Part 14
Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction and context

1.1 The University is committed to providing a high-quality experience for each student. It recognises, however, that on occasion a student may be dissatisfied with or concerned about an aspect of his/her experience and may wish to pursue this further. The University encourages students to inform it where there is any cause for concern or where there may be an opportunity to make improvements. This Complaints Procedure, and associated policy, enables students to make complaints.
1.2 Apprentices at UEL will be, and are, regarded as undergraduates or post graduates and follow all rules and regulations as set out in the manual of general regulations for the level and type of qualification as gained within the Apprenticeship standard they are studying

1.3 Other policies and procedures connected to this Complaints Procedure are:

- **Dignity at Work and Study Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **Manual of General Regulations:**
  - Responsibilities of Students and Fitness to Study, Part 11
  - Student disciplinary regulations and procedures (incorporating the student code of conduct), Part 12
  - Suitability procedure for Students on Professional Courses, Part 13
- **Student Charter**

1.4 There may be other documents, policies and procedures which describe separate procedures for dealing with complaints (contained within, for example, an institutional collaborative partnership agreement) and these shall be drawn to the attention of students as and when appropriate.

1.5 The University Secretary is responsible for the development, compliance, monitoring and review of this Complaints Procedure. The University Secretary is also responsible for overseeing the dissemination and implementation of this Complaints Procedure.

1.6 This Complaints Procedure will be publicised via the UEL website, the Intranet, Student Hubs and the Students' Union**.**

2. Purpose of the Procedure

This Complaints Procedure will:

- Describe the procedures whereby students may raise issues of concern about courses, courses, facilities or services provided by the University or about actions, lack of actions or omissions by the University or its staff.
- Provide students with a structured procedure to escalate such issues where it has not proved possible to resolve them to their satisfaction through informal local discussions.
- Provide a procedure whereby more serious concerns can be considered directly as

complaints where it is apparent that complex and/or multiple issues or issues of a particularly serious nature areinvolved.

3. Definition

The University has adopted the following definition of a student complaint from The Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Appeals (December 2016), produced by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education:

"An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the university."

A student complaint might be about, for example:

- poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the University;
- complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the University;
- the way a student has been treated by a member of staff (see also Dignity at Work and Study Policy).

4. Scope of the Procedure

4.1 This Complaints Procedure applies to the following:

- All students studying on any campus of the University, including students who have arrived on campus to embark on their course but who have not yet completed formal registration processes;
- A former student provided the complaint is raised within one calendar month of the event which has given rise to the complaint or, if a series of events has given rise to a complaint, within one calendar month of the final event in the series.
- Students studying for a UEL award who spend any time off campus (such as on a placement or year abroad/in industry or undertaking off-site research), where the issue of concern or complaint relates to matters within the control of the University of East London.

4.2 For the purpose of this Complaints Procedure, all of the above shall be deemed to be covered by the use of the term 'student'. Where a complaint is made by a third party on behalf of a student, the use of the term 'student' in this Complaints Procedure shall also be deemed to apply to the person making the complaint.

Students studying on a course offered through a UEL partner should refer to **Appendix A**.

Students studying on a UEL apprenticeship courses should refer to **Appendix B.**

4.3 Exclusions

This Complaints Procedure does not cover the following (separate procedures exist for these as noted in brackets):

- Appeals relating to decisions made by an Assessment Board regarding assessment, progression or award. (Manual of General Regulations Part 7);
- Complaints relating to a case of Academic Misconduct (Manual of General Regulations, Part 8);
- Matters relating to fitness to practise (Manual of General Regulations, Part 13 - Suitability Procedure);
- Complaints relating to the Students Union (UELSU operates a separate Grievance and Complaints Procedure accessible via its website);
- Complaints relating to provision of services wholly within the remit of a

collaborative partner or to the action or lack of action of staff employed by a

collaborative partner except where these relate to academic matters which fall within the remit of UEL (see Appendix A for further information);
- Complaints made by students against students (see Dignity at Work and Study Policy) where these relate to allegations of bullying or harassment;
- For private matters in which the University cannot intervene save where such matters relate to a breach of the Manual of General Regulations, in which case they should be reported to the relevant Dean of School or Professional Service for appropriate action as disciplinary issues;
- Complaints made by staff against students (see Dignity at Work and Study Policy) where these relate to allegations of bullying or harassment. Matters which relate to a breach of University Regulations should be reported to the relevant Dean or Head of Professional Service for appropriate action pursuant to the Student disciplinary regulations and procedures (incorporating the student code of conduct), Manual of General Regulations: Part 12); and
- Complaints based on or related to matters of academic judgement.

5. Complaints Procedure Stages and Timeframes

5.1 The procedure is divided into two parts, an Informal Procedure, which emphasises resolution at the 'local' point where the complaint arose, and a Formal Procedure, which involves the University Secretary or their nominee as manager and facilitator of the Procedure. The role of the University Secretary (or nominee) is to ensure that the Formal Procedure is operated according to proper process and within relevant timescales, aiming to resolve complaints within Stage 1 and Stage 2 as quickly as possible and to the satisfaction of the complainant. **Appendix E** presents this Complaints Procedure as a flowchart.

5.2 Staff and students are expected to take every opportunity to resolve a complaint before escalating the matter to the next stage of the process. Staff are encouraged to take immediate action wherever possible. Each stage of the process should be exhausted before moving on to the next stage, however, matters of a very serious or sensitive nature may be escalated to Stage 2 where appropriate. A student wishing a complaint to progress to Stage 2 should complete and submit the appropriate form (see guidance notes below for more information).

