

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 (AceQ3Be86tTc 0 Tw 148 jv 148(f38(qO)8. 0.0047 Tw.EMC /P AMR)4.3eµ86.6E33ya.68			

Item

1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is committed to providing a high-quality educational

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 Concerns re: educational delivery Poor quality support, resources, or facilities – either provided by the RVC or its agents.

2.2 A student cannot complain about academic judgement that is concluded following correct application of RVC procedures (e.g., exam boards). The OIA define academic judgement as:

“Academic judgement is not any judgement made by an academic; it is a judgement that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. So, for example a judgement about marks awarded, degree classification, research methodology, whether feedback is correct or adequate, and the content or outcomes of a course will normally involve academic judgement.” (OIA, 2018, Section 30.2)

3. Complaint or appeal

3.1 The OIA define an appeal as “a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards”. Students making such a request should refer to our [RVC Student Appeals Procedure](#). If students remain unclear as to which procedure to use, students should email the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Team for further guidance (studentcomplaints@rvc.ac.uk).

4. Responsibilities of students

4.1 We expect students to treat all members of our community with respect as outlined in our [Student Charter](#) and the [General Regulations for Study and Award](#); This includes when raising a concern/complaint with the RVC. We encourage students to raise

7.3 We will make every effort to adhere to the timescales above but matters of complexity

12. Retention, Deletion and Archiving

12.1 Data related to complaints is used to:

- (a) Monitor and analyse our management of casework within the required timeframes in order to improve and develop RVC service delivery.
- (b) Respond to internal audit requirements.
- (c) Enable us to respond to any requests regarding the decision and process that may be made by the OIA.
- (d) Conduct the periodic evaluation of cases in relation to Freedom of Information Request.

12.2 Investigators and Complaints Review Panel members who obtain copies of records before and during an investigation and/or Hearing will be sent an automated reminder to 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 directly with the partner institution. Raising a concern locally and at the time of the issue leading to the concern increases the opportunity for early resolution to negate any adverse impact on the student's experience and learning. However, if the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction, students are able to raise the matter with the RVC as a Stage 2 formal complaint.

14. Stage 1 – Raising a concern for informal resolution

14.1 Students should raise their concerns in person or in writing via email or letter (not social media) directly with the member of staff most related to the concern. Raising a

concern locally and at the time of the issue leading to the concern increases the opportunity for early resolution to negate any adverse impact on the student's experience and learning.

14.2 If the student feels uncomfortable about raising the grievance with the person directly, they are able to raise the issue through a third party such as their course representative, tutor or supervisor, member of the Advice Centre or a Student Union Representative. The student should make sure that the issue is clearly

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

- f* Describe the circumstances leading to the complaint.
- f* Outline the impact that it has had on them/their learning opportunities.
- f* Confirm the action taken so far to informally resolve the complaint.
- f* 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 Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct 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.

16. Initial review

16.1 The Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Casework Team will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within five calendar days and undertake an initial review of the Student Formal Complaint Form.

16.2 If the complaint does not fall within the remit of these procedures, it will be rejected. The student will be informed in writing of this decision and the reasons that the complaint has been rejected. If necessary, the student will be referred to other procedures, such as Appeals and Representation, for resolution.

16.3 If the complaint does fall within the remit of the procedures but the student has not already sought informal resolution as outlined in Stage 1, they will be advised in writing to do so. However, in some circumstances, such as bullying or harassment, it may not be appropriate for the student to raise their concerns directly and informally. In these circumstances, students are advised to contact the [Advice Centre](#) for wellbeing support and guidance on next steps.

16.4 If the complaint does fall within the remit of these procedures and informal resolution has already been sought, the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Casework Team will notify the student and confirm that an independent and appropriately trained investigator will be appointed to progress the complaint. Where the complaint relates to a member of staff, the investigator appointed will be independent of both parties and have been accepted by both parties. Failure by the student to accept an investigator without good and evidenced reason may result in the complaint being dismissed.

17. Complaint investigations

17.1 The investigator will ensure that the student is informed about the power and scope of the investigation. It is recommended that an initial meeting is held with the student so that the information provided in the Student Formal Complaint Form can be expanded upon and the investigator is clear on the student grievance. The student may bring a supporter to this meeting as these are internal RVC processes this cannot be a legal

19.2 The Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Team will review the draft report to ensure that all concerns have been addressed and that proposed remedies are in line with RVC precedent and OIA guidance/case studies. They may involve the Registrar and/or their nominee in these deliberations. The investigator may be requested to T[)T0.v

23. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

23.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a Final Formal Review can apply to the OIA for an independent review. Requests for OIA review must be made no later than 12 months after the Final Formal Review decision.

23.2 The OIA has published an Introduction to the OIA for Students which can be downloaded from <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2264/intrototheoia-students-jan-2019.pdf>

23.3 Further 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/can-you-complain-to-us/>