

# Student and Applicant Complaints

## UPR SA16 Appendix I version 04.0

### Policies superseded by this document:

This document forms a new appendix to UPR SA16 'Student and Applicant Complaints' with effect from 1 September 2025.

### Summary of significant changes to the previous version:

This is the first version of this document and should be read in full.

### Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

### Table of contents

1	Rules for the administration of Student or Applicant complaints.....	1
2	Reporting to the Dean of Students (Standard Forms and Correspondence).....	2
3	Notification of a Stage 2 Form.....	3
4	Letter of Notification .....	3
5	Letter of Decision .....	3
6	Request for a Review by the Vice-Chancellor – form .....	4
7	Review Hearing Administration .....	4
8	Review Hearing Letter.....	5
9	Conduct of Complaints Hearings or Meetings.....	6
10	Adjournment.....	7

---

## 1 Rules for the administration of Student or Applicant complaints

- 1.1. As defined in UPR SA16 Student and Complaints (1.2) a complaint is considered as:

‘an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about action or lack of action by the University, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University’.

There are three (3) stages to the UPR SA16 Student and Applicant Complaint process:

1. Stage 1
  2. Stage 2
  3. Request for Vice-Chancellor Review
- 1.2. Those responsible for administering these complaints procedures will comply with the rules set out in this section.
  - 1.3. With limited exceptions, all written material considered by the Presiding Officer (the responding individual identified at each stage of the UPR SA16 complaints procedure) during any applicable Hearing under this policy will be provided to the Complainant and to any Respondent. The Case Officer's report will, therefore, be provided to the Complainant and the Respondent.
  - 1.4. The Presiding Officer at any Stage of these procedures will not have dealt with or heard the matter previously.
  - 1.5. A Letter of Decision must be provided to the complainant at the end of each stage of the process. This included Stage 1, Stage 2 and Request for VC Review.

## **2 Reporting to the Dean of Students (Standard Forms and Correspondence)**

- 2.1. Where a complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 and the Complainant proceeds to Stage 2, the Stage 1 Presiding Officer will provide a written summary of the complaint outcome correspondence, detailing any previous investigation, action undertaken, and the outcome of the Stage 1. The Stage 1 written summary will be referred to the relevant Presiding Officer considering the Stage 2 complaint, and will provide a copy to the Dean of Students via the Student Procedures Team;
- 2.2. The written summary referred to in paragraph 2.1 will include the following:
  - i. the student's name and Student Registration Number/the applicant's name and e-mail address;
  - ii. the name of the Stage 1 Presiding Officer and their position (for example, Year Tutor, Research Student Tutor, Team Leader);
  - iii. a brief summary of the complaint;
  - iv. a summary of the investigation made (any relevant documentary evidence must be appended to the report);
  - v. a summary of the actions taken and, if necessary, an explanation of why it has not been possible to resolve the complaint;
  - vi. the Stage 1 Presiding Officer's signature and the date of signature.

### 3 Notification of a Stage 2 Form

- 3.1. The Complainant must complete all the fields within the form. Incomplete forms and forms submitted without the required supporting documents/material will not be considered and will be returned, un-processed, to the student.
- 3.2. The form will require that the Complainant provides the following information:
  - i. the nature of the complaint, whether the matter has been considered at Stage 1 of this procedure and;
  - ii. any documents/material that support the Stage 2 complaint;
  - iii. identify clearly how the documents/material support the Stage 2 complaint;
  - iv. all of the documents/material provided by the complainant at Stage 1;
  - v. the e-mail to which all communications are to be sent;
  - vi. the telephone numbers on which the student can be contacted (mobile and where applicable, landline).