5.3 Stage 1: local resolution

Complaints should normally be raised within one calendar month of the event which has given rise to the complaint or, if a series of events has given rise to a complaint, within one calendar month of the final event in the series.

Complaints will be dealt with initially at the level at which the event leading to the complaint occurred. This could be either to a module or course leader or personal tutor or within the relevant service department, for example. Wherever possible the student should address the complaint to the member of staff most directly involved in the event leading to the complaint, in order to give that person the opportunity to address the concerns.

If, for any reason, a complaint cannot be raised in this way, advice should be sought from the Student Union; or a senior academic (if the complaint relates to an academic matter) or the relevant head of service (if the complaint relates to a non-academic service) in order to identify an appropriate alternative means to achieve a resolution.

The member of staff receiving the complaint will make every effort to resolve the complaint simply and quickly. If necessary they may invite the student to a meeting to discuss the matter. If it is considered that immediate action will resolve the matter with meeting the

student, staff are encouraged to facilitate such an early resolution wherever possible.

At the end of the informal stage the student will be provided with a written response to his/her complaint, which will either:-

- Detail the proposed resolution; or
- If no resolution has been proposed, explain why.

Any decision taken at any stage of dealing with a complaint should be reasonable and should be based upon the evidence available to the member of staff making the decision.

Informal complaints will be dealt with in a timely fashion. Where possible, immediate action should be taken to resolve but the informal stage should be completed within one calendar month, in any event. The University may need to extend the timescales for response if, for example, it becomes difficult to schedule meetings with the relevant individuals or if matters are complex and require additional time to fully investigate. These examples are not exhaustive and the University will inform students should it become necessary to extend.

Members of staff dealing with complaints under Stage 1 should log all complaints received and retain appropriate records of the investigation and outcome.

Complaints against a member of staff

If the complaint includes issues regarding the actions of named members of staff, the substance of these allegations will be communicated to the member(s) of staff concerned by the Dean / Head of Service or other senior member of staff investigating and responding to the complaint. In all cases, staff will be invited to meet with the Dean/Head of Service or other senior member of staff investigating and responding to the complaint to discuss the allegations. The member of staff may be accompanied at any such meetings by a colleague or trade union representative. If appropriate, the member(s) of staff can be referred in confidence at any stage in the process to their HR manager and/or the University's Occupational Health Team, who can arrange counselling and support.

One possible outcome of a complaint against a member of staff is that a recommendation may be made to progress the matter under the University Staff Disciplinary Procedures. In such circumstances, the process outlined in the disciplinary procedures will operate in parallel with this Complaints Procedure. The relevant Dean / Director of Service must liaise with HR Services before attempting to take any action pursuant to the disciplinary procedures.

5.4 Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If the response to the complaint is not considered by the student to be satisfactory, they may commence Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure by completing the Student Complaint Form at **Appendix F,** and submitting it to Complaints & Appeals (Complaints@uel.ac.uk). The Form should be submitted within one calendar month of the written response from Stage 1. The Form when completed should include:

- The grounds for complaint;
- A statement of what has been done by the student to attempt resolution within the School / Service;
- Why the resolution/ action taken by the School / Service following notification of the complaint has been inadequate;
- The form of resolution or redress sought; and
- If resolution at Stage 1 has not been sought, the reasons for seeking to progress the complaint at Stage 2 directly.

Upon receipt Complaints & Appeals will commence the following actions:

- Acknowledge receipt of the Form within seven calendar days.
- Undertake an evaluation of the complaint to ensure the following:
    - Whether the complaint has been submitted under the correct procedure;
    - That the Form has been correctly and adequately completed;
    - That the complaint has been submitted in time; and
    - The form of resolution sought is achievable, reasonable and proportionate.

Having considered the above, Complaints & Appeals will determine whether the Complaint Form can be accepted. Complaints & Appeal may request that the student provides additional or further information before determining whether a Complaint Form is accepted.

Once a Complaint Form has been accepted, Complaints & Appeals will allocate the complaint to a member of staff who has not previously been involved in the matter (the "Investigating Officer"). The principle is to avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest. For academic matters this will normally be the Dean of the relevant School and for other issues, the Head of the relevant Service department. However, and depending on the circumstances this may be a Dean or Head of Service from another school or service. Where possible, the Dean or Head of Service will be supported by an Investigating Officer.

The allocated member of staff (or Investigating Officer) may meet with the student to discuss the complaint and any potential resolution. Following any initial meeting, investigation of the complaint may involve one or more of the following:

- Further correspondence between the parties; and/or
- Conciliation or mediation meeting(s) between the student concerned (who may be accompanied by a friend or Student Union) and the School / Service; and/or
- A Complaint Hearing Panel.

Complaints & Appeals will support members of staff in determining the most appropriate course of action.

Complaint Hearing Panel

Should a Complaint Hearing be appropriate, it will be chaired by a Dean of School from outside the School in which the student is enrolled (in the case of a complaint about an academic matter, or a Head of Service from another service area in relation to non-academic matters). A Panel, consisting of the Chair, two other members of academic or support staff drawn from schools or service departments unrelated to the complaint, and a representative from the Students' Union will be convened. The school or service department that is the subject of the complaint will support the arrangements for the panel and provide a minute taker. Complaints & Appeals will act as technical adviser to the panel.

