

Education for Health Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

We are committed to providing a high-quality service and we will resolve any problems in our provision of that service as quickly as possible. Complaints are an important source of information for improving our own internal processes and procedures. We pride ourselves on delivering an excellent service and will critically review any complaint we receive following the time limits set out in this procedure. You will be informed of any deviations to these timescales and the reason for it if one should arise.

2. Definitions

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning:

- a. Academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, including an academic or administrative service related to the provision of learning
- b. A product or service-related issue (such as catering) that is not related to an academic matter.

Please note that informal queries and appeals are excluded from the complaints process. We define informal queries and appeals as requests for a 'review of a decision relating to your assessment outcome, academic progress or award'.

Our 'Informal Queries and Appeals Policy' can be found on the Policies and Procedures page of our website: <https://www.educationforhealth.org/education/student-support/regulations-policies/>.

3. Associated Procedures

Section 3.3: Student Charter

Section 5.8: Education for Health Quality Framework

Located on the Education for Health Policies and Procedures page:

<https://www.educationforhealth.org/education/student-support/regulations-policies/>

4. Roles and Responsibilities

We will:

- Respond to complaints within the time limits set out in this policy;
- Ensure that we address all the points you raise and that our replies explain the outcomes clearly;

- Handle your complaint confidentially and only give people the information that is needed to carry out a proper investigation and make a full response;
- Make sure that no complaint you have made will be used to your disadvantage in the future;
- Always be polite and professional;
- Use the outcome to improve our service and to avoid where possible a reoccurrence of the issue.

If you wish to make a complaint, please note that we do not accept complaints made by third parties **unless** we have written confirmation from the student that they are happy for the third party to make a complaint on their behalf.

5. The Policy

The Complaints procedure is summarised in the flowchart attached at the end of this policy.

5.1 Informal Process - Stage 1

If you experience problems with any aspect of our academic or administrative services, you should contact the appropriate department at Education for Health as soon as possible so that we can act quickly to put things right. You may know the address of the department concerned from previous correspondence but if not, please contact Student Support on (01926) 838969 or email studentsupport@educationforhealth.org.

It is essential that you act **immediately** if there is a possibility that your studies will be affected by any problem you have experienced. For example, if you are unable to access your module materials, the sooner we know about it, the sooner we can resolve this for you.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept responsibility for problems that affect the outcome of your studies if you delay telling us about them as it may become too late for us to put things right.

You must make your complaint within a reasonable timeframe of the matter that prompted your complaint. If your complaint relates to a module of study, you should make your complaint **no more than 3 months after completion of or withdrawal from the module or course** in which the complaint arose. After this time, your complaint will be considered to be 'out of time', save in exceptional circumstances that prevented you from submitting it.

We will respond to your complaint within 28 days from the date of you raising the matter with Education for Health. Each complaint will be reviewed on a case by case basis and the appropriate solution will be recommended to rectify the complaint you have.

5.2 Formal Process – Stage 2

If you have told us about a problem and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to make a formal complaint. This must be within **28 days** of the date of our response to your informal complaint (Stage 1).

Please contact the department at Education for Health responsible for providing the service you are complaining about. If you want to complain about more than one department, you should either contact each department separately or alternatively you can write to the Head of Operational Support at g.parks@educationforhealth.org.

The complaint should be submitted in writing by post, fax or email, to ensure that we record your complaint accurately. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to send a written complaint, please contact the Head of Operational Support to discuss alternatives on the email address provided above, or at 01926 493313.

Concise numbered points can be a helpful way to set the situation out clearly and you should provide any supporting evidence available to you.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will provide a full reply within 28 days. If we are unable to give you a full reply within this time, we will tell you when we will be able to do so.

We will normally reply to you by email so you get our response quickly but if you have not included your email address we will write to you.

5.3 Review Process

If, when you receive our reply to your complaint, you believe that Education for Health's complaints process has been conducted incorrectly or you feel that the outcome is unreasonable in relation to the evidence, you can ask that your complaint be reviewed. How this review process will operate depends on the nature of your complaint.

5.3.1 Who undertakes a review

If your complaint relates to

- a module or programme validated by The Open University or The University of Hertfordshire - **and**
- academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities

then you can request a review by the relevant validating partner.

Further details are provided in:

- section 5.3.3 for The Open University (OU),
- section 5.3.4 for The University of Hertfordshire (UH).

For all other complaints, please see section 5.3.2. This includes complaints relating to a module or programme validated by The OU or UH but where the complaint is regarding a **service-related issue** (see section 2b), rather than an academic matter.

5.3.2 Review by Education for Health

For relevant complaints (please see section 5.3.1), you can request a review by the Chief Executive of Education for Health. This must be within **28 days** of the date of our response to your Stage Two complaint. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to send a written complaint, please contact the Head of Operational Support to discuss alternatives on the email address provided above, or at 01926 493313.

