

European Institute of Human Sciences



EIHS Student Complaints Procedure

**EIHS, Highmead Foundation - Llanybydder -
Ceredigion SA40 9UL - UK**

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Introduction

1.1 EIHS believes that students are entitled to have access to effective systems for handling any complaints that might arise during the course of their studies, as one way of ensuring that the Institute provides the highest possible academic and service standards. Students should feel able to make a complaint, knowing that it will be investigated in a fair manner.

Definitions and scope

2.1 EIHS defines a student complaint as a complaint levelled by a student against another student, member of staff, service or facility of EIHS. For the purpose of this procedure a student is defined as a person who has been accepted to study at the Institute or a former student who has left within the last three calendar months.

2.2 Issues covered by other specific procedures will not be dealt with under this procedure. For example:

- Academic reviews and appeals.
- Complaints relating to services provided by the Students' Union, which should be pursued with the Students' Union in the first instance.

General Principles

3.1 The Institute seeks to minimize student complaints by ensuring that students have opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. EIHS is committed to the continuing review and improvement of its provision and seeks regular feedback from students through Staff/Student liaison and evaluation questionnaires. EIHS is also committed to providing an environment within which students are encouraged to raise any matters of concern in an informal manner as soon as they arise. This often removes the need for formal complaints.

3.2 Students are encouraged to raise a concern or complaint as soon as possible after the event has taken place, and normally no later than the end of the semester in which the issue or event occurred.

3.3 A group of students may use this procedure to make a collective complaint, on the basis that one student identifies themselves as the main contact for purposes of communication.

3.4 All information received as a result of a complaint investigation will remain confidential to those involved in the process. However, it should be noted that, in the interests of natural justice, parties to a complaint have the right to know the full details of the complaint.

3.5 Any investigation into a complaint will be carried out in a timely, thorough and systematic manner, and any judgement made will be on the basis on the evidence provided by all parties.

3.6 In order to ensure that a thorough investigation of a complaint is made, EIHS expects to be able to collect appropriate information from all the parties involved. Anonymous complaints will therefore *not* be accepted.

3.7 Those investigating or adjudicating upon a complaint at any stage of the procedure will do so impartially. Anyone with a material personal interest in the complaint will neither investigate nor adjudicate.

3.8 Every effort will be made to adhere to the time limits set out in this procedure. However, the timescales may be varied by mutual agreement in individual cases. The parties to the complaint will receive an explanation of the delay and be advised of when progress is expected.

3.9 At any meeting held as part of the complaints procedure, the student will have the right to be accompanied by one person (for instance, a representative of the Students' Union) as will any other parties to the complaint. Those accompanying shall not normally be professional legal representatives, and in the case of members of staff, will be a work colleague. Other matters of procedure for such meetings not set out in this procedure will be at the discretion of the Principal.

3.10 If a student fails to attend a meeting in respect of their complaint within a reasonable period of time, the investigation will continue and be concluded in their absence.

3.11 Where a deficiency in provision or process is acknowledged, a complaint may be addressed by offering an apology or an acceptable explanation for the deficiency, by undertaking to implement future improvement, or by a mutually acceptable course of action to address the individual circumstances of the case.

3.12 A complainant is strongly advised to report matters which they suspect are criminal offences to the police. Where criminal proceedings are under way, the University may delay the progression of any complaint relating to the same matters until after the outcome of the proceedings is known.

3.13 If the complaint is about the Principal, advice should be sought from the Administrator with regard to approaching the EIHS Trustees.

3.14 Students will not be disadvantaged as a result of raising a matter of concern or of making a complaint, provided it is made in good faith. Where a complaint is shown to have malicious or dubious intention, the complaint shall be rejected and disciplinary action may be taken.

Procedure

4.1 The three stage complaints procedure is as follows:

Stage 1 - Informal Complaint

4.2 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved at an early stage by discussing the matter informally at the earliest opportunity. A student should therefore bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff, who will aim to resolve the matter by informal discussion. For example, if the complaint concerns academic matters, a student might wish to take this up with

their Personal Tutor or with another member of academic staff. If the complaint is about an Institute service, then the student should talk to an appropriate member of staff from that service. If there is any doubt regarding who to contact, or if the student feels it is more appropriate, the Principal should be approached.