The student may be accompanied by a friend or representative at this meeting and the School / Service may be represented by up to two members. Notes for guidance on the conduct of a Complaint Hearing are at Appendix D.

If the complaint relates to the actions of an individual member of staff, rather than the School / Service, that individual has the right to attend and be represented.

The Complaints Panel shall meet, normally within one calendar month (excluding University closures) of the referral from Stage 1, and communicate its conclusions to the student and the School / Service within one calendar month of the date of the hearing. Complaints &

Appeals will keep all parties informed of progress and will explain reasons for any necessary extension of the timescale for response, for example, if an adjournment in the proceedings is necessary.

5.5 Stage 3: Review

If the response issued at the conclusion of Stage 2 is not considered by the student to be satisfactory, they may request a review in writing within ten calendar days from the date of the notification of the outcome of the Formal Complaint.

A request for a review can only be considered in the following circumstances:

- there has been a material procedural irregularity which has demonstrably affected the outcome of the claim to the detriment of the student; or
- there is new evidence that would have significantly affected the outcome and could not reasonably have been made available when the complaint was made; or
- that there is evidence that all of the relevant information was not considered at Stage 2; or
- that the decision is perverse given the facts of the case; or
- that the complaint was upheld but the proposed remedy was inappropriate.

The request for a review should be addressed to the University Secretary outlining why the outcome of the Formal Complaint is not satisfactory.

If the University Secretary determines that there is valid ground for a review, the University Secretary shall review the case. Following a review, the University Secretary may either:

- Uphold the outcome of the Formal Complaint; or
- Refer the case back to the school/service with recommendations for reconsideration

A decision will be made within one calendar month of receipt of the request for a review.

6. Outcomes of this Complaints Procedure

Complaints & Appeals will notify the complainant of the outcome of the final stage of the complaint in writing within one calendar month and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

Should a complaint be upheld, any actions identified to resolve the complaint at any stage of this Procedure should be implemented as soon as possible. In addition, the University Secretary or their nominee (or the Chair of the Complaints Panel in cases where a panel has been convened) may make recommendations to the Dean of School, Head of Service and relevant members of the management team. Recommendations may also be made to University governance committees in respect of quality assurance procedures or policies.

6.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University's internal complaints procedures, he/she will be entitled to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education (within parameters set out in the rules issued by the OIA). Information and eligibility rules are available at: www.oiahe.org.uk

7. Training and awareness

The University Secretary will organise activities to raise awareness of this Complaints Procedure, and how it is to be used, amongst the student body. The University Secretary will also provide support, guidance and training for staff in Schools / Services on any changes to this Complaints Procedure, its application, and good practice in handling complaints and resolving them as close as possible to their point of origin.

Appendix A

Complaints from students studying on partner courses

The University makes awards to some students studying courses at partner institutions. A student on a course at a partner institution may make use of various University services. The University has overarching responsibility for the quality and standards of the academic courses offered by these institutions.

Students on such courses may complain to the University on matters related to the quality of his/her academic course. Complaints can be made direct to the University following completion of the relevant partner institution's complaints procedures.

Managing student complaints

A student on a course validated by the University who wishes to complain should follow one of the following courses of action depending on the nature of his/her complaint:

- Complaints associated with non-academic matters, except those which relate to one of the University's services, must be pursued in accordance with the partner institution's own complaints policy and procedures.

- Complaints associated with one of the University's services should be pursued in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. If a student wishes to complain, but is unsure of the department responsible, s/he may seek advice from a member of staff or the Students Union.

- Complaints on matters related to the academic course should first be pursued in accordance with the partner institution's own complaints policy and procedures. If, following completion of those procedures, a student considers the outcome to be unsatisfactory, s/he can request a Stage 3 Review of that outcome by the University pursuant to this Complaints Procedure (subject to establishing the necessary grounds for such a Review). The student is expected to submit the request within one calendar month of the student receiving written confirmation from the partner institution of the final outcome of the complaint in accordance with its own procedures.

An annual summary report of student complaints against partner organisations will be received by Board of Governors and a record will be retained.

Appendix B

Complaints for students studying on UEL Apprenticeship courses

Students on Apprenticeship courses at UEL may complain to the University on matters related to the quality of his/her academic course.

Both employers and apprentices may contact the ESFA with queries or concerns and may escalate complaints to the ESFA through the apprenticeship helpdesk (on 08000 150400 or email nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk).

Apprenticeship / Employer Complaints

- If either party receives a formal or informal complaint from an Apprentice, it shall promptly notify the other party and provide the other party with full details of the complaint.
- The parties shall work together in good faith to try to resolve any complaint from an Apprentice as quickly as possible.
- The Employer shall ensure that each Apprentice is aware of their right to complain to the ESFA if the parties are unable to resolve the complaint to the Apprentice's satisfaction.
- The parties shall:
  - fully co-operate with the ESFA, HEFCE and any other relevant regulatory body in relation to the investigation of any Apprentice complaint; and
  - promptly implement any requirements or recommendations made by the ESFA, HEFCE or any other relevant regulatory body as a result of any Apprentice complaint.

