

School of Life and Medical Sciences

Workbased Learning/ Practice Complaints Policy

Section 1: Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This procedure sets out a framework, and establishes a documented procedure, for dealing with complaints received from students whilst on placement outside the University. It complies with the guidelines in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Work Based Learning (QAA 2018). The complaints to be considered under this procedure are those that impinge on the quality of the student's placement and/or work-based learning experience.
- 1.2 The policy explains the procedure if a student makes a complaint about the host organisation, their practice placement and/or work based placement. It also provides specific details about how the complaint procedure will be operationalised and managed. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the procedures and proceedings to ensure equality of opportunity for disabled students.
- 1.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with other University policies and procedures. In addition, relevant partner organisational policies may need to be applied in conjunction with University procedures. Depending on the nature of the complaint, some issues may also need to be addressed through a host organisation policy, for example bullying and/or harassment. In these cases, the student will be provided with appropriate support from the University and through any interface with the Equality and Diversity Policy (UPR EQ03) as required. This may include support, advice or guidance from the student's Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, Collaborative Partnership Leader (CPL), medical or counselling services and/or disability advisors/officers. If there is any uncertainty regarding the policy that should be implemented, advice must be sought from the relevant Host Manager and/or the Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance.
- 1.4 Students who are employed by another organisation, e.g. local Trust, or who are sponsored by the NHS or health and social care agency and need to make a complaint about their employer, should follow the local NHS, Trust or sponsoring organisation policy. The student will be provided with appropriate support from the University as required. The role of academic staff is to ensure that the complaint is handled appropriately by the organisation and to monitor the outcome.
- 1.5 The procedure for raising and escalating concerns about a placement (whistle-blowing) relating to **malpractice or wrongdoing** is contained under UPR GV12 Appendix 1: Public Interest and Disclosure. Section 2 of this procedure refers to students and paragraph 2.5 specifically outlines how students should raise concerns whilst on placement. Students should also inform their Programme Leader or CPL as soon as possible.

Section 2: General Principles

- 2.1 It must be established that there has been a complaint, rather than an expression of concern, which will normally be managed through the Programme Leader or CPL.
- 2.2 If the complaint is of a serious nature, e.g. the student is in a vulnerable, dangerous or unsupervised position, the formal procedure (See Appendix 1) will be instigated immediately.
- 2.3 All complaints will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible and within the timescales stipulated in Sections 3 and 4 below. A staged process will be followed, locally or formally, as stipulated in Sections 3 and 4. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially as

far as is possible, but the student will be informed if the University personnel involved need to consult others with whom information must be shared. University personnel will work in partnership with relevant placement providers in managing complaints. The Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance will monitor and analyse the number and range of complaints received within the School on an annual basis.

- 2.4 Emphasis throughout the process will be on early resolution of issues raised. As far as possible, this will be at a local level. A full, fair and honest response to a complaint is essential, as it may not always be possible for the University to satisfy the complainant. Notifying the complainant and relevant others of what actions will be taken is an important component of the process.
- 2.5 Academic staff will encourage a sensitive and constructive approach to addressing all matters dealt with under this procedure. Staff will ensure that complaints are handled within the prescribed timescales and that the outcomes are communicated at all stages. A member of staff who specifically supports students in matters related to protected characteristics will be invited to participate in the discussions/proceedings of a complaint, where the complaint or the resolution relates to an equality or diversity matter. The involvement of this member of staff can be at the student's request or if the practice or academic staff dealing with the complaint feel that this would be in the student's best interests.
- 2.6 The student will normally be supported at any meeting by a University representative such as a CPL/Programme Leader/Disability Officer or other staff member involved in the complaint. The student also has the right to be accompanied by a Student Union representative, friend, relative or colleague. This person will attend in a purely advisory capacity, i.e. as a friend/supporter.
- 2.7 Throughout the complaint process, whilst respecting the confidentiality of all parties, relevant personnel will be informed of any action that needs to be taken in terms of both the student's programme of study and their work based or practice learning environment.
- 2.8 Every attempt will be made to resolve identified issues thus providing a satisfactory work based or placement learning environment for the student in the allocated placement. However, it may be necessary, following the initial consideration of the complaint and/or investigation to find an alternative placement experience for the student. This decision will be made by the Associate Dean of School AQA or nominee. All relevant personnel will be consulted if deemed necessary.
- 2.9 The Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance will report to SAC annually regarding the number, nature and outcomes of complaints in the School.

