

STUDENT COMPLAINTS
Purpose and Principles Statement

As stated in its Student Charter, Aston University is committed to a partnership approach in its dealings with students through open and transparent communication, by providing clear information and ensuring that all processes are fair.

The University has a duty of candour and recognises that from time to time students may have suggestions, comments, concerns or complaints about University facilities or services, including services they receive from staff members.

Aston University listens to the student voice and sees our students as central beneficiaries of our Strategy. As valued members of our university community the University welcomes the opportunity to engage in constructive feedback with our students so that we can continue to develop and improve our services and deal with any issues at an informal level rather than escalate matters to become a formal complaint. Students are encouraged to raise any suggestions or concerns with our academic and service areas in a timely manner so that we can promptly seek to resolve any issues.

The University will respond promptly to any comments or suggestions and use the information to improve the service provided by the University. Likewise, where a student makes complaint under this Complaints Procedure, the information provided by the student will be used to improve the service provided by the University, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

It is hoped that in most cases, complaints can be dealt with informally without the need to progress to the formal stages of the procedure. However, the University recognises that the nature of some complaints may be too serious to be dealt with informally and therefore, in these circumstances, the student may submit a Formal Complaint as a first recourse.

The University will ensure that the service and care provided to any student who makes a comment or suggestion, or complaint under this procedure will not suffer in any way as a result of them doing so.

The University will maintain the confidentiality of comments, suggestions and complaints where appropriate. However, with respect to complaints, the service provider will normally be informed that a complaint has been made which is under investigation.

The University will not usually accept anonymous complaints. However, should a student wish to have their identity withheld, this will be considered by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor Students, who will into account the nature of the complaint and the student's reasons for requesting anonymity. No action will be taken to reveal the student's identity without them being informed in advance.

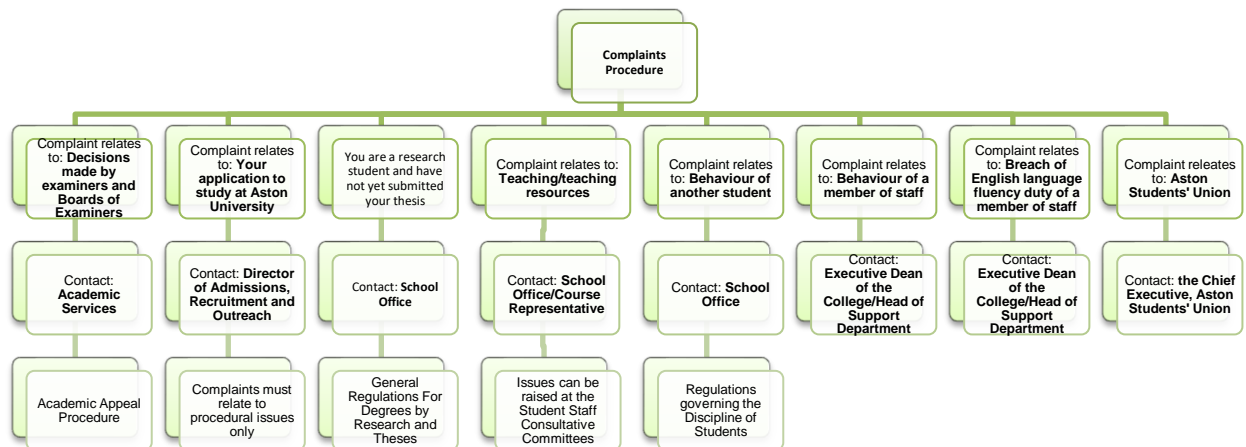
Saskia Loer Hansen

Saskia Loer Hansen
Deputy Vice Chancellor Engagement

Alison Levey

Alison Levey
Associate Pro Vice Chancellor Students

The Complaints Procedure aims to provide a simple and comprehensible means by which students may raise such matters with appropriate University staff and through which issues may be resolved. Suggestions, comments, concerns and complaints should be raised via the routes signposted in the diagram below.



Students may ask for information, advice and help in raising a matter from anyone they wish. At any stage, the student has a right to be accompanied and represented by a member of the University community who may speak on the student's behalf (such as Personal Tutors, Residence Tutors, Chaplains, and Disability Support). Students may also see advice that is independent from the university (e.g. from the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) in the Students' Union, Students' Union Officers or from other non-Aston organisations).

The University recognises that some students may require reasonable adjustments to be made to the complaints procedure as set out below (e.g. due to a medical condition or disability). Where a student has specific requirements, they should inform the Complaints Team so that reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate engagement.

The University recognises that there may be times when the issues raised in a complaint will have affected more than one student. In such cases, the University will normally allow the affected students to form a group comprising two or more students, and to submit a Group Complaint. When submitting a Group Complaint, each and every student who forms part of the group must be identified and must demonstrate that they have been affected by the issue which is the subject of the complaint. So that the Group Complaint can be managed efficiently, the group members should nominate one student to act as a spokesperson for the group. All group members must confirm in writing that they agree to the nominated spokesperson acting on their behalf. The nominated spokesperson will be the primary contact for the University. They will act as the group's representative on all matters relating to the Group Complaint and will be expected to liaise with other group members.

The University expects that students will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints. If it is established that a complaint or allegation has been made maliciously or in bad faith, the University may terminate their consideration of the complaint and disciplinary action may be taken against the person making the complaint or allegation.