Dispute Resolution

- The parties shall attempt, in good faith, to resolve any dispute related to this agreement. If a dispute arises under this agreement:
  - the dispute shall be referred first to UEL's and the Employer's Representatives identified in the ADF for resolution;
- If the dispute cannot be resolved by UEL's and the Employer's Representatives within 14 days after the dispute has been referred to them, the dispute shall be escalated to;

  UEL's Dean of School and
  the Employer's representative

  who shall attempt to resolve it;
- If

  UEL's Dean of School
  the Employer's representative:

  are for any reason unable to resolve the dispute within 30 days of it being referred to them, the parties will attempt to settle it by mediation in accordance with the CEDR Model Mediation Procedure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the mediator shall be nominated by CEDR Solve. To initiate the mediation, a party must serve notice in writing **(ADR notice)** to the other party to the dispute, requesting a mediation. A copy of the ADR notice should be sent to CEDR Solve. The mediation will start not later than 14 days after the date of the ADR notice.
- The Employer may contact the Apprenticeship Helpline at nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk or on 0800 015 0400 regarding any concerns, complaints or enquiries related to the Apprenticeship.

Appendix C

Guidance Notes to accompany the UEL Complaints Procedure

Complaints to the VC and other senior members of staff

If a complaint is made to the Vice -Chancellor's Office or the Office of any Senior Manager, it will be referred to Complaints & Appeals who will ensure that it enters the procedure at the appropriate point. If no substantive attempt has been made by the student to resolve the complaint locally using Stage 1 of this Complaints Procedure, the student will be advised to take up the issues raised with the relevant school or service.

Anonymous, vexatious or malicious complaints

Complaints require investigation to enable resolution: where a complaint is made anonymously it will not be possible to undertake such an investigation. For practical reasons therefore, normally no action will be taken in the event of complaints made anonymously. A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is trivial or untrue, having been put forward so as to abuse the process of this Complaints Procedure or, for example, to attempt to defame the name or character of another person or the University. A student should also be aware that if a complaint is vexatious or pursued inappropriately disciplinary action may be taken against him/her and the consideration of that complaint will be terminated. If it is deemed necessary to terminate consideration of a complaint, the student will receive written confirmation of this decision. The student may appeal against the decision by writing to Complaints & Appeals within one calendar month of receipt of the formal notification from the University.

Support for Staff cited in a complaint

If a complaint has been made about a member of staff it is the University's duty to ensure that its staff are treated fairly throughout the process. The member of staff will be informed if a complaint has been made about them. Any member of staff mentioned in a complaint will not be treated less favourably by the University than if the complaint had not been brought. The Complaints Procedure refers to parallel arrangements under the Staff Disciplinary Procedures. The Complaints Procedure itself cannot be used to discipline members of staff.

Complaints made by students under 18

If a complaint is made by a student who is under the age of 18, the University will notify the parents or guardians of the student in writing, and keep them informed of the progress of the complaint, unless it is the student's express wish that this should not be done. The University will permit the parents or guardians of the students to act on the student's behalf during the process, provided the student has confirmed agreement in writing beforehand.

Accompaniment at the complaint hearing of the Students' Union advisor for support or representation as appropriate. The friend or Students' Union advisor shall be permitted to put forward the student's case under the direction of the Chair of the panel, and shall be permitted to ask questions of the School/Service representatives (see Appendix D, Notes for Guidance on the Conduct of a Complaint Hearing for more detail). In the event that the complainant is unable to attend, the hearing will be rescheduled. In the event of the illness or incapacity of the compliant, there will be a maximum of 3 attempts to convene, following which the hearing will proceed in the absence of the student.

Reimbursement of expenses

If a complaint is upheld, the University will meet any reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses connected with Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure, on production of receipts; this may include travel and subsistence costs in connection with the student's attendance at a complaint hearing (if any).

Support for students and complaints from third parties (including representation from MP's)

Students may seek advice from the Students' Union in relation to bringing a complaint. Students may request that a Students' Union advisor accompanies them to any meetings associated with the investigation of the complaint. The University will not however accept complaints from third parties except where they are acting as the students' representative with the student's written consent. When providing consent, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have agreed with the third party what information the University can disclose. Any communication with third parties must comply with data protection legislation and the University's guidance on handling personal information. More information on how we process personal data can be found on the University Data Protection pages found on the UEL intranet site.

The exception to this shall be where a student wishes a Member of Parliament to make the complaint on their behalf under Section 8(e) of the Data Protection Act 2018. Where this section is engaged, the University is permitted to disclose personal data (including sensitive information) to Members of Parliament, acting on behalf of a constituent, without having to obtain the explicit consent of the individual concerned. In providing permission for the University to correspond with a third party (or by appointing a Member of Parliament to make the complaint on their behalf), the student shall accept that this may include disclosure to the third party of relevant information about their academic standing, conduct and behaviour, issues of health or disability or other personal circumstances, level of engagement with University regulations, policies, procedures and services and any other personal information about them which the University deems pertinent to the issues of their complaint. Any response to a complaint made on behalf of a student by a third party shall be provided to both the third party and the student.

Multiple and Group Complaints

Where a student (or group of students) submits more than one complaint relating to the same substantive issue, the University may choose to treat those complaints as a single complaint. In order to manage the progress of the complaint effectively, the University will normally ask the group to nominate one student to act as their representative. The evidence submitted to support the complaint must be agreed with the group and included with the Complaint Form. No additional evidence will be accepted once the complaint has been submitted. The University will liaise with the representative who should communicate with the other students in relation to the complaint as appropriate.

Investigation and supporting information

It is important that the student and staff member investigating the complaint understand the

purpose and scope of the investigation. If the student's expectations appear to exceed what the University can reasonably provide, the student should receive written notification of this as soon as possible.

