

C RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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C RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Guidance notes for staff and students on the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the University Secretary's Office: + 44 (0)191 227 4399

Students may seek independent advice and support from the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre: su.advice@northumbria.ac.uk

Assistance to students wishing to use the Student Complaints Procedure may also be obtained from Student Support and Wellbeing and the Students' Union.

Assistance to staff on the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the University Secretary's Office.

C1 INTRODUCTION

C1.1 As part of the University's commitment to quality, the procedure (Section 2 onwards) has been devised in order to deal with circumstances where, as a result of a student's experience at the University, he/she has a complaint about some aspect of the University's service. It is hoped that in a majority of cases, the student experience will be favourable, and therefore that this procedure will only rarely need to be used. Where routine difficulties arise, standard processes exist to enable straightforward resolution. However, on occasion there may come a point when further action is required and there is need for an accessible procedure that will deal with such matters speedily and satisfactorily.

C1.2 The provision for complaints includes several distinct procedures to deal with:

- Complaints against a School or Service (Section 4-8)
- Complaints against the Students Union (Section 9-13)
- Other Complaints which fall under neither of these procedures (Section 14)

C2 PRINCIPLES

C2.1 The procedures have been developed by the University to ensure that complaints made by students are treated seriously and, if found to be valid, acted upon to ensure that the student's position is protected as far as it is possible for the University to do so. It applies to matters affecting an individual student or group of students, except where the matters fall within another established procedure (see Section 3.1).

Because of the particular nature of research degree programmes, it might be appropriate that an Independent PGR Counsellor be involved at the informal stage to facilitate resolution of difficulties. The nature of this role is defined by the Graduate School Committee, and effectiveness of the role with regard to complaints is monitored and kept under review by the Graduate School Committee.

C2.2 The chief principles are that:

- i. student complaints should be dealt with seriously and fairly;
student complaints should be dealt with quickly and simply, and at the level of the direct service agency*, or as close to that as possible; [* 'Direct service

agency' may be an academic School, or University service]

- ii. student complaints should be treated in a consistent fashion across the University;
- iii. the principles of natural justice are complied with when a complaint is investigated, namely: the complaint shall be dealt with in good faith, and in an impartial and fair manner; that no one should be the judge in his or her own cause; that all concerned – complainant and the person or persons to whom the claim is addressed – shall have the right to a fair hearing. This includes impartiality on the part of the person hearing the complaint; the provision of the detail of the complaint and response, to both parties in advance of a Hearing; the requirement that both parties be informed of the outcome of the complaint and the reasons for any decision made;
- iv. there should be a reasonable expectation that legitimate complaints will be addressed properly;
- v. the procedure should be used only where all other routes of consultation, representation or redress have been exhausted;
- vi. it does not affect the rights of students to pursue legal remedies (if appropriate);
- vii. only proper and valid complaints will be investigated;
- viii. vexatious and/or malicious complaints¹ shall be considered *prima facie* grounds for misconduct by the complainant, and hence for disciplinary action to be dealt with under provisions elsewhere in the *Handbook of Student Regulations* (Section 3: Student Disciplinary Rules and Procedures);
- ix. save in exceptional circumstances no action will be taken in respect of anonymous, or anonymised complaints;
- x. *bona fide* complaints will be dealt with fairly, courteously, and confidentially, with the proviso that staff or other students involved in the complaint will be informed;
- xi. the deadline for receipt of complaints shall normally be three months after the alleged event(s) concerned which gives rise to the complaint.
- xii. Throughout the complaints process the student may be accompanied by a friend who is a member of the University, a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer or a member of the Advice and Representation Centre. Upon occasion, and with the agreement of all the parties concerned, the student may also be represented by such a friend.²
- xiii. At any stage the complaints procedure can be suspended if both parties agree to mediation in order to attempt to resolve the dispute. This would be without prejudice to continuation of the complaint should the student wish. The mediator would be someone agreeable to both parties.

¹ A *vexatious* complaint is one made solely to harass. A *malicious* complaint is one that is revealed to be without foundation and in which the complainant has lied or misled.

² A student might be represented by a friend if natural justice so required, see C2.2iv.

- xiv. The Dean of School or Director of Service may nominate a senior member of staff to act on their behalf in investigating a complaint.