4.3 Recipients of informal student complaints are responsible for addressing them promptly and fairly. The recipient will normally let the student know within five working days of receiving the initial complaint what steps (if any) will be taken to address the complaint and the expected timescale, and advised to whom they should submit a formal complaint to if they are dissatisfied with this outcome.

4.4 It should be noted that this stage will normally be an informal oral process (or via email if a meeting is not possible) and a written record will not normally be made. Any staff involved will be encouraged to share the experience where the effectiveness of the Department or Service could benefit. It is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved in this way.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

4.5 If a student has attempted to resolve matters informally but is not satisfied with the outcome, they may elect to proceed to the next stage by submitting a formal complaint, the forms for which can be obtained from the Main Office. The student must submit their Student Complaint Form to the Principal.

4.6 The student should keep a copy of their complaint and any other documentation submitted for their own records.

4.7 The Principal should acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and at the same time notify the Academic Council if he feels it would be appropriate for them to become involved in the investigation of the complaint.

4.8 The complaint will be investigated by the Principal (or his nominee), who will arrange to meet with the student to discuss the complaint in detail. At this meeting the student may be accompanied by one other person (as set out in paragraph 3.9), who may participate in the proceedings. Other parties to the complaint may also be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the person investigating the complaint

4.9 The meeting will follow this format:

- The student will be asked to explain their complaint and present any supporting evidence, with the assistance of their companion as necessary, following which they may be asked questions by the Principal (or his nominee), and by any other parties to the complaint present;
- If present, other parties to the complaint will then respond to the complaint, with the assistance of their companion(s) as necessary, following which they may also be asked questions by the Principal (or his nominee) and the complainant.

4.10 The student will receive a full written response to their complaint, which should detail the nature of the complaint, the findings of any investigation carried out, and the points covered in the meeting. The student should receive this written response within 4 weeks of submitting a formal complaint (or eight weeks when a complaint is submitted during or shortly before a vacation). If this is not possible, the student will be informed in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their complaint and given a timescale for completion. In either event, the Administrator should receive a copy of the correspondence.

4.11 If the complaint is considered justified, the student will be informed of the action taken to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is not upheld, then the student should receive an explanation of the reason for this decision.

Stage 3 - Review by the Imam

4.12 If the student is not satisfied with the decision taken in respect of their complaint under Stage 2 above, they may request that a review of the case be carried out by the EIHS Imam. Such a request should state the grounds for review, which should meet one of the following criteria:

- That there were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the complaint; or
- That fresh evidence can be presented which was not or could not reasonably have been made available to the investigation; or
- That the finding of the investigation was inappropriate in light of the evidence.

4.13 If the Imam is satisfied that a review is justified, he will have discretion to either:

- Make a judgement on the complaint based on the evidence already in his possession; or
- Establish a Review Panel to examine the evidence and come to a judgement on the complaint. The Review Panel will normally comprise one lay member of the EIHS Trustees and two members of staff chosen by the Imam, of which he may be one. All members of the Review Panel will have had no previous association with the case.

4.14 If a Review Panel is established, the student will have the right to attend a meeting to explain their complaint, and be accompanied at this meeting by one other person (as set out in paragraph 3.9 above), who may participate in the proceedings. Other parties to the complaint, and / or their companion, may also be invited to attend the meeting on the same basis at the discretion of the Imam.

4.15 Meetings of the Review Panel will follow this format:

- The Student will be asked to explain their complaint and present any supporting evidence, with the assistance of their companion as necessary, following which they may be asked questions by the Panel, and by any other parties to the complaint;
- The other parties to the complaint will then respond to the complaint, with the assistance of their companion as necessary, following which they may also be asked questions by the Panel and the complainant.
- Both parties will be asked to sum up, following which the Review Panel will come to a judgement on the complaint.

4.16 The student will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within four weeks of submitting a request for review (or eight weeks if submitted during or shortly before a vacation). If the complaint is upheld the student will be informed of any action to be taken to resolve the matter. If the complaint is not upheld, the student will be informed of the reason for this decision, and EIHS will also issue a completion of procedures letter to the student.

6. Monitoring

6.1 The Principal will keep a record of all formal student complaints received.

6.2 The Academic Council and other tutors will receive a summary of the formal complaints submitted so that experiences can be shared, and where appropriate changes to procedure / practice made to ensure that the Institute meets the highest possible standards. This information will then be forwarded to the Main Office.

6.3 An annual report summarising all formal student complaints received by EIHS shall be submitted to the Trustees and the Students' Union Committee for consideration..