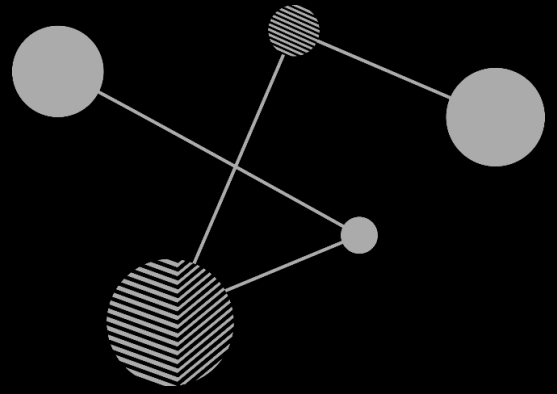


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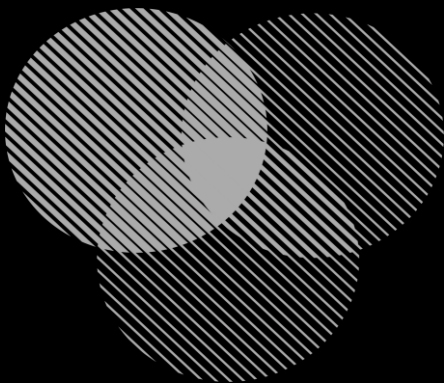
Complaint guidance

This guidance is for students who have submitted a formal complaint regarding their university experience.

It aims to provide you with information about the complaints process and includes information on your expected role and where to access support.

This guidance aligns with the following York St John University policy:

[Student Complaints Procedure](#)



Support and advice

Navigating a complaint may be challenging and we want to provide you with essential information on seeking support and advice. At York St John University, we are committed to ensuring that you have access to the resources and assistance you may need during this process.

We understand that the process of submitting a complaint may be difficult and you may require support during this time. The wellbeing of all our students is very important to us and we have services in place to provide advice and support.

Throughout the process you will be signposted to wellbeing and welfare support services. In certain cases, the Casework team may request these teams contact you directly.

The support available is broad and useful information can be found on the following pages:

- [Wellbeing and Welfare](#)
- [London Wellbeing support](#)
- [Disability support and inclusion](#)
- [Specialist support](#)

If you have an additional need, we will liaise with you about any reasonable adjustments you may require. If you require an adjustment to the way in which we communicate with you, due to disability or accessibility needs, please contact us by emailing casework@yorks.ac.uk.

If you would like to be supported during the complaint's process, the Students' Union Advice team can help you with the process and offer impartial, fair and confidential advice.

They can be found in the SU building and can be contacted at su.advice@yorks.ac.uk or you can [book a meeting](#) with their Student Advice Coordinator.

You are allowed to have a supporter present with you during the meetings held within the process. You must provide the name and the capacity in which the supporter is attending in advance.

This person should not have had any involvement in the case and should be:

- A current member of staff
- A current registered student at the University
- A Students' Union representative

Their role is to observe and provide moral support, they cannot ask questions, interpret responses or speak on behalf of you.

Support and advice

Listed below are further support links that the University provides and can signpost you to.

- **Report + Support:** All staff, students and visitors to our campus can report something, either anonymously or with contact details, so you will get a response. Our Report + Support webpage also signposts you to local support services and resources. Please note - anonymous reports are considered on a case-by-case basis, although anonymity may hinder investigations.
[Report and Support | York St John University](#)
- **Wellbeing and Welfare Support:** As a student, you can access free support to help you manage your wellbeing and welfare. This includes support to access external enhanced support services - for example, the NHS, hate crime reporting centres, or local specialist services, including Sexual Assault Referral Centres. You can also self-refer for a meeting with a specialist practitioner or visit a drop-in session.
[Wellbeing and Welfare · Student Hub Online Portal](#)
- **Disability Support and Inclusion:** For students with a disability, long term health condition, mental health condition or a specific learning difficult, additional support is available.
[Disability Support and Inclusion · Student Hub Online Portal](#)
- **International Student Support:** For international students, information, guidance and support is available.
[International | York St John University](#)
- **Student Assistance Programme:** Our Student Assistance Programme offers support through a free 24-hour confidential helpline and digital resource.
[Spectrum Life | York St John University](#)
- **Academic Support:** During investigations adjustments may be possible, such as deadline extensions, leaves of absence or changes to course schedules. Please talk to the Casework team about this.
casework@yorks.j.ac.uk
- **Accommodation:** The Accommodation team may be able to provide information on emergency accommodation options if you feel unsafe in your York St John or partner provider housing. Please note there may be financial implications associated with this. Students can seek advice on any financial implications from the [Funding Advice team](#).
[Accommodation | York St John University](#)

Timescales and expectations

Timescales

- You should raise your concerns as soon as possible, and within 3 months of the incident/s.
- The University aims to ensure that the complaints process runs smoothly and avoids any delays. If any delays do occur, the University will make sure to keep you updated.
- The University will do its best to abide by the time limits set out in these procedures, but it may not always be possible. The University aims to complete all level 2 complaint investigations and any subsequent review requests **within 90 calendar days** from the time your complaint was accepted as a level 2 complaint, including your supporting evidence. Indicative timescales are provided for level 1 complaints. As a general principle, issues are resolved as closely as possible to the point of occurrence, but with provision for formal procedures where necessary.
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Expectations

The University expects all students to treat other students and staff at the University with dignity and respect. The University reserves the right to suspend investigation of a complaint matter if there is a breach of expected standards, including where those investigating a case are subject to harassment, physical or verbal abuse.

Any meetings held will not be audio recorded, but they will be minuted. They should not be recorded without the express consent of those involved. If you record any meetings without the consent of others, this may amount to a disciplinary offence. Any recording will not be permitted to be used as evidence.

