

Student Cases: Complaints and Disciplinary Processes

A quick Guide

Student Cases (Academic Office)

Andrew Gough: Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption of Studies, anything that goes to Special Cases

Gwion Ramage: Academic Misconduct

David Sherwood: appeals, student complaints, non-academic misconduct, support for study, fitness to practise at informal and formal level

Victoria Watkins: all processes – very often first point of contact for students

Dr Gethin Rhys: all processes (Head of Student Cases)

Do not use personal emails! Use the appropriate shared inbox so we can respond as soon as possible:

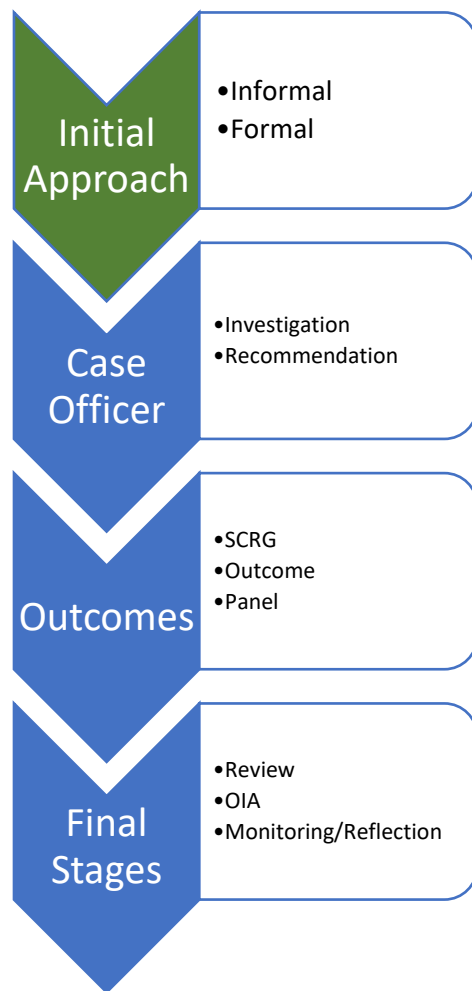
aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk

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Student Cases policy streams

"Academic"	Non-"Academic"
Academic Misconduct Mitigating Circumstances Compensatory measures, extenuating circumstances, interruption of studies, changes to time limits, etc. Academic Appeals	Student Complaints Fitness to Practise Support for Study Non-Academic Misconduct

Process and Timelines



1. Informal process
2. Start of formal process and case officer appointed
3. Investigation case officer: risk assessment & consideration of precautionary measures / factfinding / input from all parties
4. Case officer reports to Student Case Review Group
5. Either referral to formal panel, or direct outcome
6. Outcome info: goes to student and staff involved in implementation
7. Monitoring of outcome implementation
8. *Option for student to request a review; option for student to go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator*

There are Set timelines for each stage of the formal process

Advice from Student Cases (informal)

Student Cases can be a sounding board for both non-academic misconduct issues and for complaints:

- Is this behaviour misconduct?
- What should we do now?
- How do we balance the needs of different groups of students around a conflict?
- Is this a HR issue or a complaint?
- What would happen if it went formal?

We can talk students through how to make a formal complaint re misconduct
...and we can provide an additional informal level of intervention

Emails to <mailto:secases@uwtsd.ac.uk> will reach relevant staff quickly – better than emailing an individual

Non-Academic Misconduct

Breaches of the University's Student Code of Conduct:

- Actions which cause actual or potential **distress or harm** to others;
- Actions which cause actual or potential **damage to property** of others;
- Actions which may prevent or disrupt the **normal functioning** of the University;
- Actions which may cause **reputational damage** to the University as a result of the misconduct of the alleged perpetrator;
- Actions **which impede or interfere with the pursuance of work/ study** of University members, or impact on normal operations of the University;

Please note that the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#) contains the University Bullying and Harassment Policy and good examples helping to identify behaviour as misconduct!

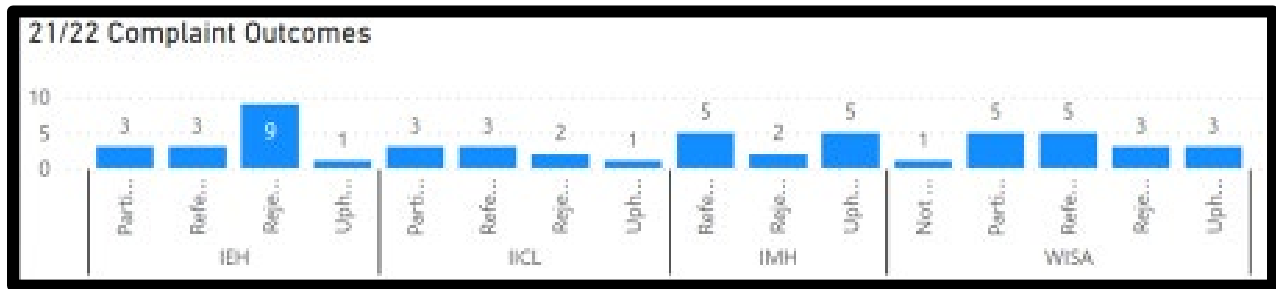
Issues of non-academic misconduct occur more often outside of the class room than inside it, e.g.:

- incidents reported to have taken place outside of the university
- out-of-class interactions between students, incl. online
- accommodation
- reception areas / interactions with non-teaching staff

Student Complaints

- Don't panic!
- Student make complaints about all units
 - ...often about issues already being addressed
 - ...and not all formal complaints are upheld
- Most students will try for a local and informal solution first and programme teams can make a huge difference in defusing issues...

- ...but don't be afraid of letting a complaint come to the centre



What the stats say:

1. Most complaints are rejected
2. Often the local remedy is the correct one
3. Many complaints have to do with students misunderstanding regulations or finance agreements

Case officer investigation

Complaints: normally through a formal information request

- Worth noting we rarely interview students face to face but primarily work with the written information they have provided in the complaint
- Info requests based closely on student's account: phrasings do not reflect an AO judgement on the issue!

Non-Academic Misconduct: more active process involving interviews with the case officer – of both staff and students

- This can be time-consuming – the policy time line for investigation is 40 days

Precautionary Action

- Not a judgement on the matter investigated
- may serve to allow the investigation to be conducted fairly
- Concerns about the student(s) or student's(') impact on University community
- Police Involvement
 - University may suspend investigation until completion of police investigation
 - University can take separate or different action (or subsequent sanction) from the police
- Suspension / partial suspension [PVC/DVC approval needed]

- Exclusion for part/all of university facility
- Requires a risk assessment to be done within a week

Here, we often work with Student Services to ensure:

- Sufficient support for the suspended student, e.g. via a designated contact
- Reaching out to other students impacted by the issue and/or process
- Updates to risk assessment

Managing students on precautionary suspension is a team effort: Student Services, Registry, Fees, Student Cases and Academic Teams can all be involved ...but also note that, especially for partial suspensions, we will always limit who is informed to preserve the student's privacy as far as possible.

What happens next?

1. Case officer reports to Student Case Review Group
 - a. SCRG membership
2. Either referral to formal panel, or direct outcome
3. Outcome info: goes to student and staff involved in implementation
 - a. Information limited and data sharing must be motivated – e.g. for an accommodation issue, the academic team is unlikely to be told
4. Monitoring of outcome implementation
5. *Option for student to request a review; option for student to go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator*

Don't hesitate to contact Student Cases for support or advice!

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