C3 SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

C3.1 The procedure may not be used where another procedure is in existence, including:

- (i) the procedures for student discipline and appeals;
- (ii) the outcome, or the potential outcome, of the procedures for Annual Progression, viva voce examinations and/or assessment, and the procedures for appeals against the decisions taken by the School Research Committee or University Research Degrees Committee;
- (iii) appeals against requests to students to withdraw for unsatisfactory performance generally;
- (iv) any other agreed procedures within the University.

NB:

- (a) Where doubt exists on which procedure to use, definitive advice should be obtained from the University Secretary's Office.
- (b) In addition, a student may discuss issues of concern with the Director of Academic Services, a student welfare and international adviser within Student Support and Wellbeing, a PGR student representative on the appropriate School Research Committee or Graduate School Committee, or with a representative of the Students' Union.

C3.2 Student concerns raised under other existing procedures may not also be pursued concurrently by the Student Complaints Procedure; equally student complaints raised under the Student Complaints Procedure may not also be pursued concurrently under other existing procedures.

C3.3 Staff may not concurrently initiate actions under other existing University procedures for matters that are the subject of consideration under the Student Complaints Procedure.

C3.4 Procedures shall normally be completed according to the timescales indicated in these regulations. If for any reason these timescales cannot be met, the student shall be informed.

C4 PROCEDURE A (FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST SCHOOLS OR SERVICE DEPARTMENTS AND MATTERS WHICH FALL UNDER THE AUSPICES OF A SCHOOL)

C4.1 Procedure A covers all matters other than those involving complaints against the Students' Union: see Procedure B, Sections 9-13. See also Section 14 for complaints that do not fall under either procedure.

C5 Stage One – The Informal Stage

C5.1 It is expected that in the first instance complaints will be made directly to the person delivering the service. If for good reason this is not feasible, then the complaint should be directed either to the appropriate person nominated in the School to deal with research student complaints or (where this is not possible, for whatever reason) to the Independent PGR Counsellor, who is a senior person appointed to

assist with the swift and effective resolution of difficulties.

- C5.2 It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to ensure that all students are informed of the appropriate person to whom a student may make a complaint. Notices shall be posted in all Schools, Services and other areas of the University to ensure that students are aware of their rights in this respect. Students off campus should seek advice as indicated at the beginning of this document.
- C5.3 In addition, a student may discuss issues of concern with the Director of Academic Services; a student welfare and international adviser within the Student Support and Wellbeing Department; a PGR student representative on the appropriate School Research Committee or Graduate School Committee; and with the Students' Union.
- CG5.4 The University hopes that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally. The discussions taking place at this stage shall remain confidential unless both parties agree to the sharing of information with others, or the complaint goes to Stage Two.
- C5.5 A student who wishes to make a complaint is in the first instance strongly encouraged to identify in writing the issues about which they are dissatisfied and the outcomes they desire to rectify this. This should form the basis of the discussion with the staff concerned. If the complaint is against a School, rather than against an individual staff member, it should first be presented for discussion to the Dean of School. In the case of a complaint against a University Service, informal discussion should take place with the Service Director.
- C5.6 At this stage, the person to whom the complaint is made will discuss it informally with the student and other persons who are involved, to explore whether the complaint can be resolved without resort to more formal procedures. It is expected that informal complaints will normally be concluded within 10 days of the initial discussion; undue delay beyond this period may be reason for the matter proceeding to the next stage.
- C5.7 Both the student and the person to whom the complaint is made, should seek to bring the informal complaint to a clear conclusion in an appropriate timescale, even if there is no agreement.
- C5.8 No complaint about any named person shall be raised within any Committees.

C6 Stage Two – The Formal Stage

- C6.1 If, having pursued the informal approach outlined at Stage One of this procedure, the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may then start the formal stage of the procedure by submitting a completed Student Complaints Pro Forma to the appropriate person responsible, i.e.:
- Service Director or
 - Dean of School or
 - if the complaint concerns the Dean of School, to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) or
 - if the complaint concerns the Director of a University Service, to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman (or their nominee)

The deadline for submission of such a formal complaint is normally 10 working days

from the conclusion of the informal complaints process. The Student Complaints Pro Forma should indicate both why the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal approach at Stage One, and the outcome sought.