Section 3: The Complaints Procedure

Examples of complaints that may be received are included in **Appendix A** and a summary of the complaint process is provided in **Appendix B**

3.0 Stage 1 – Local procedure

- 3.1 The student should initially approach the designated Host Manager or alternate at the work based or placement site regarding their complaint. If a student feels unable to raise their complaint with the designated Host Manager or it would be inappropriate to do so, the student should raise their complaint with the visiting Academic Tutor/CPL, although any member of academic staff can receive a complaint. Receipt of the complaint (verbal or written) must be acknowledged and recorded by the recipient of the complaint completing **Record of Complaint Form – Appendix C**.
- 3.2 The complaint will be considered locally in the first instance. A meeting to discuss the complaint must be convened by the recipient and involve the CPL/visiting academic tutor (if different), the student and the Host Manager if appropriate. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of the complaint being made. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded on the **Record of Complaint Form – Appendix C** by the individual holding this meeting. Normally, an action plan and/or recommendations

will be documented and a date for a meeting to review the action plan/recommendations will be set. A copy of **Record of Complaint Form – Appendix C with completed Section 1A** must be sent to all those present at the meeting, the Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance, the Programme Leader/ CPL, and a copy placed in the student's file normally within ten working days of the meeting taking place.

- 3.3 The meeting to review the action plan/recommendations must take place between the CPL/visiting academic tutor and the Host Manager involved in the initial complaint, and the student if appropriate. The aim of the review meeting will be to ensure that any actions arising from the complaint have been implemented. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded on the **Record of Complaint Form Appendix C – Section 1B** by the CPL/visiting academic tutor. A copy of the form should be sent to those present at the meeting, the Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance, the Programme Leader and a copy placed in the student's file within ten working days of the review meeting taking place.
- 3.4 If, following the above meetings, the complaint has not been resolved or the actions have not been implemented, **Stage 2 (Formal Procedure)** of this policy must be applied.

4.0 Stage 2 - Formal procedure

- 4.1 This procedure will be invoked if the complaint has not been resolved following the investigations undertaken during **Stage 1**, or if the complaint is so serious in nature, *e.g. the student is in a vulnerable, dangerous or unsupervised position*, that it is not appropriate to attempt resolution at **Stage 1**. In a case of a breach of the Legal Agreement by the work based or practice placement, the University may pursue the complaint on behalf of the student.
- 4.2 The Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance will appoint an independent member of academic staff to conduct an investigation into the complaint. The investigator will not be directly involved with the complainant or the subject matter.
- 4.3 The investigator will then carry out an impartial investigation, consulting with the complainant, the CPL/visiting academic tutor, Host Manager and/or other relevant stakeholders.
- 4.4 The investigation may involve further investigation which may involve interviewing the complainant, and other relevant personnel, either separately or together, as appropriate. An action plan will be compiled by the investigator and shared by all parties as a result of this. The action plan must identify appropriate actions and recommendations and identify how these will be implemented with appropriate timescales. A date for a review of the action plan will be set. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded on the **Record of Complaint Form - Appendix C: Section 2b**.
- 4.5 The meeting to review the action plan must take place between the investigator and the Host Manager involved in the complaint at a time determined at the meeting to discuss the complaint. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded by the investigator. A copy of the **Appendix C Complaint form –Section 2B** must be sent to those present at the meeting, the Associate Dean of School, Academic Quality Assurance, the Programme Leader and a copy placed in the student's file within ten working days of the review meeting taking place.

