# Information on Complaints

# for all Staff and Students

This is a short message to direct you to resources concerning how and where to complain as a student of the Queen’s Foundation. We have a number of policies concerning ‘grievances’:

* Policies for “Complaints”
* A policy on Bullying and Harassment
* Policies for Appeals against a decision of an academic board.

In 2015-16 we subscribed for the first time directly to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) scheme; the OIA is now open to you as a final stage of all of these processes. We are currently working towards the OIAs *Good Practice Framework* and this includes reviewing all of our existing policies and procedures and ensuring that all staff and students are aware of the policies and where to find information about them. [[1]](#footnote-1)

● **What is an academic appeal?**

A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decision on student progress, assessment and awards.

● **Who can make an academic appeal?**

All registered or recently registered (within the previous 12 months). Details of how to appeal are contained in the appeals policies hosted in the policy area on Moodle.

● **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is defined by the OIA as any expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about an action or lack of action by Queen’s or about the standard of our service. A complaint can cover aspects of college life such as accommodation services, facilities or behaviours.

Complaints do not concern matters pertaining to academic performance (e.g. a mark given for an assignment) but a complaint could arise from a classroom setting (such as a tutor’s attitude and treatment of students). Where a complaint is about the decision of an academic board such as an exam board or plagiarism panel you can use the academic appeals policy which applies to each of our validating universities. Where there are issues of *Bullying and Harassment* you should use the relevant policy which has appropriate procedures that deal with these specific circumstances. Where there are issues pertaining to safeguarding the *Foundation Safeguarding Policy* would the primary operative policy. This is hosted in the Foundation Policy section on Moodle and on our website[[2]](#footnote-2).

● **Who can complain?**

All students can complain whether they are registered on a University Validated programme or not. Students following a Common Awards programme should use the relevant policies and procedure for complaints or academic appeals for Durham University. All other students making a complaint (including research students) should use the *Queen’s Foundation Complaints* procedure. Newman Students wishing to appeal an academic decision should use the *Newman University Academic Appeals* procedure and research students should see their relevant university student handbook about academic appeals.

● **Where do I find the policies?**

All policies and procedures can be found on the VLE (Moodle) in the *section Academic and Foundation Information* / *Foundation Policies*. For some students it is possible that the complaints or grievance policy of the Church could be used to make a complaint. Such policies will be found on respective Church websites.

● **Who do I talk to about complaints?**

This is detailed in each of the policies but in the first instance you should always speak to your personal tutor (or centre director if the complaint relates to your personal tutor) to see if your dissatisfaction can be resolved informally. Your tutor will advise you as to how you can progress your complaint to senior staff if you wish to and offer you personal support through all stages of the process. Again see the relevant policy for details.

● **Where does the OIA fit in?**

Once a complaint (or academic appeal) has run its course through all the stages of the relevant procedure if you are still not satisfied with the outcome you are then entitled to go to OIA for a review. They will make a judgement on whether you were treated fairly or not. The powers of the OIA and how to use them are covered in the guide for students on the OIA website:

(<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia_intro_leaflet_16pp.pdf>)

**Document prepared by Dr. Andrew Hayes, March 2016**

1. http://oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/good-practice-framework.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.queens.ac.uk/site/page/policies/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)