C6.2 The Stage Two procedure is as follows:

- (i) The student completes a Student Complaints Pro Forma and delivers it to the appropriate person responsible (see above)
- (ii) On receiving a written complaint, the appropriate person responsible shall, as soon as possible, and not later than 10 working days after receiving the complaint:
 - (a) acknowledge receipt in writing to the student;
 - (b) advise any member(s) of staff concerned, in writing that a complaint has been received and the substance of the complaint.
- (iii) After taking the steps set out in (ii), the appropriate person responsible shall:
 - (a) decide whether the complaint is not within this procedure and requires to be dealt with by other means;
 - (b) consider such evidence, written or otherwise, and hold such discussions as he/she shall deem appropriate. In this respect, students and staff may be asked to give evidence. Any student questioned during this investigation may be accompanied, by a friend (as defined in 2.2 xiii). Any member of staff questioned at this stage may be accompanied by a work colleague;
 - (c) decide whether there is, or is not, a reasonable justification for the complaint;
 - (d) determine the proposed remedy in the event that the complaint has been found to be justified.

C6.3 The appropriate person responsible shall make his/her conclusions known in writing to the student and to any relevant member(s) of staff normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. The Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman will issue a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'.

C7 Stage Three – The Appeal Stage

C7.1 If the student is dissatisfied with the decision at Stage Two of the procedure then he/she may appeal to the appropriate person responsible for Stage 3 in these circumstances, i.e.

- University Secretary; or
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation); or
- Vice-Chancellor as appropriate;

on the following grounds:

- a) That there were process errors in the conduct of Stage 2 (Formal Complaint);
- b) On the basis of new evidence that was not available earlier;
- c) That available evidence had been ignored at Stage 2; or
- d) Other grounds acceptable to the Vice Chancellor.

Annex 3 Research Degree Student Regulations Complaints – updated October 2011

- C7.2 The student shall submit his/her appeal to the appropriate person, and make their case in writing normally within 10 working days after receiving the conclusions of the Stage Two investigation, specifying the grounds for appeal. Complaints received after this deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- C7.3 The appropriate person dealing with this matter shall, immediately on receipt of the appeal, notify, in writing, any members of staff involved (and the Director of Human Resources, if appropriate) that an appeal has been made.
- C7.4 The University Secretary will review the case on the basis of any new documentation provided and decide on the appropriate action of:
- (a) dismissing the appeal at this stage if no case has been made and arrange for the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman to issue a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'; or
 - (b) referring the appeal to a Stage Three Complaints Panel.
- C7.5 In the case of C.7.4 (b) above, the appropriate person dealing with this matter shall arrange for a panel of five persons – the Student Complaints Panel – to meet normally within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. A member of staff of the University, from another School will be appointed by the University Secretary to act as Clerk to the Panel.
- C7.6 The Student Complaints Panel shall comprise:
- a) As Chair, a Dean of School or a member of the University Executive (of recognised research standing) not directly concerned with the complaint and nominated by the University Secretary on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor; and
 - b) one member of staff of recognised research standing, who must be from a different School/ Service from that against which the complaint is made and from that of the appellant, nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation); and
 - c) one student representative, who must be from a different School from that against which the complaint is made and from that of the student, nominated by the President of the Students' Union or may be the President of the Student's Union; and
 - d) the Director of Academic Services (unless the complaint is against the Student Support and Wellbeing Department) and
 - e) one staff representative from a Trades Union recognised by the University, who must be from a different School/Service against which the complaint is made and from that of the student, to be nominated by the Union branch Chairman; and
 - f) A representative of a relevant profession/discipline of study may attend the panel as an adviser as determined by the Pro Vice- Chancellor (Research & Innovation).
- C7.7 The Student Complaints Panel shall hear the complaint in accordance with the procedures laid down in Appendix C1 to this document.
- C7.8 The Student Complaints Panel shall provide the Vice-Chancellor, Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman and the student with a written report within 10 working days of the hearing.

- C7.9 The Vice-Chancellor (or the University Secretary on his behalf) shall then ensure that any appropriate action is taken.
- C7.10 At the end of the internal Student Complaints Procedure, a student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter (see Section 8 below). This concludes the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure.