5.0 Associated procedures

- 5.1 If, during the investigation, the student considers that the complaint is not being handled appropriately by the University, the student can make a complaint by following the process set out in UPR SA16 (Student and Applicant Complaints).
- 5.2 If, following investigation, the complaint remains unresolved or the action plan and recommendations have not been implemented by workbased personnel, the suitability of the work based or placement site for future students will be reviewed by the School.
- 5.3 Students' complaints about work based or practice placements, which on investigation are found to be of a malicious or vexatious nature will be managed through University disciplinary procedures (normally SA15 Fitness to Practice or Student Discipline).

APPENDIX A

Examples of possible complaints about a placement or work based learning environment

- Inadequacies in mentoring/supervision
- Failure to provide an adequate learning environment
- Inadequacies in induction or orientation to the work based or placement site
- Refusal to acknowledge and/or address legitimate concerns raised by the student

Examples of serious complaints where the student may be in a *vulnerable, dangerous or unsupervised position* may include

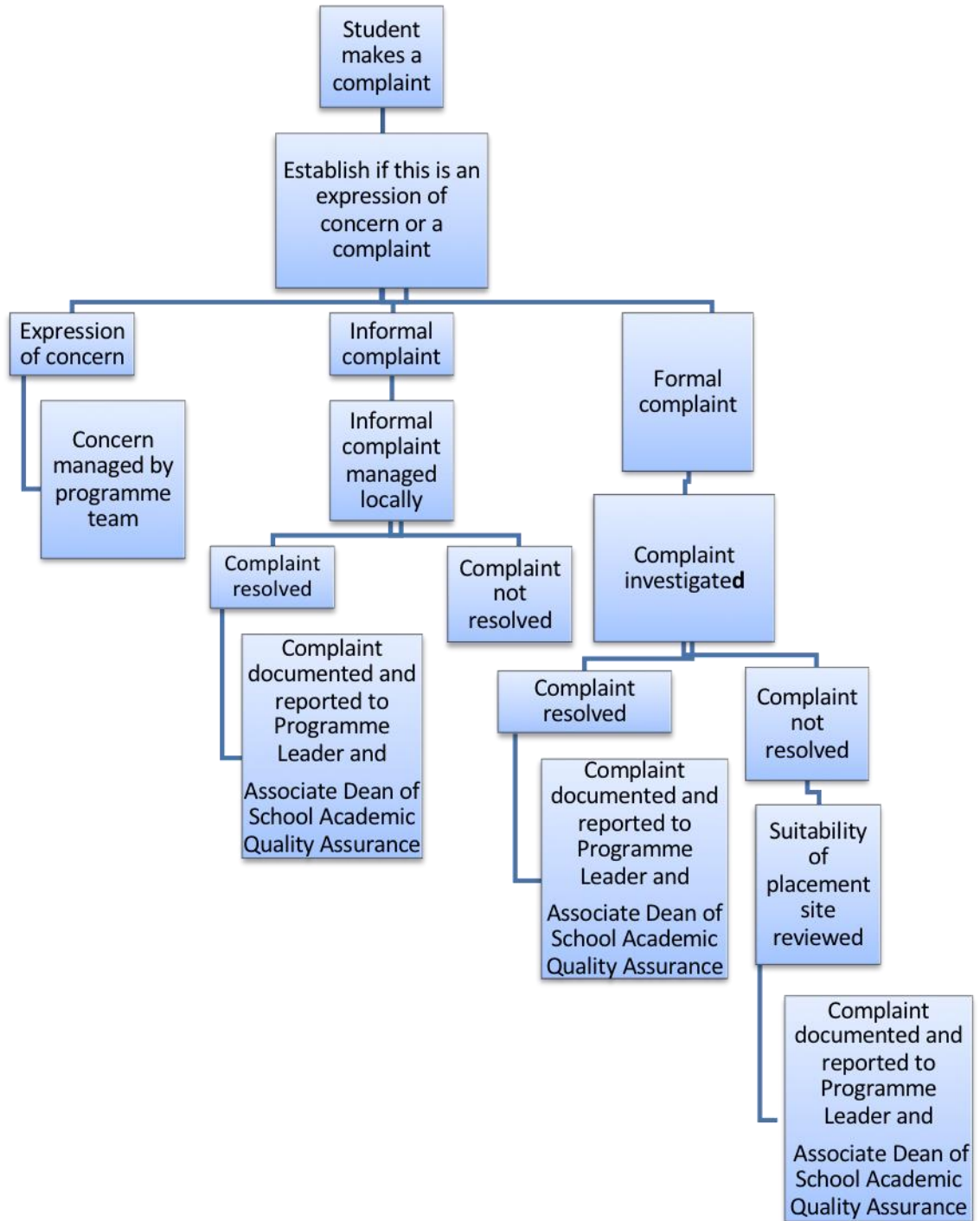
- Serious inadequacies or absence in mentoring/supervision
- Refusal to acknowledge and/or address concerns raised by previous complaints
- Inappropriate behaviour towards student
- Failure to acknowledge equality and diversity issues

