

**ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE
OXFORD**

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure was reviewed and approved by St Antony's Governing Body on 20 October 2021

Our aim

St Antony's College is committed to monitoring and evaluating its services to enhance their quality and ensure that they meet the needs of all visitors to and members of the College. This complaints procedure covers areas of dissatisfaction concerning:

- general standards of service;
- actions or lack of actions by the College or its staff; and
- the provision or lack of provision of services by the College affecting individuals, students, senior members, visitors or clients of any group.

The complaints procedure is open to anyone who is or was recently* a registered student of the College.

*Students have access to this procedure for a maximum period of three months after their studies have concluded or been terminated before completion of their course. For PGT students, conclusion/termination means the official end date or an agreed extended date for submission of any last assignment or exams. For PGR students, conclusion/termination means the date on which the relevant academic department/faculty issues Leave to Supplicate.

This complaints procedure does **NOT** cover:

- issues relating to student or staff behaviour (these are covered by the [Code of Student Discipline](#) and the Employee Handbook respectively);
- harassment, including bullying (there is a separate College [policy and procedure on harassment](#))
- staff grievances (these are also covered by the Employee Handbook); or
- any dissatisfaction related to any University department or service (the University has its own complaints procedures for such matters)
- academic appeals (for example, a decision made by a Board of Examiners), which are governed by the [University Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

Where a case is related to the College's PREVENT duty, the PREVENT Lead will be informed to investigate whether the overarching College policies are threatened.

There are three key stages of the complaints procedure. These are described in detail below and summarised in the diagram annexed at B.

Stage 1: Informal

The College expects that you will feel able to raise and resolve your concern informally through normal contacts and discussion with the relevant parties, without the need to instigate formal procedures. If you are unable or unwilling to raise the matter directly with the specific individual or group of individuals that you feel dissatisfaction towards, you should raise the complaint through someone as close as possible to

its origin, such as the relevant administrator, the event organiser, the service provider etc.

Key contacts for informal complaints

Area of College operation	Informal contact
Lodge	Individual Porter concerned, or Head Porter
Housekeeping	Individual Scout concerned, or Housekeeping Manager
Maintenance	Individual Maintenance Operative concerned, or Maintenance Manager
Catering	Individual member of Kitchen staff concerned, or Chef
Stewarding	Individual member of Stewarding staff concerned, or Steward
Accommodation	Individual Conference & Accommodation Officer concerned, or
Conferences	Conference and Accommodation Manager Conferencing Officer or Manager
Domestic Bursary	Domestic Bursar
Registry	Individual member of Registry Team concerned, or College Registrar
IT	IT Officer or IT Manager
Library	College Librarian
Accounts	Individual member of Accounts Team concerned, or College Accountant
Development & Alumni	Individual member of Development & Alumni Team concerned, Development Director
HR	HR Assistant or HR Manager
Research Centres	Centre or Programme Administrator
MEC Library	MEC Librarian
MEC Archive	MEC Archivist
Welfare	College Registrar
Discipline	College Registrar

If you are unsure who to approach, please seek advice from the Bursar, the College Registrar or the Dean.

You may contact the relevant person by email, face-to-face or by phone. Contact details can be found at <https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/people>.

The complainant

In raising the issue or complaint, whether verbally or in writing, you should indicate the outcome that you seek in order to resolve the concern. You should also raise the issue or complaint as soon as possible after the actions or lack of actions which prompted it; the greater the time delay from an action or lack of action to submission of the complaint, the more difficult it will be for the College to deal with the complaint effectively.

The recipient of the informal complaint

The person receiving the issue or complaint should seek to understand the nature of the problem and, if possible, resolve it there and then. If the complaint is made in writing, an attempt should be made to contact the complainant by telephone to arrange to discuss the complaint in person. The relevant member

of staff will seek to offer advice and where possible will try to find an informal resolution. Possible outcomes might include mediation and conciliation where appropriate; this is a voluntary process where an impartial, independent third party helps the parties to resolve issues confidentially.

If a complaint covers more than one area of the College (for example because it involves more than one service), the person first receiving the complaint must ensure that responsibility for investigating and responding to the complaint is quickly agreed, and liaise with all relevant parties as necessary.

