

Student Complaints – Code of Practice

1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice is designed for all students or former students of Clare, whether undergraduate or postgraduate.

In addition to this general Code of Practice, there are some specific policies laid out at <http://www.clare.cam.ac.uk/Complaints-and-Discipline/>

All of these policies are approved by the College Council, which includes student representatives.

Any applicant wishing to make a complaint about the admissions procedure should refer to the University of Cambridge's procedure set out at:

http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/handbook/section1/1_10.html

1.2 The College welcomes comments and suggestions from students on any topic, and the great majority of complaints can be dealt with informally. In the first instance, a student should either speak directly to the Fellow or member of staff with whom s/he has a matter to raise, or discuss it with their personal Tutor, or use the self-assessment questionnaire circulated every Lent Term. Any student wishing to make a formal complaint should follow the Code of Practice outlined below in section 3; advice on how to proceed may also be sought from the student's Director of Studies, the Dean of Students, or from any of the people described at: <http://www.clare.cam.ac.uk/Health-and-Welfare/>

1.3 No student will be disadvantaged by having raised a complaint, and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. However, it may be that a complainant's identity needs to be revealed in order for there to be a thorough and fair investigation. The College will endeavour to inform an individual complainant of the extent to which his/her identity is likely to be revealed at each stage of the process.

1.5 Complaints about a specific incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurs and no later than one month following such occurrence.

2. Informal procedure

2.1 Students who experience a problem with any service provided by the College or within its control should first raise the matter with the individual concerned. A student who feels unable to do this directly for any reason should consult his/her Tutor, Director of Studies, the Dean of Students, or one of the people described at: <http://www.clare.cam.ac.uk/Health-and-Welfare/>

2.2 If informal discussions do not resolve the situation satisfactorily, the Dean of Students (for staff) or Director of Studies (for supervisors) or Senior Tutor (for Directors of Studies or Tutors) should be approached. Students should do this either directly or through their Tutor.

3. Formal procedure

3.1 In more serious cases, or where an informal approach has not resolved the situation, the student should make a formal complaint to the Senior Tutor, who will acknowledge receipt, and will either conduct an investigation or appoint another senior member of the College to do so. If the complaint concerns the Senior Tutor, the formal complaint should be addressed to the President of the Fellowship, who will either conduct an investigation or appoint another senior member of the College to do so.

3.2 When submitting a formal complaint, the complainant should provide copies of all relevant documents, and should indicate the form of resolution being sought, without prejudice to the final outcome. A student is advised to consult his/her Tutor (or another Fellow where appropriate) when preparing a formal complaint.

3.3 A full and considered response to the complaint should normally be completed within 40 working days and any subsequent remedy implemented with the minimum of delay.

4. Appeals

4.1 If the formal procedure does not result in an outcome which is satisfactory to the complainant, then s/he should write to the Master, stating the basis of the appeal. The Master may decide that there are no grounds for appeal and, if so, will issue a formal Completion of Procedures letter to the student, together with details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Student Complaints Scheme (at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>)

4.2 If the Master decides that there are grounds for an appeal to be heard, s/he will set up a committee of three people selected from the Fellows serving on the Court of Discipline, whose members are elected annually by the College Council. The committee will not include any person who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage. The committee will investigate the appeal and make recommendations to the Master. The final decision of the Master will be communicated to the complainant and a formal Completion of Procedures letter will be issued, together with details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Student Complaints Scheme (at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>)