Complaints are handled confidentially, with information shared only as necessary, for example to progress your complaint, implement a decision on the complaint, implement recommendations from a complaint or where it is required by law or in the public interest. Sensitive concerns should be flagged with the Student Casework Manager.

The complaint process

The University welcomes feedback. You can share your views through programme representatives, the Students' Union, and student surveys. If something goes wrong, we recommend raising your concern directly where it occurred to try to resolve it informally. If this doesn't work, the following Complaints procedure applies.

A complaint is defined as *“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about something a provider has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.”* Malicious or vexatious complaints may result in disciplinary action.

The procedure adheres to equality and fairness principles, aiming to resolve concerns early to prevent escalation.

Late complaints may be accepted at the discretion of the University Complaints Officer for exceptional reasons (e.g., serious illness). If your complaint is rejected due to being late, you can request a 'Completion of Procedures' letter to take the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, please see [page 7](#) for more information.

It is important to be clear about what resolution you are seeking in making a complaint. For example:

- An apology or explanation
- A practical remedy or change (requesting a service be improved, missed teaching to be rescheduled, or a maintenance issue in accommodation to be fixed)
- Improved communication or support (asking for clearer information in the future, more regular updates, or additional academic or wellbeing support)

Level 1

You must raise your concerns within 3 months of the incident/s.

After raising your concern, we will ask you if you have raised the issue locally. It is recommended to address your concerns with the relevant team or manager where the issue occurred. Many matters can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage.

Level 2

If you believe your concerns have not been properly addressed at level 1, you may decide to make a level 2 formal complaint by using the [complaint form](#).

You should send your complaint form to casework@yorks.ac.uk within 3 months of the incident or level 1 discussions.

The Student Casework Team (casework@yorks.ac.uk) can clarify the complaints process. The Students' Union offers independent advice and support. It is strongly recommended that you do not proceed to the level 2 formal complaint stage unless and until you have taken appropriate advice.

Level 2 complaint process

Level 2 complaint

If you decide to make a formal complaint after receiving the outcome of the level 1 investigation, your complaint will be referred to the University Complaints Officer for a decision on whether the complaint procedure is the appropriate procedure to use.

The Student Casework team may request additional information or evidence from you.

If your complaint is not accepted, you can request a 'Completion of Procedures' letter to take the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, please see [page 7](#) for more information.

If accepted at level 2, an 'Investigating Officer', who is an independent staff member, with no prior knowledge of your concerns, will investigate, review evidence, and conduct interviews as needed. This may include:

- **A meeting with you to discuss your report**
- **Meetings with colleagues within the university**
- **Gathering information and evidence that has been put forth**

The Investigating Officer may ask you for further evidence and/or may explore possible outcomes with you.

You may be contacted to attend a meeting. You can choose whether it takes place in person or online, depending on your preference.

During the meeting, you will have the opportunity to explain your complaint and present any information you have.

You are welcome to bring a supporter with you. The meeting will not be recorded, but minutes will be taken and sent to you afterward.

After reviewing all the information, the Investigating Officer will submit a report to the Complaints Officer recommending if the complaint is upheld, partly upheld, or not upheld. The report will provide reasons for the proposed outcome/s.

If the complaint is recommended to be upheld or partly upheld, remedial action will be proposed.

Once the outcome is reviewed and confirmed by the Complaints Officer, you will be told as soon as possible.

Once you have received the report and the outcome, you have 10 working days to accept or reject the proposed outcome. If you do not accept it, you have the option of taking the matter to the review stage. If we do not hear from you after 10 working days, the complaint will be considered closed.

Review stage

Level 2 complaint: review stage

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your level 2 formal complaint, you may ask for a review of the findings by completing the [Complaint review form](#) and sending it to casework@yorks.ac.uk within 10 working days of the date the report was sent to you.

You can request a review for the following reasons:

- i. If you have new evidence that you were unable to provide, with good reason, during the level 2 investigation, or
- ii. If you have evidence that the level 2 procedure was not properly followed, or
- iii. If the outcome was unreasonable in light of the evidence available.

Your request must set out the grounds for the proposed review and provide the evidence to support it.

Your request for a review will be considered by the Complaints Officer, or nominee. A request may be rejected if it is received outside the deadline or if no evidence or substantive argument is provided.

Where a review is to be conducted, this will be carried out by the University Vice Chancellor, or their nominee. The reviewer will have had no previous involvement in the case.

The reviewer will review the case file, undertake any appropriate further enquiries, and make recommendations. You will normally receive a response within 10 working days and will be informed if the review will require more time.

The Vice Chancellor or nominee may:

- **Uphold the original outcome**
- **Substitute an alternative outcome**
- **Appoint a new Investigating Officer**

Should an alternative outcome be substituted, you will be given 10 working days to consider the outcome of the review. If you accept the outcome proposed, or do not respond within the time frame. The matter is considered resolved.

If the Vice Chancellor or nominee upholds the original outcome, or if you do not accept an alternative outcome proposed, you will be sent a 'Completion of Procedures' letter saying that you have come to the end of the York St John University complaint procedure.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may seek an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, please see [page 7](#) for more information.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Completion of the University Disciplinary Procedure

- If your complaint is not accepted or you do not accept the outcome of your review, you will be sent a Completion of Procedures Letter.
- If you remain dissatisfied, you have the opportunity to apply for a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).
- The OIA is an independent body which was established by the Higher Education Act 2004 to consider student complaints which have not been resolved through an institution's internal procedures.
- The deadline for an appeal to the OIA is 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.
- This service is free to students.
- For further details, see the OIA website: www.oiahe.org.uk

Additional information

If you require any additional information or support about the complaint process, please contact casework@yorks.ac.uk.