The following complaints may be dealt with through relevant Trust policies

- Failure to uphold health and safety procedures
- Harrassment and bullyingHarrassment or bullying

Summary of complaint procedure

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C: Record of Complaint

School of Life and Medical Sciences

This form can be completed electronically. Click in the shaded areas and type; the boxes expand to accommodate your text.

DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT

A copy of this page must accompany any subsequent record of local or formal complaint meetings.

Complainant's Name			
Profession		Level of study	
Placement/Work site			
Name of staff who received the complaint		Date received	
Method of raising concern			
Nature of complaint <i>(A copy of written complaints must be appended)</i>			

STAGE 1 - LOCAL COMPLAINT

Section 1A Record of the meeting about a complaint managed at a local level

Date of meeting to discuss complaint	
Personnel involved in meeting to discuss complaint	
Brief details of discussion of the meeting	
Action plan and recommendations	
Complaint to be managed at local level <input type="checkbox"/>	Date for review
Progress to formal stage <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date of distribution*	

* Within ten working days of the meeting to discuss the complaint, a copy of this record must be sent to all those present at the meeting, the School Complaints Co-ordinator and the programme tutor, and a copy placed in the student's file.

Section 1B Record of the review meeting for a complaint managed at a local level

Date of review meeting	
Personnel involved in review meeting	
Outcome of review meeting	
Action plan or recommendations arising from complaint	Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Not achieved <input type="checkbox"/>
Future plans	
Date of distribution*	

* Within ten working days of the meeting to review the complaint, a copy of this record must be sent to all those present at the meeting, the School Complaints Co-ordinator and the programme tutor, and a copy placed in the student's file.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL PROCEDURE

Section 2A Record of the meeting about a formal complaint

Name of investigator	
Personnel involved in investigation	
Summary of investigation	
Action plan <i>Identify how actions will be implemented and appropriate timescales</i>	
Date of review meeting	
Outcome of follow up meeting with complainant	
Date of distribution*	

** Within ten working days of the meeting to discuss the formal complaint, a copy of this record must be sent to all those present at the meeting, the School Complaints Co-ordinator and the programme tutor, and a copy placed in the student's file.*

Date of review meeting	
Personnel involved in review meeting	
Outcome of review meeting	
Action plan or recommendations arising from complaint	Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Not achieved <input type="checkbox"/>
Future plans	
Date of distribution*	

Section 2B Record of the review meeting about a formal complaint

** Within ten working days of the meeting to review the formal complaint, a copy of this record must be sent to all those present at the meeting, the School Complaints Co-ordinator and the programme tutor, and a copy placed in the student's file.*

Practice Placement Complaints Report Template

Name of School: School of Life and Medical Sciences **Name of Department**

Date of Report:

Student's programme of Study	Seniority of Student (please identify by year of study)	Summary of Complaint (Please outline)	Nature resolution/outcome