



Complaints Procedure

General

The emphasis in this Complaints Procedure is on informality, with the object of solving problems quickly, simply and fairly. It is hoped that the great majority of issues can be settled amicably at the First Stage, and that complaints will only exceptionally reach the Second Stage.

Staff of The Careers Group University of London will respond promptly to written complaints and will also expect clients to keep to an agreed timetable for pursuing a complaint.

Constructive criticism, made through client questionnaire surveys or in discussion with staff, is always welcome as help towards raising service levels

Definitions

A Client in this procedure means any student, graduate or other user of the College or centrally based careers services that are part of The Careers Group including C2.

1. First Stage (Informal Complaint)

1.1 A Client should initially make the complaint to an appropriate member of staff. If the Client is unwilling or unable to approach a member of staff, the Client should raise the matter with the Head of the College Careers Service (or other appropriate Head if the complaint concerns a different section of The Careers Group). The member of staff will report the substance of the complaint to the appropriate Head.

1.2 The object of this First Stage is to resolve problems quickly and simply with the minimum of formality. The member of staff first approached or the Head of Service/Unit, has discretion as to how the complaint is investigated and determined. The Head of Service/Unit will keep a record of each complainant, the nature of the complaint and how it was resolved. If the complaint has been made in writing, the Head of Service/Unit will respond in writing within two weeks of receipt.

2 Second Stage (Formal Complaint)

2.1 If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the member of staff/Head, the Second Stage is handled either through the complaints procedure of the college in question where this is a local requirement or through The Careers Group where this has the discretion to handle the complaint. Where the complaint is handled in accordance with college complaint procedures, the Director of The Careers Group must be kept fully informed at all stages.

2.2 Where the complaint may be handled through The Careers Group, the Client may make a formal complaint, in writing, to the Director of The Careers Group. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Director consider any complaint that has not been through the original stage.

2.3 If the Director comes to the conclusion that the complaint has already been fairly settled at an earlier stage, or that the complaint is trivial, or wholly lacking in merit or substance, he or she may dismiss the complaint, and advise the complainant of the reasons for the

decision. The Director will respond to a letters of complaint within ten working days, with as full a response as possible.

2.3.1 If the Director comes to the conclusion that there is substance in the complaint, the Director may either:

- [1] seek to resolve the complaint, in discussion with the relevant Head or
- [2] submit a report on all the material facts to the University of London's Director of Administration, who will resolve the matter, or
- [3] by agreement with the complainant appoint a person from among the external members of the Board of The Careers Group, whose decision shall be binding on all concerned.

The Director will notify the complainant of this decision, in writing, within twenty working days of receipt of the original written complaint.

2.4 A Client who has exhausted the above procedure but remains unsatisfied with the handling or outcome of a complaint may write to the Vice-Chancellor. Such a letter should be received within ten working days of the date of the Director's letter (2.2 above).

3. Public Interest Disclosure

3.1 Complaints that are allegations of malpractice or concern some other matter which the Client believes he or she is unable to raise in The Careers Group shall be made in accordance with the University's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure.

4. Harassment

4.1 Any allegation that an employee is harassing or discriminating against a Client will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary arrangements provided under the terms of their contract of employment.

5. Disciplinary Action

5.1 There shall be no disciplinary or other adverse implications for a Client who makes a complaint or allegation providing the Client acts in good faith, within the law, and not vexatious, or with malice, and in accordance with established procedures including those above. Victimisation of a complainant and deterring anyone from making a proper complaint are serious disciplinary offence.

6 Office of the Adjudicator for Higher Education

6.1 If the procedures described in 1 and 2 have been carried out and the complaint remains unresolved the matter may be referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Information on how to complain to the Adjudicator is available on [\[1\]](#).

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