C8 Independent Adjudication

- C8.1 Under the Higher Education Act 2004 provision is made for reference of student complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education when the University's internal student complaints processes have been exhausted, but the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome.
- C8.2 On completion of the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure a student will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' by the University Secretary's Office and provided with details of the services available from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The Completion of Procedures Letter will:
- provide a description of the complaint
 - confirm that the University's internal complaints procedure has been completed
 - state the outcome of the internal complaint process
 - confirm that the student has the right to take the complaint to the OIA
 - indicate how a student can contact the OIA
 - stipulate that the OIA will only consider complaints from students within a period of three months from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter
- C8.3 Further advice and/or assistance concerning the OIA, or in contacting or submitting a complaint to the OIA should be obtained from the University Secretary's Office (Appendix C2 to this document).

C9 PROCEDURE B (FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE STUDENTS' UNION)

- C9.1 Section 22 of the Education Act 1994 provides that there should be a complaints procedure available to all students who:
- i. are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Students' Union, or
 - ii. claim to be disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right (also in Section 22) not to be a member of the Union, or, in the case of a representative body which is not an association, that he/she does not wish to be represented by it.

C10 Stage One – The Informal Stage

- C10.1 A student who wishes to make a complaint under paragraph C9 (i) or (ii) is in the first instance strongly advised to identify in writing the issues about which they are dissatisfied and the outcomes they desire to rectify this. This should form the basis of discussion with staff concerned.
- C10.2 The University hopes that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally.

- C10.3 Discussions taking place at this stage shall remain confidential unless both parties agree to the sharing of information with others or the complaint goes to Stage Two. If the complaint remains unresolved, it should be presented for discussion to the appropriate service manager and next, if the complaint still remains unresolved, to a Students' Union Executive member other than the President (nominated by the President).
- C10.4 In raising a complaint in respect of the Students' Union, complainants may be accompanied as a friend by another registered student of the University.

C11 Stage Two – The Formal Stage

- C11.1 If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal approaches at Stage One, he/she may raise the complaint formally by submitting a Student Complaints Pro Forma to the Students' Union President (or, in his/her absence, to a Vice-President).
- C11.2 The Student Complaints Pro Forma should indicate why the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal approach at Stage One.
- C11.3 The Stage Two procedure is as follows:
- i. The student prepares a completed Student Complaints Pro Forma and delivers it to the Students' Union President.
 - ii. On receipt of a written complaint, the Students' Union President shall, as soon as possible, and not later than 10 working days after receiving the complaint:
 - a) acknowledge receipt in writing to the student;
 - b) advise the appropriate officer(s) of the Union that a complaint has been received.
 - iii. After taking the steps set out in (ii) above, the Students' Union President shall:
 - a) decide whether the complaint is not within this procedure and requires to be dealt with by other means; or
 - b) consider such evidence, written or otherwise, and hold such discussions as he/she shall deem appropriate. In this respect, students and staff may be asked to give evidence (any student questioned during this investigation may be accompanied, as a friend, by another enrolled student of the University, by an officer of the Students' Union or a Trades Union representative. Any member of staff questioned at this stage may be accompanied by a work colleague or a member of their Trades Union); or
 - c) decide whether there is, or is not, a reasonable justification for the complaint; or
 - d) determine the proposed remedy in the event that the complaint is found to have been justified.
- C11.4 The Students' Union President shall make his/her conclusions known in writing to the student, and to any relevant officers of the Students' Union, normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint and shall send a copy of the written

conclusions to the Chairman of the Board of Governors, and to the University Secretary.

C12 Stage Three – The Appeal Stage

C12.1 If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Students' Union President, then the student may appeal to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

C12.2 The student shall submit a completed Student Complaints Pro Forma to the University Secretary (on behalf of the Chairman of the Board of Governors) within 10 working days of the Students' Union President's conclusions notifying the student, specifying the reasons why the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Students' Union President.

C12.3 The University Secretary shall, immediately on receipt of the appeal, acknowledge receipt in writing to the student, and, taking such advice as he deems necessary, advise the Chairman of the Board of Governors on whether a *prima facie* case exists for the appointment of an independent person to consider the appeal. If a *prima facie* case for appeal is established, the University Secretary shall ask the Chairman of the Board of Governors to nominate an independent person (who may be external to the University or a member of the Board of Governors) to consider this final stage of the appeal.