### 4 Letter of Notification

- 4.1. Where a complaint requires a Stage 2 meeting or Hearing, the Complainant will be notified, in writing, by means of a **Letter of Notification** which will:
  - i. for the avoidance of doubt, give a full explanation of the nature of the complaint;
  - ii. give the day, date, time and venue for the Hearing/meeting;
  - iii. give an explanation of the Complainant's right to be accompanied
  - iv. invite the Complainant to submit any witness statements to the Presiding Officer where they have not already done so;
  - v. advise the Complainant of their entitlement to bring to the Hearing/meeting any witness and of the requirement that they must inform the Presiding Officer five (5) working days beforehand of their intention to do so;
  - vi. the names of any individuals who are to appear at the Hearing/meeting.  
Included with the letter will be:
  - vii. a copy of all the documents relating to the complaint;
  - viii. a copy of the relevant version of this document (UPR SA16)
  - ix. the letter will stipulate the version of UPR SA16 under the provisions of which the matter is being dealt with.
- 4.2. **Letters of Notification** will be sent to the email address the student has provided to the University for all correspondence;
- 4.3. A copy of the **Letter of Notification** will be provided to the Dean of Students, the Student Procedures Team and any Respondent.

### 5 Letter of Decision

- 5.1. In accordance with the timescales set out in the UPR SA16 Student and Applicants Complaints, Presiding Officers will communicate their decisions to Complainants, in

writing, at the end of both Stage 1 and Stage 2, by means of a **Letter of Decision** which will:

- i. give the reasons why the decision was taken;
- ii. explain any further rights of review that the Complainant might have if they are not satisfied with the outcome;
- iii. Included with the letter will be a copy of the report or record of the Hearing;
- iv. **Letters of Decision** will be sent to the email address the student has provided to the University for all correspondence;
- v. A copy of the **Letter of Decision** and all enclosures will be provided to the Dean of Students, the Student Procedures Team and any Respondent.

## 6 Request for a Review by the Vice-Chancellor – form

6.1. The Complainant must complete **all** fields within the form. Incomplete forms and forms submitted without the required supporting documents/material will not be considered.

6.2 The form will require that the Complainant provides the following information:

- i. the complainant's name and Student Registration Number (if appropriate);
- ii. the grounds for review;
- iii. the new documents/material that support the grounds being cited for a review,
- iv. identify clearly how the new documents/material support the grounds being cited;
- v. all of the documents/material provided by the complainant at previous Stages of the process;
- vi. the e-mail to which all communications are to be sent;
- vii. the telephone numbers on which the student can be contacted (mobile and where applicable, landline).

## 7 Review Hearing Administration

7.1. The Student Procedures Team:

- i. will ensure that the date of any Review Hearing will be sufficiently far ahead to ensure that as far as reasonably possible, any witnesses can be traced and informed of the requirement to attend;
- ii. will make detailed arrangements with any other persons who are to attend the Review Hearing;
- iii. will write a **Review Hearing Letter** to the appellant which will be in the required format as set out in section [8].

- 7.2. Where the Dean of Students is not the Case Officer, the Dean of Students (or nominee) will attend all Review Hearings as an observer.

## 8 Review Hearing Letter

- 8.1. The Student Procedures Team will write to the Complainant by means of a **Review Hearing Letter** which will give:
- i. the names of any individuals who are to appear at the Review Hearing;
  - ii. the day, date, time and venue for the Hearing;
  - iii. advise the Complainant of their entitlement to bring to the Hearing any witness and of the requirement that they must inform the Student Procedures Team not less than five (5) working days beforehand of their intention to do so and of the name of any witness who is to attend;
  - iv. an explanation of the Complainant's right to be accompanied or represented;
  - v. invite the Complainant to submit any witness statements to the Student Procedures Team no less than three (3) working days before the Review Hearing, where they have not already done so;
  - vi. advise the Complainant that any documents to be considered at the Hearing that are not available at the time that the **Review Hearing Letter** is issued will be provided to them before the Review Hearing;
  - vii. advise the Complainant that should they fail to give notice that, for good reason, they are unable to attend the Hearing, the matter may be heard in their absence;
  - viii. advise the Complainant that failure to attend a Hearing may be considered a disciplinary offence;
  - ix. Included with the letter will be copies of all of the documents to be considered at the Hearing, including copies of any new documents relating to the complaint not previously provided to the Complainant;
  - x. **Review Hearing Letters** will be sent to the email address the student has provided to the University for all correspondence;
  - x. A copy of the **Review Hearing Letter** and all enclosures will be provided to any Respondent.
  - xi. At any meeting to discuss the process of the Hearing, or at the Hearing itself, the Complainant will be entitled to no less than three (3) working days prior the meeting or Hearing, to present any evidence or documentation that is relevant to the representations being made.

