

Guidelines for managing student complaints and allegations against University staff

This document has been prepared by Student and Academic Services (“SAS”) and the People Directorate to set out an agreed set of guidelines for managing student-facing matters which require the involvement of both directorates.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is acknowledged that students may raise concerns about members of staff employed by or providing services to the University during their time as a student. This includes (but is not limited to) concerns raised under any of the following:
 - 1.1.1. Complaints made under the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).
 - 1.1.2. Concerns raised under the [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).
 - 1.1.3. Disclosures made through [Report + Support](#).
- 1.2. Whilst it is hoped that any difficulty that arises between a student and a staff member may be resolved informally, it is recognised that there are situations where a student may wish to raise their concern on a formal basis.
- 1.3. Where a student raises a concern, it may be necessary, depending on the facts and circumstances of the case, for the allegations to be investigated by the People Directorate under the staff [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#) rather than by SAS under the relevant “student-facing” procedure.
- 1.4. Where this is necessary, SAS and the People Directorate will adhere to the guidelines set out below to ensure that the University is meeting its duties and obligations to both the student and the member of staff.

2. Liaison and Escalation

- 2.1. Establishing clear lines of communication is essential for the effective management of these cases. Where a concern raised by a student is investigated under a staff procedure, SAS and the People Directorate shall each nominate a point of contact to liaise with each other about the case. The points of contact will normally be the officers on either side dealing with the case.
- 2.2. The points of contact should liaise regularly at agreed intervals to discuss the case and address any issues that have arisen. For complex cases, a case management meeting (which may involve other staff) may be appropriate.
- 2.3. Where either point of contact considers that these guidelines have not been followed and they are unable to resolve the matter with the other point of contact, the point of contact should promptly escalate their concerns to their directorate’s Senior Officer. The Senior Officers are the Associate Director,

Student Registry (SAS) and the Deputy Director of People (People Directorate). The Senior Officers should meet and seek to resolve the concerns as swiftly as possible, involving other staff where necessary.

3. Process

- 3.1. Where it is identified and agreed by SAS and the People Directorate that an allegation should be investigated by the People Directorate under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure (or other People Directorate procedure as appropriate), the People Directorate will be responsible for:
 - 3.1.1. Ensuring that the staff member is provided with appropriate support and assistance.
 - 3.1.2. Ensuring that the investigation is undertaken promptly and without an unnecessary delay.
 - 3.1.3. If the student is interviewed, ensuring that the opportunity is provided for them to be accompanied by a SAS staff member or member of GSU's Advice Service.
 - 3.1.4. Ensuring that regular progress updates (at intervals to be agreed) are provided to SAS to enable student expectations to be managed effectively. Ensuring that information is shared with SAS promptly and in sufficient detail to enable SAS to fulfil its responsibilities towards the student under 3.2.
 - 3.1.5. Ensuring that once the investigation is concluded, appropriate information regarding the outcome and next steps is provided to SAS in order for information to be shared with the student such as it is possible for the University to provide in accordance with its duties and obligations under data protection law. The People Directorate will ensure that the information provided to SAS for sharing with the student is of the equivalent level of detail that would be provided to a staff member if they raised a grievance or allegation under the relevant People Directorate procedure.
- 3.2. SAS will be responsible for:
 - 3.2.1. Ensuring that the student is provided with appropriate support and assistance.
 - 3.2.2. Informing the student of the referral to the People Directorate in the first instance.
 - 3.2.3. Informing the student of the likely timescales, next steps and potential outcomes, including as to what, if any, information the student may be told about the outcome of the People Directorate's investigation.
 - 3.2.4. Updating the student as to the progress of the investigation.

- 3.2.5. Providing the student with an outcome in accordance with the University's duties and obligations under data protection law on the basis of the information shared by the People Directorate.
- 3.2.6. Informing the student of any options open to them if they are dissatisfied with the decision and providing a Completion of Procedures letter at the appropriate stage.
- 3.2.7. Discussing with People Directorate any compensation which may be due to the student under the University's student policies.

4. Timescales

- 4.1. The [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) expects providers to complete both the formal and review stages of their procedures within 90 calendar days.
- 4.2. It is recognised that providing an outcome and opportunity for any review to the student within that 90-day timeframe is dependent on the prompt progress of the People Directorate's investigation.
- 4.3. It is agreed that the People Directorate will endeavour to conclude their investigation to allow for the 90-day timeframe to be met where it is practicable to do so.
- 4.4. Where the People Directorate identifies that the investigation is likely to be prolonged or delayed, it will promptly inform SAS of this, and ensure that SAS is updated regularly on progress to ensure that SAS can manage the student's expectations accordingly.

5. Review

- 5.1. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the points of contact in SAS and the People Directorate should identify and feed back to their Senior Officers any lessons learnt that may require amendments to these guidelines, University procedures or working practices.

6. Ownership

- 6.1. This document is jointly owned and operated by SAS and the People Directorate and is maintained by the University Secretary.
- 6.2. SAS and the People Directorate will together be responsible for reviewing this document on an annual basis and implementing any necessary changes to their respective working practices.

Date of last review: February 2025
Date of next review: February 2026