Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure

For all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes

Version	Update and Reason	Author and Title	Date of Academic Board Approval	Effective Date	Review date
6.0	Re-write to account for 2016 OIA guidance and new QAA Quality Code	Emma Burchfield (Academic Registrar[()6EM(()6Ei7 /MCID3/Mn7w 5 0 Td( )TjEMEQBT/P /MCI7 43 BDC 343 5()6Ei7 r			2023
6.1	Update of FFR contact details	Siobhan Baker (Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer)	N/A – hygiene update only	15 October 2020	September 2023
6.2	Complaints Procedure audit update	Siobhan Baker (Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager)	N/A	6th September 2023	September 2026

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2. Definition of a complaint

2.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) defines a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider”. Examples of complaints therefore include:

2.1.1 Failure to meet obligations, including those outlined in course/student handbooks.

2.1.2 Misleading or incorrect information provided during the application process.

2.1.3

Academic Tutor

Senior Tutor

Supervisor

Departmental Postgraduate Research (PGR) Advisor

Research Degrees Officer

Student Union Representative

Course Director or Academic Head of the Graduate School

Year Leader

Advice Centre

Disability Advisor

RVC Report and Support

Student Union Representative

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit

7. Process and timescales

7.1 This procedure provides for initial informal resolution and subsequent formal proceedings:

Stage 1	Raising a concern for informal resolution
Stage 2	Formal complaint
Stage 3	Final Formal review (internal to RVC)
Stage 4	Office of the Independent Adjudicator (independent external review)

7.2 Indicative timescales for each stage:

Stage 1	Informal concern	10 calendar days

delete or shred any papers and/or documented evidence related to the students' investigation and/or Hearing.

12.3 This may also include double deleting any copies saved in downloaded folders. Access Will also, be removed from the created One Drive Folder where the case documents are securely shared.

13. Partner institutions

13.1 In order to provide educational and other student experiences the RVC may partner with other Higher Education Providers (HEP) or organisations. Examples of these include joint and franchised degree programmes and partnerships with veterinary practices to provide clinical training.

13.2 In all cases we encourage students to try to resolve their concerns informally and Im109 0 Ti.8 o ( )Tj2

advised to contact the Advice Centre for wellbeing support and guidance on next steps.

14.4 The SRC Team may themselves deem it necessary to consider the issues presented and carry out a local level investigation. This may ask the student for additional information or seek independent evidence, but a full and formal investigation will not be undertaken.

14.5 They may also determine and implement an appropriate remedy (in consultation with relevant colleagues if necessary) at this stage if they consider the concern to be justified in whole or part.

14.6 The person receiving the concern may advise the student to proceed directly to a Stage 2 Formal Complaint if the concern is complex or serious in nature and therefore warrants a full investigation.

14.7 In all cases it will be explained to the student, either verbally or in writing (likely dependent on how and when the concern was raised) the response to their concern and any further action that needs to be taken by the student and/or the RVC.

14.8 If the student remains dissatisfied with the resolution, they must be directed to Stage 2 Formal Complaint and provided with a copy of this procedure.

15. Stage 2 – Formal complaint

15.1 Formal complaints must be submitted by completing the Student Formal Complaint Form via email to studentcomplaints@rvc.ac.uk within three months of the issue leading to the complaint arising.

15.2 Students are expected to use this form to clearly and succinctly:

Describe the circumstances leading to the complaint.
Outline the impact that it has had on them/their learning opportunities.
Confirm the action taken so far to informally resolve the complaint.
Confirm the resolution they are seeking.

15.3 All students must provide supporting evidence with their complaint form; complaints received without evidence are likely to be rejected during initial review by the SRC Team.

15.4 Students must also ensure that they provide information for all grievances at the point of submission as it will not be possible to substantially extend the scope of an investigation once started.

18. Mediation

18.1 Where the complaint concerns interaction with other students or staff the investigator may recommend referral to a mediator at any stage of the investigation. The mediator may be internal or external to the RVC.

18.2 All costs associated with the appointment of an external mediator will be met by the RVC. If all parties accept mediation, the investigation will be suspended whilst mediation is undertaken.

18.3 The mediator will report the mediation outcome to the investigator. If mediation has resolved the complaint the resolution as agreed by both parties will be communicated to the investigator and the complaint form(l)2.6 (s)-26.6.6 sesept goy1a8the i9 (edi)2.6 (at)-6.6 (i)2.6 (e

20. Complaint Review Panel

20.1 The Complaint Review Panel will be formed by 4 members appointed by the SRC Team.

20.2 The Panel composition of 4 is inclusive of a Chair and a nominee of the President of the Students' Union selected for their independence from the complainant, their understanding of the principles at stake and the broad context of the study of the student whose case is being considered. The student can request that the Student Union member be omitted from the panel; where this occurs, the quorum should remain at 3 members.

20.3 No panel members can have previously be involved in the case or have significant connections to the student, such as tutor responsibilities. A secretary to the panel will also be appointed.

20.4 The panel will receive the report of the investigation and the original student's Student Formal Complaint Form. The panel will determine on the balance of probabilities whether to uphold the complaint or not and agree any remedies that may be appropriate (and in line with RVC precedent and OIA guidance/case studies.) The

days of the formal misconduct outcome. Full details and process are outlined in the Final Formal Review Procedures.

21.3 Cases will not be considered after this time limit unless the appellant is able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the delay.

22. Completion of procedures information

22.1 If the RVC determines that an appeal is unjustified or that a case is not permitted to proceed under the Final Formal Review Process, the RVC will provide a Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter to the student. This letter will include an explanation of the decision reached.

22.2 A Completion of Procedures letter is required should the student wish to advance a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. The RVC will usually only issue a Completion of Procedures letter once the disciplinary procedure has concluded and a final decision has been provided to the student.

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