Students are expected to provide at the time of submission of their complaint, all relevant documentation or other evidence and details of all issues which they wish to be taken into consideration. Where this is not possible for good reason, students are expected to indicate what documentation or evidence is to follow. The person receiving the complaint ('the investigator') shall be entitled to impose a reasonable deadline by which this further information should be provided by the student. This deadline shall not

normally be more than one month after the submission of the complaint and may be less. Timescales for consideration of the complaint will be halted whilst the provision of further information is anticipated. Unless there is good reason why the student cannot then meet that deadline, the investigator may then proceed to consider the complaint once that deadline has passed, even if the further information has not been provided.

Where the investigator believes that there is additional information which the student has not provided which is pertinent to the consideration of the complaint and which cannot readily be gathered from other sources, they may request that the student submits it and set a reasonable deadline (normally no more than 14 calendar days) for its submission. The timescale for consideration of the complaint will be halted whilst the provision of that further information is anticipated. Unless there proves to be good reason why the student cannot then meet that deadline, the investigator may then proceed to consider the complaint once that deadline has passed, even if the further information has not been provided.

Equality and Diversity

These internal regulations of the University and their associated policies and guidance will be operated in accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy.

Re-Classification of complaint

The University reserves the right to reclassify a complaint as an academic appeal according the nature of the subject matter of the complaint. The outcome of an academic appeal cannot be made the subject of a complaint except where there is possible material error in arriving at the decision. The final decision regarding a matter raised under this Complaints Procedure or any of the associated procedures shall normally be considered to be the final decision of the University: there is no right to further consideration of the same matter under a different University policy.

Reasonable conduct

It is expected that students, their representatives and staff members should act reasonably and fairly towards each other in good faith and respect this Complaints Procedure. The University has a responsibility to protect its staff against unacceptable behaviour according to its regulations and policies and action will be taken for any abuse of process.

Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality, with information released only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint or academic appeal. Where it is necessary to obtain information from a third party in relation to the investigation, the third party should only be given as much detail about the complaint as is necessary in order to obtain the information required from them.
Where a complaint has been raised against a student or member of staff and has been upheld, the student bringing the complaint will be advised of this. However, it may not be appropriate to share specific details affecting individual students or staff members particularly where disciplinary action is being taken. It is important that the student is advised of this at the earliest opportunity in order to manage expectations. Students may be advised that appropriate action is being taken but not necessarily be provided with any further detail.

Reporting and Monitoring

All complaints considered under Stages 1 and 2 of this Complaints Procedure should be recorded and reported annually by Complaints & Appeals. This will detail the number of complaints as well as the outcomes and will highlight any potential areas for enhancement or lessons learned.

Partner institutions will also be asked to submit an annual report on any formal complaints. These reports will be collated with information on University level reviews so that an annual report of all complaints can be provided to Academic Board.

Complaints & Appeals will oversee the tracking of complaints and recording of key data on behalf of Board of Governors. All data held will be monitored in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy and reported on an annual basis to the Board of Governors. The annual report will identify and evaluate any issues for which further action needs to be taken.

Appendix D - Notes for guidance on the conduct of a complaint hearing

These notes are to be provided to all parties.

Purpose

The purpose of a h earing shall be to hear both the complaint and the response. Taking into account previous attempts to resolve issues and satisfy the student, the Panel shall determine whether the student's complaint is justified and whether the School / Service has provided, on the balance of probabilities, a reasonable response or resolution.

Process

A Complaint Hearing will, where required, be convened by the school /service department who are the subject of the complaint.

Membership of the Panel shall be determined by the member of staff allocated to attempt resolution of the complaint in consultation with Complaints & Appeals. Panel members may consist of staff and a representative of the Students' Union. The Chair and staff members shall be drawn from outside the School / Service involved in the complaint and may be academic or support staff, depending on the nature of the complaint. Complaints and Appeals shall act in the capacity of technical adviser to the Panel. The relevant school or service shall provide a minute-taker.

The student may be accompanied by a friend or member of the SU and the School / Service may be represented by up to two members.

The Order of Proceedings shall be as follows:

1. Introduction of those present.
2. Statement as the purpose of the complaint hearing.
3. Reference to documents and statements by complainant and School / Service.
4. A4 synopsis summarising the main points of their case distributed by both parties.
5. Complainant and/or representative presentation (approx. 15 minute / max. 20 minutes)
6. Opportunity to question complainant's presentation by panel and School.
7. School / Service Department presentation (approx. 15 minutes /max 20 minutes)
8. Opportunity to question School/ Service's presentation by panel and complainant.
9. Complainant and/or representative summing up. (5 minutes) New evidence is not admissible at this time.
10. School / Service summing up. (5 minutes) New evidence is not admissible at this time.
11. Adjournment – chair and panel to consider the submission in private. Either side may be required to be available to provide further information or clarification of matters to the Panel.

Documentation

The Panel and complainant will have access to relevant previous documentation in connection with the complaint, ideally at least 5 working days before the date of the hearing. Each party will be informed of the names of the Panel members and the names of the respective parties' representatives before the hearing.

Witnesses are not permitted to appear in person at any hearing. However, the complainant and the School / Service are permitted to provide written statements in advance of the meeting which will be considered with the previous documentation.

Other documentary evidence may be tabled at the discretion of the Chair.

Conclusions and recommendations

Should the Panel uphold the complaint, it may make any recommendations which it sees fit to the School / Service.

Recommendations may also be made to University committees.