- 8.3. If the complainant is a student, they can be accompanied by a member or nominee of the [Herts SU Advice Centre](#). If an Applicant, they may be accompanied by a parent/guardian or friend. Although the Complainant may, for example, invite a lawyer or a Trade Union representative to act as their adviser it should be noted that the person attends the meeting or Hearing purely in an advisory capacity and does not, therefore, act as the student's representative.
- 8.4. Members of staff may also be accompanied to a meeting/Hearing by either a colleague employed by the University or an official Trade Union employee. However, the advisor will not be permitted to answer direct questions for the employee.
- 8.5. Where a Complainant wishes to be accompanied by a Student's Adviser at a meeting or Hearing, they should advise the University five (5) working days beforehand, as follows:
- i. For Stage 2, direct this to the Dean of School/Head of Strategic Business Unit five (5) working days beforehand;
  - ii. For Stage 3 direct this to Student Procedures Team (5) working days beforehand.
  - iii. A Student's Adviser will only be permitted to speak during a Hearing if asked direct questions by the Presiding Officer. However, the student or applicant may consult freely with their Adviser at any time.

## 9 Conduct of Complaints Hearings or Meetings

- 9.1. The process whereby a formal complaint is investigated is distinct from the University's disciplinary procedures. However, where it is determined that there should be a disciplinary Hearing, the investigation by the independent Case Officer made under the provisions of these regulations (UPR SA16) will contribute to the investigation Stage required by the University's disciplinary procedures.
- 9.2. Presiding Officers and others responsible for administering the student complaints procedures set out in UPR SA16 will comply with the following rules at each Stage of these student complaints procedures:
- i. the Complainant may, if they so wish, be accompanied by an Adviser at any Hearing or meeting to which they have been invited at which the matter is to be discussed
  - ii. the Presiding Officer will be accompanied by another member of staff, not directly involved in the case, who will observe the proceedings, in later Stages of these procedures, this requirement will normally be met through the presence of the Secretary and Registrar (or nominee);
  - iii. where practicable, arrangements will take account of the needs and concerns of those involved;
  - iv. the Hearing will be attended, as appropriate, by the individuals stipulated for each stage of these procedures;

- v. the independent Case Officer appointed by the Secretary and Registrar will present their report;
- vi. the Case Officer may be questioned by the Presiding Officer and, at the invitation of the Presiding Officer, by the Complainant and the Respondent;
- vii. the Complainant may be questioned by the Presiding Officer and, at the invitation of the Presiding Officer, by the Respondent;
- viii. the Respondent may be questioned by the Presiding Officer and, at the invitation of the Presiding Officer, by the Complainant;
- ix. the Presiding Officer will invite the Complainant and the Respondent to call any witnesses who may be questioned by the Complainant and the Presiding Officer and, at the invitation of the Presiding Officer, by the Respondent;
- x. the Presiding Officer will invite the Respondent and then the Complainant to make any closing remarks;
- xi. the Presiding Officer may direct the Complainant and their Adviser and any other persons present to withdraw while they consider the matter and may recall the Complainant and any other persons present for further questioning;
- xii. where possible, the Presiding Officer will advise the Complainant and the Respondent of their decision immediately after the Hearing or will indicate to the Complainant and Respondent when they might expect a decision;
- xiii. a written record will be made of the Hearing;
- xiv. Audio recordings of meetings will not normally be allowed, although reasonable adjustments may be made if required in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy. Requests for adjustments must be made at least two (2) working days in advance to the Chair of the Complaint Hearing.

## **10 Adjourment**

- 10.1. In exceptional circumstances, at any stage of proceedings, an adjourment may be necessary for either party to obtain more evidence or for a Panel or Presiding Officer to consider the evidence further. Requests will be granted at the absolute discretion of the Presiding Officer and will not be withheld unreasonably.

Sharon Harrison-Barker  
Secretary and Registrar  
Signed: **1 August 2025**

**Alternative format**

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at [governanceservices@herts.ac.uk](mailto:governanceservices@herts.ac.uk) or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.