

## **Complaints & Appeals Procedure**

### **Introduction**

1. The SWRTG fosters a sense of community in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.
2. The Complaints and Appeals Procedure outlined below is intended to be followed by current students, and former students (in the case of former students, complaints and appeals should normally be made within three months of being granted Leave to Supplicate or otherwise completion of their studies), in cases of disagreement with regard to:
  - Academic matters (e.g. award of prizes, tutorial arrangements).
3. Typically, complaints will refer to isolated incidents and the provision of services by the SWRTG. The SWRTG has separate procedures for complaints about individuals which involve harassment (e.g. bullying, victimisation, racial or sexual harassment).
4. The majority of cases will normally be settled by the complainant resolving their grievance directly with the relevant tutor, staff member or departmental manager. Where this has been attempted and resolution is not possible, complainants can adopt an informal procedure (described in section 2 below), but a formal procedure is also available where a complainant wishes to register a written grievance (described in section 3). This procedure also details how appeals can be made. A flowchart illustrates the various stages of the process (see Appendix 1).
5. Anonymous complainants or complaints made on behalf of someone else will not be considered, unless there are compelling reasons for doing so. Such reasons should be clearly stated.
6. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a student who brings a complaint in good faith, and against any student who brings malicious or vexatious complaints.

### **Informal Procedure**

7. Under the informal procedure, the student member is asked to raise their complaint with the relevant GTO or trainer.
8. This informal procedure is intended to encourage discussion and understanding of the problem, and in some cases, may lead to its resolution without submission of a formal complaint. The complainant can be accompanied at any stage of the informal procedure by another member of College.

9. To resolve the complaint the relevant Officer will normally arrange a meeting with the complainant and:
  - seek to offer helpful and confidential advice and/or
  - try to find a remedy, or a reconciliation (in cases where relations have broken down between individuals, and the complainant does not object to this course);
  - note the withdrawal of a complaint where the complainant decides to do so;
  - record the outcome in a written response to the complainant.
10. The outcome may involve instigation of action under another procedure.

### **Formal Procedure**

11. All formal complaints must be made in writing to the Group Chair.

Formal complaints about the GTO or trainer must be made in writing to the Group Chair. The formal procedure will normally be used only when the informal procedure has not achieved a resolution. In cases where the complainant has adopted the formal approach immediately, it will be open to the Group Chair to refer the complaint back to an earlier stage in this process. Formal complaints will not normally be considered three months after the occasion of the complaint or in cases when the matter is being addressed under another procedure: someone seeking to bring a complaint outside the normal three month time period must include with their formal complaint the reasons why they were unable to bring the complaint within the normal time period.

12. If a formal complaint is taken forward, the Group Chair will convene an *ad hoc* committee of three members of the committee to hear the complaint. All those chosen will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality.
13. The complainant may take advice in advance of the hearing and will be given adequate opportunity to make representations to the hearing itself, being given the chance either to make a written submission, or, if they prefer, to appear before the committee.
14. If a complaint remains unresolved after the internal procedures have been exhausted a student member may appeal to CITB.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

15. The GTO, on behalf of the Chair, will keep a register of the number of complaints made using the formal procedure in an academic year.

Please note, all complaints should be made to the GTO or Group Chair within 3 months of the incident for it to be considered.