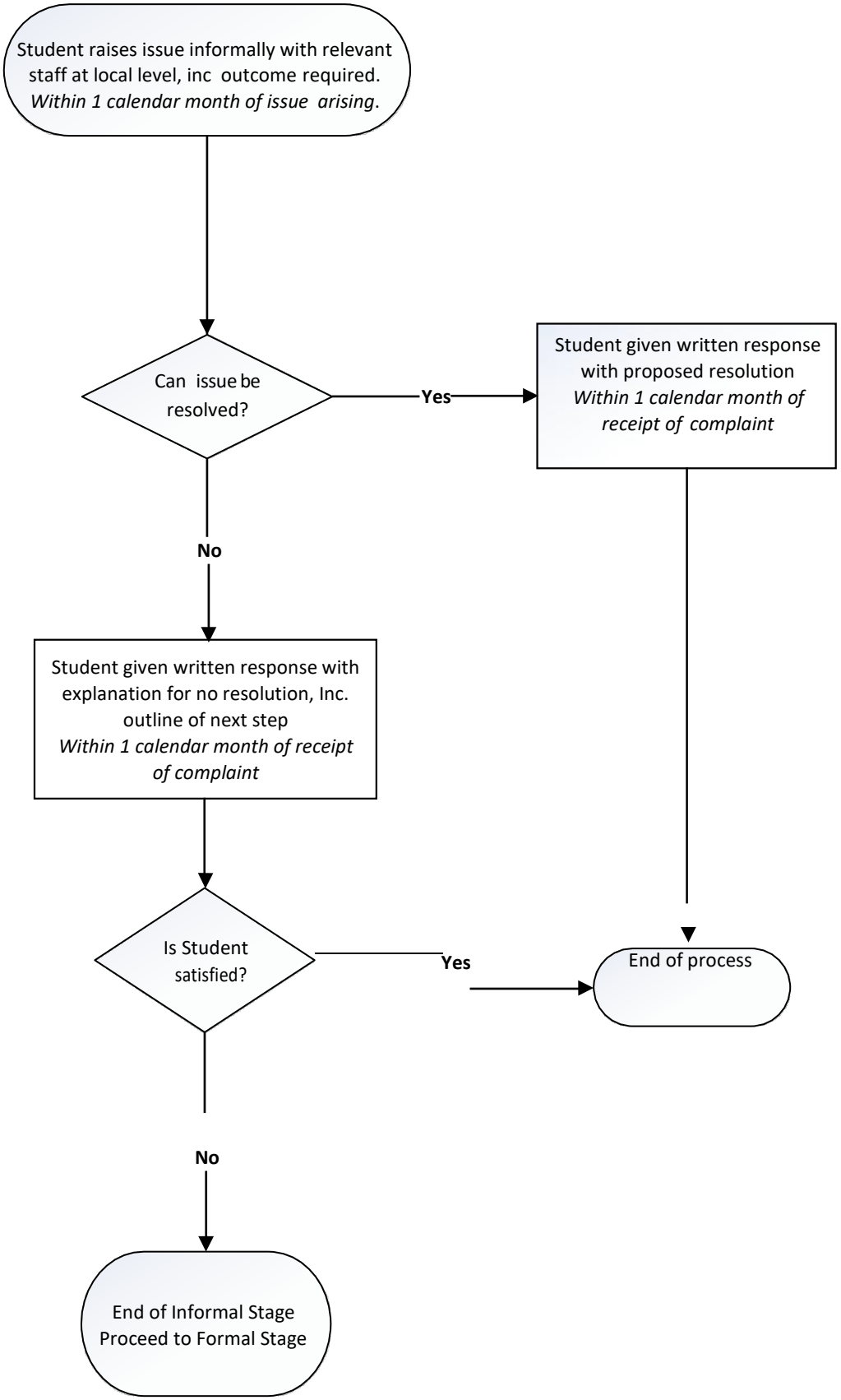
It may be determined that the School / Service had no case to answer and/or had acted reasonably during the earlier part of the Complaints Procedure.

Any conclusions and recommendations will be communicated in writing to the complainant and the School / Service within the specified timescale.

