek redress with the lecturer concerned or through their Year Tutor, Programme Coordinator, Class Representative, Student Union Representative, Head of Discipline or Head of School.

The formal procedure provides for several stages in the handling of a complaint. The purpose is to ensure that such complaints are resolved appropriately and transparently. It is envisaged that most complaints may be addressed and resolved without recourse to this formal process.

There are several other areas where issues may arise, but where separate policies and procedures are provided for in those instances, e.g.:

1. Student Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures ([Student Dignity and Respect Policy](#)).
2. Appeals against decisions of Examinations Boards and breaches of assessment regulations (as outlined in the Assessment Regulations and Marks and Standards) (See: [Exam Forms](#)).
3. Student Disciplinary Procedures (See: [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#)).

The following procedure applies to all students registered on programmes leading to TU Dublin awards. It allows students to make a complaint in instances where approved quality assurance procedures may not have been followed in relation to a programme, e.g.:

1. A programme is not delivered according to the published information provided to students (Approved Programme Document, Student Handbook).
2. The Student Voice was not taken into consideration as part of Programme and Module Amendments/Programme Review/School Review as provided for in the Quality Framework.
3. Relevant programme information, i.e., Student Handbook, is not provided to students.
4. Any other issue related to quality in programme delivery.

The University will ensure that such complaints are treated seriously and constructively at all stages of the complaints process. It will also seek to ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and consistently. If a complaint is upheld, appropriate remedial action shall be implemented. If a complaint is dismissed, the reason(s) for the decision will be communicated to the complainant.

The University will seek to ensure that student complaints are addressed promptly and within the timescales specified in this process. If the timescale set for addressing a complaint is not achievable at any stage in the process, then the complainant shall be provided with an explanation regarding the cause of the delay. Students will have the opportunity to raise complaints on an individual, or collective, basis without fear of future disadvantage or recrimination.

In executing this procedure, the need for privacy and confidentiality of both complainants and respondents will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to other TU Dublin staff members to deal with the complaint, and in such circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure. A complainant is entitled to be accompanied at all stages of the Student

Academic Complaints Procedure by a friend or colleague for support. Students shall be encouraged to seek such supports and advice from the Students' Union.

2. Using the Structures of the Quality Framework

Therefore, before lodging a formal complaint under this procedure, the student should seek to have an informal discussion of any issue that arises in relation to the delivery, management or assessment of a programme with the lecturer concerned, or with their Year Tutor, Programme Coordinator, class representative, or relevant Head of Discipline. This facilitates an amicable and fast resolution of the issue, where achievable. The staff member or class representative may consider it appropriate to bring the matter to the attention of the Programme Coordinator/School Management and/or Discipline Programme Board for resolution. A student may wish to contact the Head of School directly regarding their complaint, where they do not wish to discuss the matter with other programme lecturing or administrative staff.

If the issue cannot be addressed through the informal approach, and associated channels, above, then the student has recourse to a formal complaint process as per the stages in the Students Complaints Procedure as outlined below.

3. Stages in the Student Complaints Procedure

The flow chart and procedure below (*Figure 1*) outline the sequential stages to be followed when a student wishes to make a formal complaint in relation to their programme of study. Any student on a programme of study leading to a TU Dublin award who wishes to make a complaint should do so as soon as the issue leading to the complaint emerges, and within the semester in which the issue has emerged.

A class representative or TU Dublin Student Union Representative can make the complaint on behalf of a larger student group, where the issue affects multiple students.

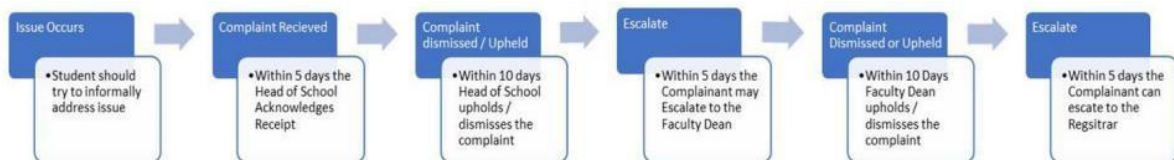


Figure 1. Flowchart overview of the Student Complaints Procedure

The formal complaint process consists of a number of stages, as outlined below.

Stage 1: Submission of Complaint to Head of School

- 1.1 The Complainant submits the Complaint Form to the Head of School. The complainant should ensure that they retain copies of the Complaint Form sent to the Head of School as they must submit a copy of this form, should they wish to pursue the complaint through further formal stages, as outlined below. An evidenced basis for an academic complaint is a fundamental requirement for rigor and fairness in the due process of consideration of such a complaint. As such, anonymous submissions shall not be considered. The Head of School, or nominee, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days.
- 1.2 The Head of School shall consider the complaint. If the Head of School upholds the complaint, they shall agree and implement the action(s) to resolve the matter.
- 1.3 If the Head of School dismisses the complaint, the Complainant will be informed in writing of the reason for the dismissal.
- 1.4 The decision of the Head of School is communicated in writing to the Complainant and Programme Coordinator (where applicable) and Head of Discipline within 10 working days of receipt of the Complaint Form. The Complainant may escalate the issue to the Faculty process (via the Faculty Dean) within 5 working days of the notification of the decision of the Head of School. In this event, the Complainant should forward to the Faculty Office a copy of the Complaint Form sent to the Head of School, along with any other relevant correspondence.

Stage 2: Escalation of Complaint to Faculty Dean

- 2.1 The Faculty Dean or nominee shall consider the complaint. If the complaint is upheld, the Faculty Dean shall decide the action to be taken to resolve the matter and shall refer this decision to the Head of School for implementation.
- 2.2 The decision of the Faculty Dean will be communicated in writing to the Complainant, and Head of School within 10 working days of receipt of the Complaint Form and associated documentation (where submitted).

Stage 3: Escalation of Complaint to University Registrar

- 3.1 If the Faculty Dean dismisses the complaint, the Complainant may submit the the complaint to the Registrar within 5 working days of the notification of the decision of the Faculty Dean. The Complainant should forward a copy of the Complaint Form along with relevant correspondence.
- 3.2 The Registrar considers the case. If the complaint is upheld, the Registrar shall decide on the action to be taken to resolve the matter and shall refer this decision to the Head of School for implementation. The decision of the Registrar is final.
- 3.3 The decision of the Registrar is then communicated in writing to the Complainant, Faculty Dean, and Head of School.

4. Retention of Complaints Records

Heads of School, Faculty Deans and Academic Affairs shall keep a record of complaints submitted under this process, along with written evidence and related correspondence in accordance with the relevant Records Retention schedule.