

TRINITY LABAN

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES: STAFF GUIDANCE

Introduction

This guidance provides you with an easy-to-use overview of our student complaints procedure and staff roles and responsibilities. You should read this in conjunction with the full complaints procedures that can be found [here](#). We define a complaint as being:

“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about an action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Institution.”

Examples of complaints under this procedure could include:

- delivery of service and academic provision (e.g. programme design, content and structure, resources and facilities, accommodation, assessment process and information)
- quality of supervision or tuition
- failure to meet obligations (e.g. those set out in the prospectus and programme handbooks)
- harassment and/or sexual misconduct of a student by a member of staff

A query or a request for clarification is not a complaint as it does not meet the definition above. Where a query or request for clarification is left unresolved, however, this itself may potentially give rise to a complaint e.g. in the failure to meet obligations (such as to provide relevant information in a timely manner).

Where a staff member is uncertain whether the matter being raised to them is a complaint, they should consider whether it meets the definition of a complaint above and/or request clarity from the student. The Quality & Governance team is also available to provide advice and guidance to members of staff.

The following examples are not considered to fall under our student complaints procedure:

Item	Correct Procedure
Academic matters relating to the decision/s of the Assessment Board regarding assessment, progression, or award	Academic Appeals Procedure
Complaints about another student's behaviour including harassment and/or sexual misconduct by another student	Student Disciplinary Procedure
Complaints about McMillan Halls	Please contact Trinity Laban Student Services for information on how to submit a complaint regarding McMillan Halls
Complaints about the Students' Union	Trinity Laban Students' Union Constitution
Whistleblowing (public interest disclosure)	Whistleblowing Procedure
Requests for more or for different services	Raise issues through programme forums/quality committees/SU Executive/Student Representation System

Making a Complaint

There are three stages to the internal student complaints procedure. Stage one is designed for a quick resolution and is where many of our complaints begin. It is also the stage in which you have the greatest responsibility.

Stage One: Early Resolution (Informal)

Who should the student raise the complaint with?

With the person most directly involved. For example the programme leader or teacher

When should the student raise the complaint?

As soon as possible – within 40 calendar days of the incident (90 days in relation to student complaints regarding harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct by a member of staff)

When should I respond to the student?

There is no set time frame but please bear in mind the student's time frames

Stage One: Early Resolution (Written)

Who should the student raise the complaint with?

The relevant senior staff member as outlined in the Student Complaints Procedure

When should the student raise the complaint?

As soon as possible – within 40 calendar days of the incident (90 days in relation to student complaints regarding harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct by a member of staff)

When should I respond to the student?

Within 20 calendar days

Stage Two: Formal Complaint

Who should the student raise the complaint with?

Our Nominated Complaints Officer, who can be contacted at complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk

When should the student raise the complaint?

Within 15 calendar days of the written response to their Stage One complaint

When should the student hear a response?

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 calendar days and responded to within 50 calendar days. The complainant will be kept informed should there be any extensions to this timeframe

Stage Three: Review of Outcome to a Formal Complaint

Who should the student raise the complaint with?

Stage Three complaint forms should be submitted to complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk where the Principal or Registrar will allocate a senior member of staff to address the case.

When should the student raise the complaint?

Within 10 calendar days of the formal complaint

When should the student hear a response?

Within 10 calendar days

Office of the Independent Adjudicator Review Stage

Who should the student raise the complaint with?

Directly to the OIA by visiting their website: oiahe.org.uk

When should the student raise the complaint?

Within 12 months from the date of their Completion of Procedures Letter

When should the student hear a response?

There is no set time frame

Your Role

Your role in dealing with a complaint is dependent on the stage. This guidance will concentrate on your responsibilities for stage one, detailed on the next page.

At stage one, you need to:

- recognise when you are hearing a complaint
- resolve that complaint where possible and respond to the student
- report the complaint

In exceptional circumstances complaints may progress on to stage two, which is overseen by the Nominated Complaints Officer. For this stage you will need to respond promptly and provide any requested information or documentation to support their investigation.

Our Promise

Whilst carrying out your role, it is vital that you are aware of Trinity Laban's stance on handling complaints. We have promised to:

- resolve issues informally wherever possible
- address issues thoroughly and efficiently and tell students when to expect a reply throughout the process
- inform students of their rights in relation to the complaint
- carry out a full, fair and proportionate investigation and provide students with a reasonable response
- feedback complaints into our system to improve our services
- handle all cases confidentially. You should only release information to those who need to investigate or respond to students' complaints.
- ensure students are not disadvantaged as a result of raising a complaint

Some students may feel hesitant about making complaints as they don't want to damage relationships with their teachers or other members of staff. We view all complaints as constructive feedback – it helps us improve our educational provision. Your actions should align with that promise.

Stage One Guidance

Recognising a Complaint

Students may raise complaints at any time and in a variety of different ways. It may be easy to recognise when a student complains to you in writing but less so if it is raised in a conversation. You should be sensitive to the fact that different students have different needs and should be prepared to really listen.

Resolving a Complaint

You should resolve the complaint as soon as possible. You will need to make sure you fully understand what the student is complaining about and have a clear picture of what has happened from everyone involved. This will involve an inquiry on your part. Any decision you make should be a reasonable judgement based on the information you have been provided.

There are a number of ways to resolve a complaint. The most appropriate way will depend entirely on the individual circumstances of the complaint. It could be as simple as explaining why events occurred or apologising if you think Trinity Laban has fallen short of its aspirations. In some situations extra time or tuition could be provided to the student and even compensation.

For a stage two complaint the Nominated Complaints Officer has unilateral discretion of the complaint's outcome. It is important that you have the authority to make a

resolution. You may need to consult your line manager or the Nominated Complaints Officer before responding.

Responding to a Complaint

When responding to a complaint, you should:

- respond as soon as possible – no later than the set time frames stated above
- set out the reasons for your decision clearly
- let the student(s) know their next steps and communicate any deadlines. You may want to use the paragraph below as a guide:

“If you do not feel this has fully resolved your complaint, you have the right to submit a formal complaint by completing the specified form and submitting it to complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk. The forms and a number of helpful guides can be found [here](#). If you would like support in submitting your complaint, you can contact a Student Advisor in our Student Services department or a member of Trinity Laban Students’ Union. Please note that you must submit this complaint within fifteen calendar days of the date of this response.

You should:

- direct students to other sources of advice, such as the guidance documents on the website, Moodle, Student Services Advisors and Students’ Union
- maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. You should only discuss the matter with people who need to know the issue

You should not:

- miss an opportunity to resolve the complaint where possible
- forget to report the complaint and its outcomes

Reporting a Complaint

It is vital that Trinity Laban are aware of what complaints are being raised by students and how they are dealt with. Accordingly, staff members receiving stage one complaints must report the complaint and the resolution offered to the Nominated Complaints Officer by emailing **complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk**

Please include:

- who has made the complaint
- the subject matter of the complaint

- details of any attempts made to resolve the matter

It is important that you keep any documentation relating to the complaint as these may be requested if the student raises a formal complaint.

If you are unsure whether you should report something as a complaint, contact complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk for clarification.

Monitoring

We monitor all complaints centrally, even if they are resolved at an early stage. This helps us to have an overview of both the amount and the type of complaint we receive so that we can identify any potential problems.

Is there anyone I can ask for support or advice?

If you have any specific questions about the procedures you can also email the Quality & Governance team at **complaints@trinitylaban.ac.uk**