

Student Complaints & Mitigations Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The following outlines the policies Nexus ICA adhere to with regard to student complaints and mitigation. These policies have been drawn from those in operation at our partner institution, the University of West London.

1.2 This policy applies to internally assessed programmes including those validated by the University of West London and delivered at other locations.

2. Definition

2.1 Mitigation may be defined as the taking into account of any circumstances that were not within the foresight and control of the student and which the University believes might adversely affect the academic performance of a student.

3. General Principles

3.1 For any academic award the University must be satisfied that the student has provided sufficient evidence that the required learning outcomes, as laid down in the module specification and course requirements, have been met.

3.2 A student presenting a case for mitigation must provide appropriate evidence in the form of medical certificates, statements from professionals, and so on.

3.3 The consideration of any student claim is made on the basis of supporting the best interests of that student, within the framework of the University Regulations.

3.4 It does not automatically follow that unforeseen circumstances will result in any special consideration of a student.

3.5 Information regarding personal circumstances of students should be treated as confidential. Knowledge of the detail of a student's circumstances should be restricted.

3.6 The professional view of external authorities (e.g. counsellors, doctors) and internal authorities (e.g. counsellors, nurses) should be respected.

4. Mitigating Circumstances

4.1 Circumstances that could lead to a successful mitigation plea include the following:

- i. Ill-health – physical or mental;
- ii. Severe financial hardship (over and above that experienced by all students);
- iii. Emotional/personal difficulties – e.g. bereavement;
- iv. Special needs – where the student's disability comes to light for the first time at assessment;
- v. Unavoidable absence – e.g. requirements of employer;

- vi. Unavoidable absence from domicile – e.g. eviction;
- vii. Other serious circumstances, which could not be foreseen by the student.

Examples in these regulations are for illustration only and are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

5. Consistency

5.1 Consistency can be ensured by the following:

- i. The involvement of as few people as possible in making judgements.
- ii. Judgements taking place on the basis of overt evidence supplied by the student.
- iii. Ensuring that all mitigation boards follow the policy, regulations and guidelines laid down by the University.

6. Mitigation Timing

6.1 Mitigation may need to be taken into account at various stages of a course. Mitigation must be submitted by due dates which will be published annually. The student's circumstances will be taken into account by the Award Board and Student Progress Board.

7. Mitigation Results

7.1 Mitigation can result in:

- i. Extension of submission deadlines;
- ii. Altering assessment requirements, e.g. allowing further resits/resubmission;
- iii. Changing the assessment type;
- iv. Awarding aegrotat passes.

8. Mitigation Regulations

8.1 Regulations governing mitigation are available from UWL in their student handbook.

Student Complaints Procedure

1. General Principles

1.1 Nexus ICA seeks to maintain high standards in its provision of courses, services and facilities to students. Nexus ICA has established its student complaints procedures to deal with legitimate complaints from students in a fair, prompt and efficient manner.

1.2 Complaints will be addressed through a two-stage process, with Stage I: Informal Resolution of Complaints and Stage II: Formal Complaints Procedure.

1.3 All complaints will be dealt with without recrimination and no student will be disadvantaged on account of raising a complaint. Students may complain individually or collectively, where appropriate. Complaints will be investigated objectively. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

1.4 Where a complaint made by a student is believed to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, Nexus ICA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the student for breach of the Code of Conduct.

1.5 All complaints will be dealt with constructively and the student will be informed of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld, Nexus ICA will make an appropriate response including taking any necessary corrective action. Means of redress include an explanation of actions taken or planned and written or oral apologies.

1.6 All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that any person about whom a complaint is made shall be supplied with a copy of the complaint. A student may be asked to attend an interview with the member of staff investigating their complaint.

1.7 A record of Stage II complaints received from students and the means of resolution will be kept by Nexus ICA and reported annually to the Academic Board as part of the monitoring and quality assurance processes. No information that will identify any individual will be available within the report.

1.8 For students under 18 or vulnerable adults additional support may be provided.

2. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

2.1 This procedure is designed to deal with complaints arising from:

- i. Provision of academic services described in Nexus ICA's publications including teaching, content of courses and support for learning.
- ii. Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by Nexus ICA.

2.2 The student complaints procedure does not cover the following:

- i. Any matters relating to examination and assessment procedures or academic appeals.
- ii. Disciplinary issues: information regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct is published in the Student Handbook.
- iii. Admissions procedures prior to enrolment as a student of Nexus ICA.

3. Stage I: Informal Resolution of Complaints

3.1 If a student requires advice or wishes to discuss the matter before making a complaint he/she should consult his/her personal tutor, discovery group leader or any other member of staff.

3.2 The complaint must be made writing using the 'Student Complaint Form Informal Stage I', normally within ten working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or in any event as soon as possible.

3.3 Most complaints will be resolved informally by an appropriate member of staff.

3.4 The member of staff to whom the complaint is made will investigate or refer the complaint and a response will be made to the student either orally or in writing, normally within ten working days.

3.5 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of this informal procedure, then they should follow the procedures described in the formal complaints procedure below.

4. Stage II: Formal Complaints Procedure (University of West London)

4.1 A complaint under this procedure should be made to the University Secretary, in writing, normally within twenty working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or the outcome of the informal resolution. The following details must be provided:

- i. A full statement of the complaint.
- ii. Brief details of the steps already taken to resolve the complaint.
- iii. Reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the attempts to resolve the complaint.
- iv. What the student would like done – what remedy the student is seeking.
- v. A copy (not original documents) of any documentary evidence the student wishes to submit.
- vi. The student's name and the University student ID number.
- vii. Full contact details for the student (including preferred method of contact e.g. email).
- viii. Whether the student has representation and if so whom.

The complaint should be addressed to the University Secretary, University of West London, St Mary's Road, London W5 5RF or university.secretary@uwl.ac.uk.

4.2 The University Secretary will determine whether all the necessary information has been provided and may contact the student requesting additional details and evidence. In all cases, the University Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

4.3 The University Secretary will forward the complaint to the appropriate area(s), who will investigate the complaint using the information provided by the student in their written statement of the complaint. A response will be sent to the student in writing within twenty working days of the full complaint being received by the University. The response sent to the student must be copied to the University Secretary and all relevant parties (including the Students' Union where applicable).

4.4 In instances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint within twenty working days for a legitimate reason, the relevant area investigating the complaint shall write to the student and inform them of:

- i. The name of the person investigating their complaint;
- ii. The reason for the delay;
- iii. The date by which the student will be notified of the outcome.

The letter sent to the student must be copied to the University Secretary and all relevant parties (including the Students' Union where applicable).

4.5 If the student is dissatisfied with the written response they have received, and Section 5 below does not apply, the student may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: www.oiahe.org.uk. Guidance can be sought from the Students' Union.

5. Review of the Handling of a Complaint

5.1 If a student has reason to believe that his/her complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, he/she should write to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Services) within twenty working days of the date of the outcome letter, setting out his/her reasons. On the instruction of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, his/her nominee will act as University Ombudsman and review the handling of the complaint in the light of the student's written statement and report in writing to the Pro Vice-Chancellor within fifteen working days. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in light of this report. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will send a written reply to the student within twenty working days of receiving the request for the review of the handling of the complaint.

5.2 Dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint will not constitute in itself grounds for a review.

5.3 Following review, there will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the University.

5.4 The student may refer their case to the OIA. Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: www.oiahe.org.uk. Guidance can be sought from the Students' Union.