Other forms of initial help and advice

If you need initial help and advice, this may be sought from:

1. Oxford University Student Union's Student Advice Service: <http://ousu.org/advice/student-advice-service/>;
2. Your College Adviser. Please contact the College Registrar if you are not sure of your Advisor's details;
3. The Senior Tutor, who holds regular office hours during term time. Please contact senior.tutor@sant.ox.ac.uk.

Timeframe for responding to informal complaints

The College aims to resolve informal complaints within 20 working days from the date on which receipt of the informal complaint was acknowledged. If for any reason it is not possible to respond to your complaint within this timeframe, we will contact you to inform you of this and provide a date by which we do expect to reach a resolution.

Stage 2 - Formal

A complaint should progress to the formal stage if:

- the student does not feel comfortable raising their concern informally as set out above stage and initiates the formal process as set out below;
- informal resolution is attempted, but the student remains dissatisfied and initiates the formal process as set out below; or
- the issues raised are complex and will require detailed investigation, for example where a complaint relates to the conduct of staff members or covers a number of different incidents.

Key contacts for formal complaints

To register a formal complaint, you must write to the College manager responsible for the area of service as set out below:

Area of College operation	College manager responsible
Lodge	Domestic Bursar
Housekeeping	Domestic Bursar
Maintenance	Domestic Bursar
Catering	Domestic Bursar
Stewarding	Domestic Bursar
Accommodation	Domestic Bursar
Conferences	Domestic Bursar
Domestic Bursary	Bursar
Registry	Bursar

IT	Bursar
Library	Bursar
Accounts	Bursar
Development & Alumni	Bursar
HR	Bursar
Research Centres	Centre Director
MEC Library	MEC Director
MEC Archive	MEC Director
Welfare	Bursar or Dean
Discipline	Bursar or Dean

The complainant

It will help us to deal with your complaint quickly if you provide:

1. Your name and email address
2. A daytime telephone number where we can contact you
3. A clear account of what the complaint is about and which area(s)/service(s) of the college are involved
4. Supporting evidence for your complaint
5. Why informal resolution was not possible or you were not satisfied with the response you received
6. What you are hoping we will do to resolve your complaint.

The recipient of the formal complaint

On receipt of a formal complaint, the College will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is submitted under the right procedure, within the relevant deadlines/timescales, and in the required format. If the complaint is accepted under the proposed procedure, the College will seek to allocate it to an investigator (usually a member of staff) who has had no previous involvement in the matters raised, if possible.

Once allocated to an investigator, that individual will write to you to give their contact details. They may request a meeting to discuss the purpose or scope of the investigation, or they may ask follow up questions via email. If your expectations appear to go beyond what the College can reasonably deliver or what is in its power to deliver, the investigator will explain this to you in writing.

The procedures followed will be proportionate to the nature of the complaint and the complexity of the issues raised. The investigator the complaint may talk to key staff or other students and consider documents and other evidence. They will give consideration to whether mediation or conciliation might be an appropriate outcome at this stage. Given the size of the College, it is not expected that a complaint panel would be convened.

The investigator will produce a report based on their investigations which outlines the process followed, the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any recommendations. Once the investigation is complete, the College will write to you with a copy of this report and an outcome letter, setting out the outcome of the formal stage, including any decision to reject the complaint. The outcome letter will include:

- a clear explanation of the reasons for each decision
- if the complaint is upheld, information on how and when the College will implement any remedy,

and whether that includes an apology

- information about your right to take the complaint to the review stage
- the grounds on which you can do so
- the time limit for escalating to the review stage
- the appropriate procedure
- where and how to access support.

A written record will be kept of all decisions, correspondence and meetings relating to the investigation of your complaint.

Timeframe for responding to formal complaints

All formal complaints will be logged and you will receive a written acknowledgement of receipt within 5 working days (except if the recipient is on leave for any reason, which would be notified to you by an automatic reply).

Investigations into formal complaints will normally be completed within 60 calendar days from the date on which receipt of the complaint was acknowledged.

If for any reason it does not look likely to be possible to complete the above process within the specified timeframe, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered, and proposing a date by which it is expected the process will be concluded.

If you are dissatisfied with the formal complaint outcome but do not take the matter to the review stage within the time limit for doing so (see below), the College will close the case.

If the complaint is rejected, for example because it has been submitted late, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter and there would be no right to request a review.

