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"This is not good enough – someone ought to do something about it!"

Right of complaint

All students have the right to complain if they believe a particular service has not met their requirements or expectations. This applies to both academic services (for example, teaching and support) and non-academic services (for example, catering and halls) that are provided by the University.

Timing of complaint

You should complain early on when a problem arises. Dealing with a problem early on may prevent the problem getting bigger and harder to resolve.

Will I be seen as a troublemaker?

Students are actively encouraged to complain when they have a genuine concern. The University undertakes to investigate all complaints in a fair and impartial way.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination due to raising a complaint, you could contact Berry Dicker (b.dicker@wlv.ac.uk) at the **Equal Opportunities Unit**, the **Students' Union's Welfare Officer** (welfareofficer@wolvesunion.org) or the **University Complaints Controller** (see page 6).

Each School has a member of staff who acts as a **Sympathetic Listener**, who may be able to help. Their names are available from your School Notice Board and from your School Office.

You could see one of the University's **Counsellors** (01902 322572) in Student Gateway for further help and support.

Before you make a complaint

Have you tried bringing your complaint to the attention of a relevant member of the university staff? Often, the relevant service provider can deal with your concern informally.

However, some matters cannot be dealt with informally or have escalated beyond a 'local' level. Therefore, a more formal, documented approach may be necessary.

Discrimination or harassment

There is a separate system for complaints of discrimination or harassment. Please contact the **Equal Opportunities Unit** (01902 321146). Also, there is a leaflet on your rights and responsibilities with regard to equal opportunities available from the Higher Education Shop (MV Building).

You may wish to contact the **Students' Union Welfare Officer** (01902 322038). University policies relating to Equality and Diversity and Bullying and Harassment etc can be found at www.wlv.ac.uk/eo (then go to policies).

You can, however, use the University's complaints form (see below) to register your case. You can also submit any concerns to the **University Complaints Controller** (see page 6).

Academic appeals

There is a separate system for academic appeals; for example, grade and progression issues. Please contact the **Students' Union's Advice and Support Centre** (01902 322038).

You can, however, use the University's complaints form (see below) to register your case. You can also submit any concern to the **University Complaints Controller** (see page 6).

How do I make a formal complaint?

You need to submit your complaint in writing. You can obtain a complaints form from **Student Registries, School Offices** or the **Students' Union**. You can also download a form from the University's website (www.wlv.ac.uk).

What do I put on the form?

You need to provide the following details:

- Date of complaint.
- Has the complaint been addressed with anyone?
- Your name, address, contact number, course, and student number.
- Full details of your complaint.

You don't have to provide any personal details if you don't want to, but if you submit an anonymous complaint, you obviously won't receive a direct reply from the University.

Putting your complaint in writing

Sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start when writing a complaint. As a general guide, think about

- a) the reasons you want to complain, and
- b) what it is that you want to happen to resolve your complaint.

In other words, explain clearly what it is that has prompted you to complain and what outcome you want.

You should use **moderate language** and express yourself as clearly and concisely as possible. **Try not to just 'have a go' as this can make your complaint seem frivolous or unreasonable.**

The following guidance is adapted from Evans and Gill¹ (2001, p114).

The statement of complaint

1. Describe what has happened to cause you to complain, giving dates and times and any other details. You will need to show that something has gone wrong and that you have suffered as a result.
2. Give the name(s) of the person(s) or body you are complaining about.
3. If appropriate, give the names of any witnesses who have agreed to support you, enclosing a signed note from each of them to act as a consent form.
4. Enclose any documentary evidence that you have, making sure that you keep a copy for your own reference. You might want to provide a contents page if the complaint is more than, say, 10 pages.
- 5. Say what action you would like to be taken or what remedy you are seeking.**
6. If you have arranged representation, give the name of the person who has agreed to accompany, support or represent you

¹ EVANS, G.R. and GILL, J., *Universities and Students* (2001). London: Kogan Page.

at any meeting or hearing (for example, a friend or a Students' Union officer).

Where do I send the form?

You should send the completed complaints form to the **Dean of School**, the relevant **Head of Department** or the **University Complaints Controller**.

What happens next?

The complaint will be dealt with by the member of the University's management team who is directly responsible for the service about which your complaint is being made.

If you have provided personal details, you should receive an acknowledgement that your complaint has been received and you should then receive a full response in writing within 28 days.

You may be asked to attend a meeting with the person(s) investigating your complaint. If you would like support and representation, contact the **Students' Union Advice and Support Centre** (01902 322038).

What if I'm not happy with the outcome of my complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should tell the University by writing to the person who has responded to your complaint. You could also write to the **Vice-Chancellor**.

Complaints that have exhausted the University's complaint procedure may be eligible to be taken to the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator** (01189 599813), which is an external body that reviews the decisions that universities make regarding student complaints.

You must have exhausted all the University's internal procedures first. Please ask at the **Students' Union Advice and Support Centre** for further information.

Summary

- If appropriate, discuss your complaint informally with a relevant member of staff.
- If you aren't satisfied, fill in a complaint form from, which is available from Registry, school offices or the Students' Union.
- You should receive a written response addressing your complaint within 28 days.

Further Information

You can discuss your case confidentially with the **Academic Affairs Officer** of the Students' Union, who can be contacted at:

**The Advice and Support Centre
University of Wolverhampton Students' Union
MD Building
Wolverhampton
WV1 1LY**

Telephone: 01902 322038

Email: advice@wolvesunion.org

Website: www.wolvesunion.org

Or you can contact the **University's Complaints Controller** at:

**The University Complaints Controller
Room MA131
University of Wolverhampton
Wulfruna Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 1SB**

Alternatively, for cases of discrimination or harassment you can contact the **Equal Opportunities Unit** at b.dicker@wlv.ac.uk or telephone 01902 321146.

The university's regulations are available online at www.wlv.ac.uk