When the independent person has been appointed, and agrees to serve in this capacity, he/she shall consider such evidence, written or otherwise, and hold such discussions, as he/she shall deem appropriate, having regard for the procedure described in Appendix C1 to this document (in respect of complaints under Procedure A). This investigation should normally be completed within 20 working days of the appeal being received.

C12.4 After taking the steps set out in 12.3 above, the independent person shall decide whether there is a reasonable justification for the complaint or not and shall submit a report in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Vice-Chancellor, and the University Secretary, containing such recommendations as he/she shall deem appropriate. This report should normally be submitted within 25 working days of the appeal being received.

C12.5 The Vice-Chancellor (or the University Secretary on his behalf) shall then inform the student of the outcome of the investigation and ensure that any appropriate action following from the report and recommendations of the independent person is taken.

This is the end of the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure.

C13 Independent Adjudication

C13.1 Under the Higher Education Act 2004 provision is made for reference of student complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education when the University's internal student complaints processes have been exhausted, but the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome.

C13.2 On completion of the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure a student will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' by the University Secretary's Office and provided with details of the services available from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The Completion of Procedures Letter will:

- provide a description of the complaint
- confirm that the University's internal complaints procedure has been completed
- state the outcome of the internal complaint process
- confirm that the student has the right to take the complaint to the OIA
- indicate how a student can contact the OIA
- stipulate that the OIA will only consider complaints from students within a period of three months from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter

C13.3 Further advice and/or assistance concerning the OIA, or in contacting or submitting a complaint to the OIA should be obtained from the University Secretary's Office (Appendix C2).

C14 OTHER COMPLAINTS

C14.1 From time to time, there may be complaints made by students which do not fit comfortably into the procedures above, for example, complaints about misleading statements in University documentation, or other complaints which neither originate from within a School (Procedure A) nor against the Students' Union (Procedure B). In all such cases, the complaint should be addressed to the University Secretary, who will investigate the complaint according to such procedures as appear appropriate to t

he nature of the complaint, broadly following stages similar to those specified in either Procedure A or B. Complaints by students about another student are likely to be allegations of misconduct, and appropriately dealt with under Section 3 of the *Handbook of Student Regulations, Student Disciplinary Rules & Procedures*.

C Appendix C1

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Procedural Rules for the conduct of hearings of the Student Complaints Panel at Stage Three of Procedure A (Section C7/7)

1. The hearing(s) shall take place at dates and times notified in writing to the parties concerned (i.e. the student complainant(s) and the member(s) of staff concerned). As much notice as possible shall be given but there shall be flexibility as to notice, dependent on the circumstances under investigation, and the urgency of the complaint.
2. The Chair will advise the parties concerned of the names of any persons – the ‘witnesses’ whom the Student Complaints Panel intends to call to give evidence at the hearing, together with a copy of any written statements from the parties or witnesses. Witnesses can also be called by the parties concerned.
3. The student(s) and member(s) of staff concerned have the right to attend the hearing(s), accompanied by a person of their choosing. If any of the parties are to be accompanied, then they shall advise the Clerk to the Panel of the name, address and occupation of the person not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting of the Student Complaints Panel.
4. The parties concerned, and those they have chosen to accompany them, shall be permitted to question each other and any of the witnesses, and to address the Student Complaints Panel. The Panel may question the witnesses and the parties concerned.
5. If any of the parties concerned wishes to introduce documents to the Student Complaints Panel, he/she shall supply copies of such documents to the Clerk to the Panel not later than three working days before the hearing, unless he/she can show good reason as to why he/she is not able to comply with this requirement. The Clerk to the Panel shall provide one set of such documents to the other party to the complaint as soon as possible. The Chair of the Student Complaints Panel may, at his or her discretion, give time for the documents to be examined by adjourning or delaying the meeting.
6. The Student Complaints Panel will meet in private.
7. The Student Complaints Panel shall be given absolute discretion to regulate its own procedures, subject to keeping within the spirit and general limit of these rules.³
8. The Student Complaints Panel will establish the facts and adjudicate upon the complaint. It will then formally report its findings, including such recommendations as it may deem appropriate, to the Vice-Chancellor.