Appendix E

Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

Stage 1- Local Resolution



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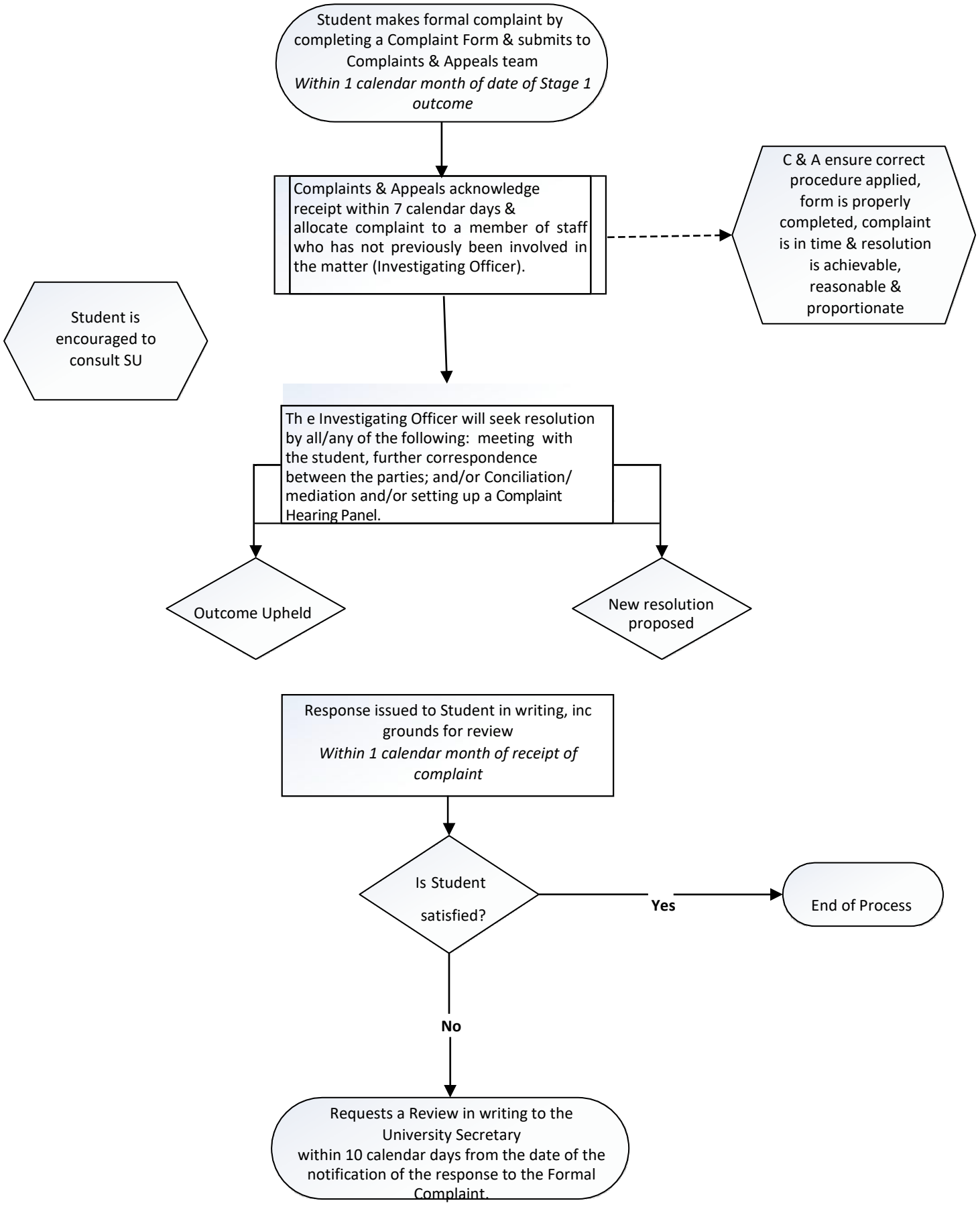
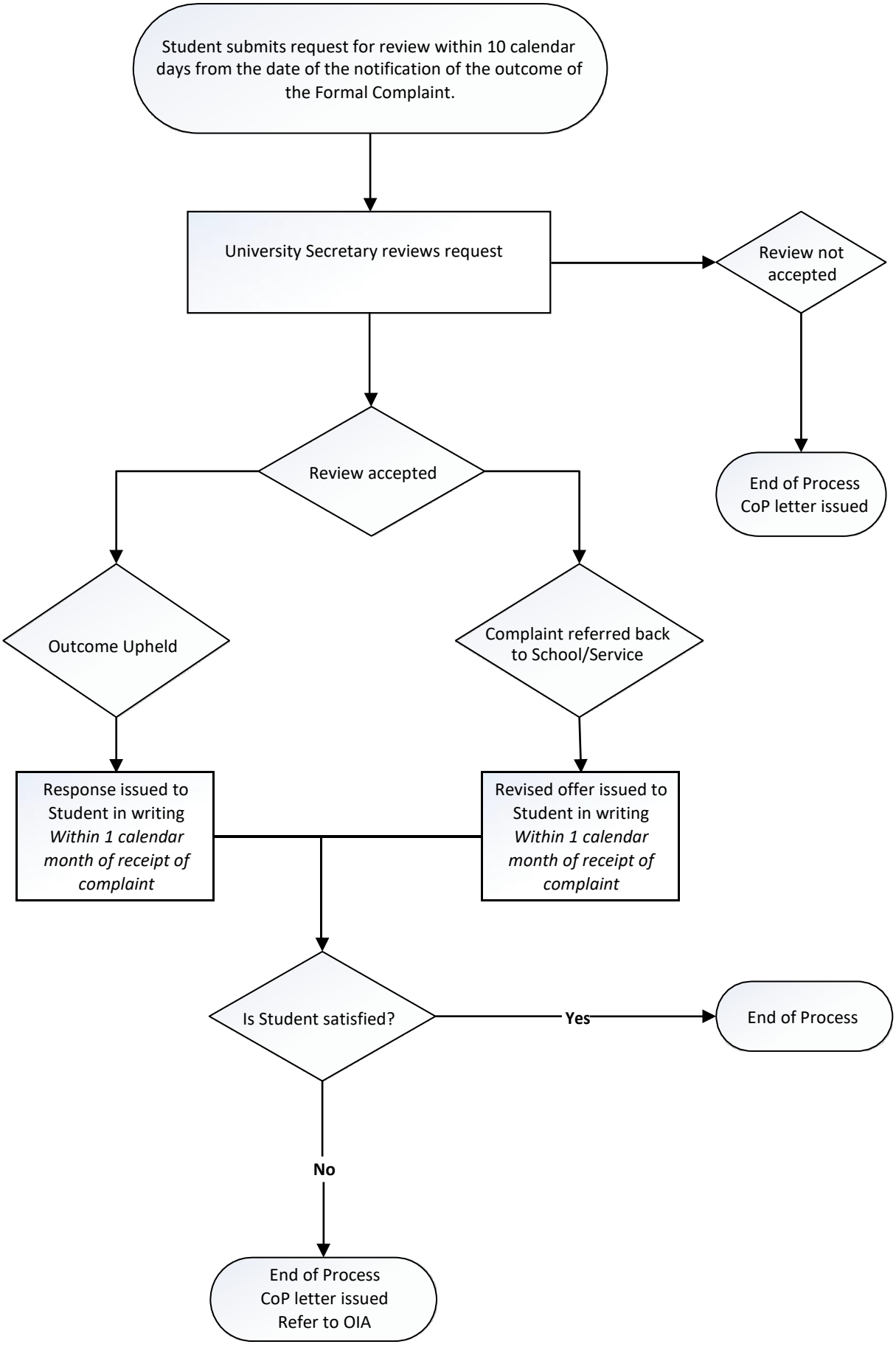
Stage 2- Formal Complaint



