

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy

We will try to resolve, as quickly as possible, any grievance or complaint you may have about your studies and stay with us. This procedure is open to any student who has a grievance in relation to their enrolment and is designed to enable you to resolve a grievance informally with your tutors and staff. If a grievance cannot be resolved informally, you should raise it formally with the Principal.

The College wants you to use this procedure when necessary so that we can deal with such matters appropriately. If you raise a grievance the matter will be dealt with promptly, fairly and in confidence.

Purpose and Scope

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that students raise with the College. Grievances may relate to, amongst other things, terms and conditions of admission, health and safety, academic studies, host family accommodation, equal opportunities and harassment. If the grievance relates to discrimination, bullying or harassment you should also refer to the equal opportunities, bullying and harassment policies.

Principles

A written record of the grievance interview and any appeal should be agreed between, and signed by, the interviewer and you and will be recorded on your student file. Information and proceedings relating to a grievance will remain confidential as far as is possible. All stages of the procedure shall be dealt with without undue delay. If you set out the grievance in writing and send a copy to the College, the formal grievance procedure (stage two) will be automatically invoked.

Procedure

At all stages of the procedure, during any associated meetings as outlined below, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow student, friend or representative during the grievance meeting and any appeal meeting.

Stage one – informal

Your first step is to raise any grievance with your personal tutor, who, in most cases, will be best placed to respond to the complaint. If this informal approach fails to resolve the issue, or the complaint is sufficiently serious, you should raise it as a formal grievance (stage two).

Where the grievance is against your personal tutor you may approach another tutor or

raise the issue with the Principal.

Stage two – formal

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, or is sufficiently serious, you should raise the matter formally by setting out the grievance in writing and sending a copy to the Principal. A grievance form is available if required.

Once the Principal receives a written copy of the grievance, you will be invited to attend a meeting with him/her to discuss the grievance. After the meeting he/she will take time to consider the grievance.

The Principal will then inform you of the decision and any proposed action to be taken in respect of the grievance. You will also be informed of the right to appeal this decision.

Stage three – appeal

If you wish to appeal a grievance decision, you should inform the Principal in writing within five working days with grounds for your appeal. You will then be invited to attend an appeal hearing which will be chaired by an external adjudicator who was not involved in the original decision-making process. After the appeal, when the grounds for your appeal have been considered, you will be informed of the appeal decision.

Stage four – appealing to the British Accreditation Council

Should the outcome of the internal appeal be unsuccessful you are entitled to appeal to the British Accreditation Council (BAC) who are an accrediting body of Cambridge Seminars College. The procedures for this appeal process are detailed below:

If a student or his/her representative has completed the institution's own complaints procedure but has still not achieved a satisfactory resolution, the following should be submitted to the British Accreditation Council (BAC):

- A detailed letter of complaint, including a full description of the cause for complaint and the circumstances in which it arose.
- A signed statement authorising BAC to investigate the complaint and to raise the matter with the institution on his/her behalf.
- Copies of all supporting documentation relating to the complaint. A complaints pack with more detail is available to download from the BAC website. BAC staff will seek to resolve all complaints received against accredited institutions to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the institution, with the exception of complaints which appear to relate to offences more appropriately referred to a statutory authority.

What BAC can do:

When BAC receives a complaint from a student or his/her representative against an accredited institution, the following procedure applies:

- BAC requests evidence to support the complaint; and
- BAC requests evidence to show that the complainant has exhausted the institution's complaints procedure.

Only if the above evidence is received, will the procedure below be followed:

- The details of the complaint will be recorded by BAC staff.
- BAC will collate the relevant documentation.

The institution concerned will be informed of the nature of the complaint and asked to investigate its cause.

The institution will be required to submit a written response within ten working days, detailing the outcome of its investigation and, where appropriate, proposing a course of action to resolve the matter.

BAC will inform the complainant of the outcome of the institution's investigation and any proposed course of action.

BAC will, with the agreement of both the complainant and the institution, make reasonable attempts to mediate between the two parties in order to resolve the matter.

BAC may make recommendations for resolving the matter but these will not be binding on either party.

If, after BAC's attempts, the matter remains unresolved, a report on the complaint will be made to the Accreditation Committee. A report will also be made to the Accreditation Committee if more than three complaints against any one institution are received in any one year.

If a complaint is received against an institution which BAC does not accredit, BAC will ascertain whether or not the institution is accredited by another recognised accrediting body. If it is, BAC will redirect the complainant to that other body. Any new or outstanding complaint against an institution whose accreditation has been withdrawn by BAC, or which withdrew voluntarily from accreditation, will be similarly redirected should the institution later be awarded accreditation by another recognised accrediting body.