³ See Section C2, and particularly section C2.4 of the *Research Degree Student Regulations*

C Appendix C2

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

Advice and assistance on the operation of the Student Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the University Secretary's Office + 44 (0)191 227 4399

In addition, you may discuss issues of concern with the Director of Academic Services; a student adviser or counsellor within Student Support and Wellbeing; a student representative on the appropriate School Research Committee or Graduate School Committee, and with the Students' Union.

University of Northumbria – Research Student Complaints Procedure

The University, through its Research Student Complaints Procedure, provides to its students a facility to through which they may seek to resolve issues of dispute that they may have with the University. In so doing the University seeks to satisfy its duty of care to its students.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

From 1 January 2005, in accordance with the Higher Education Act 2004 students of higher education institutions have the opportunity to pursue a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), a body that has been established to operate the new statutory Scheme for Independent Review of Student Complaints.

These notes are provided to aid students in their utilisation of the OIA.

The guidance notes take the form of a framework that details the obligations of staff at each stage of the procedure.

- On completion of the University's internal Student Complaints Procedure you will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' by the University Secretary's Office, and provided with details of the services available to you from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- The Completion of Procedures Letter will:
 - provide a description of the complaint
 - confirm that the University's internal complaints procedure has been completed
 - state the outcome of the internal complaint process
 - confirm that the student has the right to take the complaint to the OIA
 - indicate how a student can contact the OIA
 - stipulate that the OIA will only consider complaints from students within a period of three months from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter
- Should you require any advice and/or assistance concerning the OIA, or in contacting or submitting a complaint to the OIA please contact the University Secretary's Office.

If you wish for this document in an alternative format, please contact the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman

Northumbria University

Research Student Complaints Pro Forma

This form is to be completed in support of complaints made by a research student in accordance with the University's Research Student Complaints Procedure, Section C of the Handbook of Research Student Regulations. Please read this before completing this form. You should especially note that it is expected that you first attempt to resolve the complaint informally (this should be within three months of the alleged event(s) about which you are complaining). If you remain dissatisfied you should normally submit a Formal Complaint within ten working days of the outcome of your informal complaint.

In investigating your complaint we will take every care to safeguard your privacy and confidentiality. However, any member of staff mentioned in the complaint will be made aware of the issues raised and will have an opportunity to comment on them. In addition, it may be necessary to share your complaint with other parties within the University likely to be helpful in providing a solution.

1. Personal Details

Name: _____ Student Number: _____

School: _____

Contact

Address: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____ Contact e-mail Address: _____

Dates of the alleged event(s) about which you are complaining: _____

2. Formal Complaint

You should set out the reason(s) why the complaint is being made; state who or what is being complained about; state the nature of the complaint; and the consequences that you believe you have suffered as a result.

Add additional sheets as necessary

N.B. Should you wish to utilise additional supporting documentation, please attach these to this Pro Forma.

3. Informal Complaint Details

Please summarise your attempts to resolve your complaint informally:

- a) To whom was the initial complaint made: _____
- b) Date of meeting: _____
- c) Why do you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint?

4. Outcome Sought to the Complaint (You should indicate the outcome you seek in making this complaint)

N.B. You are asked to note that this is your preference only, and places no restriction on the outcome of the operation of the Complaints Procedure.

5. Documentation Attached

Please list any documents supplied in the space below and attach to this Pro Forma.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

6. Name and Position of the Person(s) to whom the Complaint is submitted

7. Data Protection

I hereby consent for any sensitive/confidential personal data, such as counselling records, held by the University to be made available to the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman for use as evidence or supporting documentation as appropriate. I understand that as part of the investigation into my complaint, the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman may be required to share this information with other University staff on a need-to-know basis.

I declare that to the best of my knowledge all of the information I have supplied is true, accurate and complete.

I give my consent for information in this Pro Forma and attached documents, and personal data held elsewhere within the University, to be shared with relevant members of University staff on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of investigating my complaint.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

N.B. Should you require advice or assistance in completing this form, or in relation to any other aspect of the Complaints Procedure, this may be obtained from the Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman, Room B225, Ellison Building; the Students' Union; Student Support and Wellbeing, or your School Office.

Please submit the completed form to the appropriate member of staff as described in regulation C6.1 of the Handbook of Research Student Regulations. Off campus students may submit this Pro Forma electronically, using an electronic signature from a Northumbria University email account.

This form is also available online at the University Secretary's Office website at <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/uso/>.