UEL Student Complaints Procedure

Stage 3- Review



Appendix F - Complaints Form

COMPLAINT FORM

This form can be used by a student, or recent graduate, to complain about any service or lack of service provided by the University to which a response is expected. This form cannot be used for the following categories of complaint, for which separate procedures exist:

- complaints based on or related to matters of academicjudgement.
- appeals relating to decisions made by an Assessment Board regarding assessment, progression or award. (Manual of General Regulations Part 7);
- appeals against annual monitoring reviews, transfer of research degree registration or oral examination decision for postgraduate research students (Manual of General Regulations Part 9);
- appeals against the decision of the Extenuation Panel (unless there has been a procedural error please refer to the Manual of General Regulations Part 7);
- complaints relating to the Students Union (UELSU operates a separate Grievance and Complaints Procedure accessible via its website);
- appeals against decisions taken under disciplinary proceedings;
- complaints about businesses operating on University premises, not owned by the University (these should be directed to the Manager of the business);
- complaints made by students against students (see Dignity at Work and Study Policy) where these relate to allegations of bullying or harassment;
- Complaints relating to a case of Academic Misconduct (Manual of General Regulations, Part 8)
- appeals against the decisions of Attendance Appeal Panels
- matters relating to fitness to practise (Manual of General Regulations, Part 13 - Suitability Procedure);
- complaints relating to provision of services wholly within the remit of a collaborative partner or to the action or lack of action of staff employed by a collaborative partner (refer to the partner institution's complaints policy for guidance).

Please return the completed form to: Complaints and Appeals Officer, Institutional Compliance, University of East London, Docklands Campus, 4-6 University Way, London, E16 2RD or to complaints@uel.ac.uk You should receive an acknowledgement within one week of lodging your completed complaint form.

You are strongly advised to consult with the Students' Union before completing this form. Please call 020 8223 7025 or e-mail Studentadvice@uel.ac.uk for an appointment.

SECTION ONE -YOUR DETAILS:

SURNAME		**TITLE**	
FORENAME(S)			
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE			
POSTCODE			
EMAIL ADDRESS			
DAYTIME TELEPHONE			
STUDENT NUMBER			
COURSE OF STUDY			
Do you have a registered disability or learning difficulty which the Compliance Team should be made aware of, as it has had an impact on the issues you are raising in your complaint? If so, please provide details			

SECTION TWO - YOUR COMPLAINT:

Name of School/Service you are complaining about	
Please provide details of the staff member(s) you have spoken regarding your complaint and attach the Stage 1 informal outcome issued to you **If you have not attempted to conciliate, please go back to the School or Service named in your complaint and complete Stage 1 of the Complaints procedure before proceeding any further**	
Please provide a statement of any actions you have taken to resolve this within the School/Service	

Please explain why the resolution/ action taken by the School / Service, following notification of the complaint, has been inadequate

Please provide further information on your complaint		
Date of incident	**What happened?**	**Supporting evidence (i.e. emails, details of telephone calls, Student HUB ticket numbers etc.)**
Date of email to lecturer	**EXAMPLE** Nature of complaint – please be concise, highlighting the substantive issue	Evidence 1 (email dated xxxx) Provide a copy of the email and mark it 'Evidence 1'
Please summarise how you would like to see your complaint resolved		

SECTION THREE – TIMELIMITS:

The completed complaints form should be lodged with the Complaints and Appeals Officer within the time limits detailed in the Complaints Procedure. An extension of these time limits will only be possible in exceptional circumstances, such as illness, an apparent risk of victimisation, personal embarrassment or other hindrance beyond the student's control. If your complaint has been made outside of these time limits please detail below the reason for this.

SECTION FOUR –DECLARATION:

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 we will use the personal data that you have provided to process your complaint as set out above. To process your compliant, it will be necessary to disclose the information that you have provided to authorised members of University staff, their legal advisers or where the law requires, as necessary for the reasonable purposes connected with the investigation of your complaint. You have rights associated with how your personal data is used. More information on how we process personal data can be found on the Data Protection intranet pages or by contacting dpo@uel.ac.uk.
Please sign below to confirm that the information you have provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge, and to indicate your consent for the information provided to be used as detailed above.

Signed		**Dated**	

We would welcome your feedback on the Complaints Procedure. If you wish to make any comments or suggestions, once you have completed the procedure, please submit these to **Institutional Compliance, University of East London, Docklands Campus, 4 – 6 University Way, London, E16 2RD**.

The information you provide us with will be used to help us make improvements to the procedure and the way in which complaints are handled in future. All information provided will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and any reports on the feedback received will not identify names.