Stage 3 - Review

If you are not satisfied with the response to your formal complaint, you have a right to request a review from the Warden of the College.

Scope of a review

A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage before it can reach the review stage. The review stage will not normally consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.

The complainant

Reviews can be requested on the following grounds:

- the need to review the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

You must submit your request for a review in writing to warden@sant.ox.ac.uk.

The reviewer

On receipt of a request for a review, the Warden or their representative (who must be a member of staff not involved at any previous stage) will acknowledge receipt and write to confirm the elements of the complaint that will be reviewed, managing expectations as necessary.

The reviewer is able to overturn the outcome of the formal stage, if they consider that it is appropriate to do so, or they may refer the matter back to the formal stage, for example if they conclude that further investigation is required.

The review will consider the following questions:

- Were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
- Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances?
- Has the student received clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the formal stage?
- If new material evidence has been provided, has the student given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

Possible outcomes of a review

Where a complaint is upheld or partly upheld, the College will explain how and when it will implement any remedy, and whether that includes an apology. If the remedy proposed includes referring the complaint back to the formal stage for reconsideration, the College will ensure that reconsideration is concluded as soon as possible and, where practicable, within the 90 calendar days timeframe.

If a complaint is upheld or partly upheld at the end of the College's procedures, if you wish, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter. Such a request must come forward within six weeks of the outcome letter being issued.

If the complaint is not upheld, the outcome of the review stage will be communicated to you in writing by issuing a Completion of Procedures letter within 28 days of receipt of the request for review. A template Completion of Procedures letter is annexed at A.

Stage 4 – Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

If, further to a request for review, you are still dissatisfied, you may take the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), which provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints.

The time limit for bringing a complaint to the OIA is 12 months. The OIA will consider cases only when the College's own internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. Further information about the OIA scheme is available at <http://oiahe.org.uk>.

UK Accommodation Code of Practice

The College operates under, and adheres to, the Universities UK Accommodation Code of Practice. Please contact the Domestic Bursar if you wish to view a copy of this Code of Practice, which incorporates an earlier separate procedure note entitled 'Complaints concerning College accommodation'.

October 2021

ANNEX A: Completion of Procedures letter template

Taken from: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters/>

Dear [*Name of complainant*],

Completion of Procedures Letter

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of [*name of higher education provider*] in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc** regarding [*please describe*] have been completed.

The issues that you raised in your *complaint / appeal etc** were [*details*]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc was / were**: [*brief summary of the complaint etc*].

The final decision of [*name of higher education provider*] is* [*detail*] because [*reasons*].

The procedures / regulations applied were*: [*details and date as supplied to the OIA's electronic Regulations Bank*].

[*Name of provider*] subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint / appeal etc** to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint you take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules.

Should you decide to make a complaint to the OIA, your OIA Complaint Form **must be received by the OIA** within **12 months** of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA **on or before** [*insert date - e.g. if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 9 July 2015, this date should be 9 July 2016*].

[*Include here any factors of which the provider is aware which mean that it is particularly important for the student to bring the complaint promptly.*]

You can fill in the OIA's complaint form online or download a copy from the OIA website.

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>. The OIA also publishes *An Introduction to the OIA Scheme for Students*, which can be downloaded from <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/>. Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. **You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.**

Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>. You may also wish to seek advice from the Students' Union about taking your complaint to the OIA.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues that have been dealt with through the

provider's internal procedures.

Yours sincerely,

[Authorised signatory]

Annex B: Complaints Procedure diagram

STAGE ONE: Informal

Seeks to resolve issues directly between the parties. You should contact the relevant person to:

- Set out the issue or complaint
- State what resolution you are seeking
- Raise the concern promptly.

Usual timeframe: 20 working days

STAGE TWO: Formal

Allows you to raise your complaint with the relevant College manager. You should contact the relevant person to:

- Set out the issue or complaint
- Describe why informal resolution was not possible
- Provide supporting evidence
- State what resolution you are seeking.

Usual timeframe: 90 calendar days

STAGE THREE: Review

Can be requested from warden@sant.ox.ac.uk if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your formal complaint.

STAGE FOUR: Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

An independent scheme that can be used if you remain dissatisfied once a Completion of Procedures Letter has been issued by the College.

Time limit: 12 months

Should be sent to warden@sant.ox.ac.uk