You must clearly set out the reasons for requesting a review, including:

- Full details of your complaint and all matters related to it
- The reason why you believe the response you have received at stage two has not answered your complaint
- Details of other departments in Education for Health that you have had contact with in relation to your complaint
- Copies of any previous correspondence with us related to your complaint, or enough information to help us trace this correspondence quickly
- Any additional evidence in support of your complaint
- What you think we should do to resolve your complaint.

The request for a review should be submitted in writing by post, fax or email, to ensure that we record your complaint accurately.

We will acknowledge your request. The Chief Executive (or appropriate senior member(s) of staff nominated by him/her) will investigate whether we have handled the matter in line with our policy and procedures, and whether we could have done anything else to rectify the complaint. The Chief Executive will send a reply to your complaint within 28 days of the date of receiving your request for a review. If we are unable to give you a full reply within this time, we will tell you when we will be able to do so. The reply from the Chief Executive will explain the basis of his/her decision. The decision of the Chief Executive is the final decision on behalf of Education for Health. This reply will be sent via a Completion of Procedures letter.

5.3.3 Review by The Open University

You can request a review by The OU if your complaint relates to an academic matter about a module or programme validated by The OU.

You must submit a formal complaint in writing and your letter must include the following information:

- your contact address and telephone number
- the name of the institution at which you are studying
- the name of the module or programme on which you are studying
- a detailed statement explaining what you are complaining about and why
- documentary evidence that you have exhausted your institution's own internal procedures, including copies of written correspondence between you and your institution concerning

the matter that you are complaining about, and a copy of the correspondence from your institution notifying you of the final outcome of its internal complaints procedure (for this policy, this would be the outcome of your Stage Two complaint)

- documentary evidence to support your complaint.

If you fail to provide all of the above, your complaint will be delayed and may eventually be dismissed.

Important: please read carefully

The Open University will make every attempt to respect your privacy and confidentiality when dealing with your complaint. However, unless you specifically state otherwise, the University will assume that you have given permission to disclose as necessary any of the information you provide. If you wish any matter to remain private or confidential, you must state so clearly in your letter. If you do not wish the University to disclose information, it may not be possible to consider your complaint appropriately.

When can I submit a complaint?

It is important that The Open University receives your complaint as soon as possible and **within 3 months** of the outcome of Education for Health's internal procedures. A delay may mean that the University is unable to investigate the matter fully.

Where should I submit the complaint?

Complaints must be sent to:

The Director, Open University Validation Partnerships
1st Floor, Wilson B Block
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA
United Kingdom

Where to get further help and guidance

If you wish to take your complaint to The Open University, you can contact the University for advice and guidance on the procedures.

Please contact the Director of OUVV in one of the following ways:

- by email: OUVV-Director@open.ac.uk
- by phone: 01908 332840
- by post: at the address listed above.

The University will investigate your complaint and respond to you via a Completion of Procedures letter within 40 working days of the date of receiving your formal request for a review of your complaint.

5.3.4 Review by The University of Hertfordshire

You can request a review by UH if your complaint relates to an academic matter about a module or programme validated by UH.

For further information about the UH review process, please see the UH website:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/legal/complaints-policy>

5.4 Further review or adjudication

5.4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Once you have completed all of the preceding stages, if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome and your complaint is regarding the provision of higher education, you may be able to apply for a review of the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

The OIA was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide ‘an independent student complaints scheme’. All higher education institutions in England and Wales are required to comply with the scheme, which is free to students.

The OIA will require a copy of your Completion of Procedures letter (from Education for Health or relevant validating partner) before they will agree to investigate your case. More information about the scheme, including whether the OIA is able to consider your complaint, is available at the OIA website:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

Please note that you would need to apply to the OIA **within 12 months** of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter.

5.4.2 Alternative Dispute Resolution

If your complaint is not about the provision of higher education, and in accordance with Part 4 of 2015 No. 542 Consumer Protection, the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015, ADR Group (www.consumer-dispute.co.uk) is our ADR Entity.

At such time as we have exhausted our internal complaints handling procedure when considering a complaint from a customer and we have been unable to settle that complaint, ADR Group (www.consumer-dispute.co.uk) will be competent to deal with that complaint should the customer wish to use alternative dispute resolution and we will be obliged, or prepared, to submit to an alternative dispute resolution procedure operated by ADR Group (www.consumer-dispute.co.uk).

5.5 Sources of advice

If you need help at any point with the information or procedures in this policy, contact us at our main office where you will be directed to the most appropriate source of support:

Education for Health

10 Church Street
Warwick
CV34 4AB
Tel: (01926) 493313

Please contact the office (details above) if you need this document in an alternative format.

Please see the next page for the flowchart outlining the Complaints procedure.

6. Policy History

Last updated: June 2019

7. Review Date

June 2020

Complaints Process

