

Complaints Committee

Terms of reference

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1. Key purpose

CEM has established an open, fair and accessible Student Complaints Policy and Procedure in order to encourage the prompt resolution of problems at the earliest possible stage. This is an independently Chaired committee to consider complaints that have reached stage three, which is the final stage of CEM's complaints procedure. The committee will consider complaints and inform the outcome to the complainant(s) in writing within 14 days of the meeting.

2. Terms of reference

- 2.1 To consider each complaint that reaches stage three of CEM's Complaints Policy and Procedure, therefore acting as the final stage in CEM's complaints process.
- 2.2 To provide a fair hearing of the written statement prepared by the complainant(s). The statement can be presented by the complainant(s) or heard in their absence.
- 2.3 To ensure that the complainant(s) involved is on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in the proceedings. This includes the CEM Complaints Officer assisting or otherwise facilitating the complainant(s) in the presentation of their case.
- 2.4 To approve the terms of the document sent to the complainant(s) to notify him/her of the outcome of his/her complaint.
- 2.5 To recommend to CEM any changes in policy as a result of the complaint investigations and/or appropriate recompense to be issued to the complainant(s) by CEM.
- 2.6 To ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a consequence of making a complaint.
- 2.7 To ensure that confidentiality of both the complainant(s) and the subject of any complaint are respected.
- 2.8 To recommend changes to CEM's Complaints Policy and Procedure as appropriate.
- 2.9 To recommend any changes required to the Complaints Committee terms of reference to the CEM Academic Board.

3. Membership of the committee

Name	Post	Ex officio/appointed/by invitation
CEM Trustee with a background in academia	Chairman	Appointed
External Examiner	External representative	Appointed
CEM Student Representative	Student representative	Appointed
CEM Principal or nominee from the Directorate	Internal representative	Appointed

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Name	Post	Ex officio/appointed/by invitation
Helen Edwards	Complaints Officer (Secretary)	Ex officio
	Member of the CEM Directorate that investigated the complaint at stage two	By invitation (to answer queries of fact relating to the investigation of the complaint at stage two, and not present during Committee deliberations).
	Other member(s) of CEM staff as appropriate	By invitation (to answer queries of fact relating to CEM policy and procedure, and not present during Committee deliberations),
	Complainant(s)	By invitation (not present during the Committee deliberations)

Membership

For each meeting of the Committee there will be the following members.

The Chair who will be a CEM Trustee with a background in academia, an external member selected from CEM's current external examiners, a student representative selected from CEM's current student representatives and an internal member either the CEM Principal or a nominee from the CEM Directorate of which who were not either the subject of, or responsible for the academic or service area which was the subject of, the complaint; or had not investigated the complaint at Stage 2.

In Attendance

The following will attend each meeting of the committee:

The Complaints Officer, who will act as secretary

The Director who investigated the complaint at Stage 2.

Other members of CEM staff may be invited to attend the committee in order to answer queries of fact relating to CEM policy and procedure.

4. Quorum

The meeting will be quorate only with the attendance of the Chairman plus the internal and the external representatives.

5. Frequency of meetings

The Committee will meet as and when required to consider complaints that have not been resolved at stages one and two of CEM's Complaints Policy.

6. Conduct of the committee

- i) Prior to the meeting of the Complaints Committee, the complainant(s) will be asked to prepare a formal written statement outlining the complaint. This must be received 14 days prior to the meeting.
- ii) A member of the CEM Directorate will then investigate and produce a response on behalf of CEM. Both statements will be circulated seven days prior to the committee meeting.
- iii) The committee may request any further information it requires, such as copies of CEM policy or copies of any previous correspondence between CEM and the complainant(s), in order to undertake its deliberations fairly and impartially.
- iv) The complainant(s) may attend the hearing and be accompanied by a family member, friend or colleague. The person accompanying the complainant(s) may not take part in any proceedings. Neither the complainant(s) nor the complainant's companion is permitted to be present during the Committee's deliberations. Complainants who are not able to attend the committee in person may request to attend remotely by teleconference or other appropriate means.
- v) Both parties may seek legal advice prior to the meeting. However, legal representation is not permitted at the meeting.
- vi) Each meeting will begin with the Chair inviting the complainant(s) to put his/her case, and the Committee through the Chair can then ask questions.
- vii) The investigating CEM Director will then be invited to put their case forward and the Committee, through the Chair, can then ask questions.
- viii) There will be an opportunity for both the complainant(s) and the investigating CEM Director to make a final statement.
- ix) Committee deliberations will be carried out in private. The outcome will be confirmed in writing to the complainant(s) within 14 working days and will contain notification that CEM's internal complaints process has been completed.

7. Complainants' right to subsequently raise their complaint to the next stage

- i) The Complaints Committee will not enter into correspondence with the complainant(s) following delivery of its decision.

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ii) The complainant(s) retains the right to subsequently raise their complaint to the next stage of the complaints process as follows:

- For Open University validated courses, complaints should be directed to the Open University by writing to The Director at the following address:

The Director
Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships
1st floor, Wilson B
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK6 7AA
UK

- For University of Reading validated courses, complaints should be directed to the University of Reading by writing to the Director of Student Services at the following address:

Director of Student, Learning and Teaching Services
Carrington Building
University of Reading
Whiteknights
RG6 6AH
United Kingdom

- For College of Estate Management validated courses, complaints should be directed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Information for this can be found at

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia.aspx>

8. Complaint Support

The complainant(s) may access support and further information at any point in the process by contacting the Complaints Officer at CEM.