

# **OVERARCHING POLICY FOR ACADEMIC APPEALS AND STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

1 The Overarching Policy for Academic Appeals and Student Complaints of The University of Law (the University) has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance on Concerns, Complaints and Appeals. The QAA's Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced. This policy sits within the University's Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of the University and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the Code.

This policy is also informed by the Office for Students Regulatory Framework and the OIAHE Good Practice Framework.

## **Introduction**

2 This policy sets the framework of expectations within which the University of Law (the University) ensures that its procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement. The University recognises that central to this policy is the University's responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students.

## **Responsibility for this policy**

3 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with academic appeals and complaints lies with the Academic Board.

## **Expectation**

4 The University has procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities, or the provision of a programme of study or related academic or administrative service; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

## **Key Aims and Principles**

5 The University ensures that, in the operation of its policies and procedures on

academic appeals and complaints:

- 5.1 no student suffers disadvantage as a result of raising a complaint or appeal;
- 5.2 opportunities for early resolution of complaints and appeals are available;
- 5.3 procedures are clear and readily accessible to students, taking into account equality and diversity issues and barriers to access;
- 5.4 clear and accurate advice and guidance is available to students and staff;
- 5.5 training is available for staff conducting procedures;
- 5.6 procedures are conducted in a timely and fair manner;
- 5.7 appropriate action is taken following an appeal or complaint;
- 5.8 processes are in place to monitor the effectiveness of procedures;
- 5.9 outcomes of appeals and complaints processes are monitored and reviewed, and a record of resulting enhancements is maintained;
- 5.10 Support for students is available during the complaints and appeals process.

## **Procedural Approach**

6 The University has separate procedures for dealing with academic appeals and reviews, student complaints and concerns raised by a member of the student population, prospective students or other affected stakeholders.

7 An academic appeal and review is defined as a request for a reconsideration of a decision of a University academic body charged with making decisions on assessment, student progression and awards. There are specific time limits for applications

8 A student complaint is defined as the expression of a specific concern about the quality of learning opportunities, or the provision by the University of a programme of study or related academic or administrative service, other than liability for course fees. There are specific time limits for applications.

9 A concern is defined as a comment, either in conversation, writing or via social media, on the learning opportunities or student experience. When a concern is raised, it can represent the first stage of a complaint if left unaddressed.

10 Where a student complaint relates to matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities, the student may where appropriate invoke the procedures of academic appeal and review, and student complaint.

11 If the University feels at any point that a student is abusing our policies or processes, it reserves the right to call a halt to proceedings and close the case.

12 The Academic Board regularly monitors the processes and outcomes of academic appeals and reviews and student complaints with a view to enhancement of processes and the student learning experience.

## **Responsibility for the provision**

13 Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Overarching Policy for Academic Appeals and Student Complaints lies respectively with the Academic Registrar and the Head of Complaints.

## **Monitoring and review of the provision**

14 Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Overarching Policy for Academic Appeals and Student Complaints lies initially with the Academic Registrar and the University Complaints Officer, respectively. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Academic Board.

## **Version history:**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amended by</b>	<b>Revision summary</b>	<b>Date</b>
V1.0	Campus Dean – Guildford	Initial drafting group	31/05/13
V1.1	Campus Head – Bristol	QA group	05/07/13
V1.2	External Consultant	Coherence activity amendments	19/09/13
V1.3	Student Officer	Review	23/09/13
V1.4	VP – AGQS	Review	24/09/13
V1.5	Academic Registrar	Review	25/09/13
V1.6	Academic Board	Approval	03/10/13
V1.7	Registry Officer	Final amendments following proofing	02/12/13
V1.8	VP – AGQS	Chair's sign off	13/12/13

V1.9	Academic Registry	Review	16/07/15
V2.0	Vice Provost – External and Academic Development	QA group	20/08/15
V2.1	Academic Board	Approval	10/02/16
V2.2	Review Group and other stakeholders	Revised to align with published QAA advice and guidance	06/09/19
V2.3	Registry Officer	Change to the document coding convention	March 2020