

## Complaints Procedure

The University College Isle of Man (UCM) is committed to providing an environment which gives students the opportunity to participate in decision-making and which encourages regular feedback through course review and staff-student liaison meetings. We also recognise that, despite all the best efforts made by staff, students may feel that they need to bring issues to staff's attention outside these regular methods of communication.

This procedure adopts the principles set out in the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) Complaints Procedure.

UCM is committed to managing complaints in a way that is timely and efficient, to resolve the matter at the earliest opportunity, in fairness, with rigour and without bias.

Details of the complaint will remain confidential to the parties concerned.

In the interest of natural justice, the complainant, and anyone else involved is entitled to see all relevant evidence to be considered and to put their case.

If there is to be a hearing, everyone involved will have the right of attendance and to be heard.

If there are allegations of a criminal offence, UCM may refer the matter to the police and suspend its own proceedings until the outcome of any criminal proceedings is known.

Anonymous complaints or unidentified evidence will be disregarded unless someone is prepared to substantiate them.

Complaints made directly to the Principal will be acted upon in the same manner as detailed in the steps below.

When we get things wrong we will act to:

- accept responsibility and apologise;
- explain what went wrong and why;
- make any changes required (where it is within our remit to do so);
- learn lessons from mistakes and review any policies or practices where appropriate.

The remedy applied needs to be proportionate to the nature of the complaint and take into account what redress the complainant seeks.

If a satisfactory outcome is not reached, then the complainant should refer to the DESC Complaints Procedure to establish the next course of action.

A complainant will not be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint. However, if it is later discovered that a complaint was not genuine, then DESC's Complaints Policy Appendix One will be applied and UCM may consider initiating the student disciplinary procedure.

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## Making a complaint

### Step 1 – Local Resolution

A complaint is better resolved informally, locally and at the time it arises. It is best to raise the issue with the person most directly responsible.

Step 1 does not require the use of an official proforma, however, to progress the complaint further, there must be some evidence that Step 1 has been raised within 21 days of the alleged incident. Complainants must keep a record of their own actions taken to resolve the complaint and keep copies of any correspondence.

### Step 2 – Formal Resolution

All formal complaints should be made directly to the UCM's Vice Principal Students & Environments within 21 days of the last verifiable attempt at local resolution. The complainant is expected to provide details of their attempt to resolve the matter locally. The written complaint (hard copy or electronic) should include the following information:

- Name of complainant

- Name and details of people involved, including the name of the person with whom the matter was informally raised and any witnesses

- A brief description of the complaint

- Evidence of steps taken to resolve the complaint

- Reasons for continued dissatisfaction

- What resolution is being sought?

The complaints form attached at **Appendix 1** can be used to ensure the above information is captured. The Vice Principal will confirm receipt of the complaint within two working days and will conduct an investigation within ten working days of their receipt of the complaint. The outcome of the investigation will be divulged to all relevant parties. If the manager is not able to send a full reply within these timescales they will inform the complainant of the reason why and keep them up to date on the progress.

### Step 3 – Final Formal Resolution

The final step may be used if a formal resolution has not been achieved.

All formal complaints should be made directly to the UCM's Vice Principal Students & Environments within 21 days of the last verifiable attempt at formal resolution. The complainant is expected to provide details of their attempt to resolve the matter formally. The written complaint (hard copy or electronic) should include the information listed in Step 2 of this procedure.

The complaints form attached at **Appendix 1** can be used to ensure the above information is captured.

The Vice Principal will confirm receipt of the complaint within five working days and will conduct an investigation within ten working days of their receipt of the complaint. The outcome of the investigation will be divulged to all relevant parties. If the manager is not able to send a full reply within these timescales they will inform the complainant of the reason why and keep them up to date on the progress.

### SQA Complaints

For assessment-related complaints, candidates of SQA qualifications may also have the right to complain to SQA awarding body. SQA will only consider your complaint if you have already exhausted all stages of UCM's complaints procedure and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which we handled your complaint, or you believe that we have unreasonably failed to apply the procedure correctly.

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Quality Manual, Section 2: Quality Management – 2.2 UCM Complaints Procedure Revision 202001 V1(last modified 01/09/2021; last reviewed 01/01/2023) QMR1

Please note that all data will be held under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and kept in accordance with DESC/UCM's retention policy.

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# Appendix One

## Complaint Form

**Details of Complainant:** (Please print)

Title: Surname: First Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone contact number:

Email address:

**Name and details of persons involved** (including potential witnesses):

**Details of the complaint** (please use a separate sheet if necessary):

**What action has been taken to try to resolve the issue/complaint:**

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**Reason for the continued dissatisfaction:**

**What resolution is being sought:**

**Signature of Complainant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_.

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