
Student Complaints Policy

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1.0 Introduction

The Dyson Institute is committed to ensuring that it provides its Students with a high-quality experience. If a Student is dissatisfied, every reasonable attempt will be made to resolve the issue informally. Should a Student wish to explore a more formal means of resolving their issue, The Dyson Institute operates this Student Complaints Policy which outlines the process and roles and responsibilities of all parties.

Students will never be disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of their decision to raise a concern or make a complaint, regardless of the outcome.

This Student Complaints Policy is based on both the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and the best practice outlined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

This Student Complaints Policy does not cover complaints or appeals in relation to the admissions process – these are covered in our published Admissions Policy.

1.1 Vision and mission

This Student Complaints Policy has been developed with a view to supporting and furthering The Dyson Institute's vision and mission.

The Dyson Institute's vision is to be the best engineering university in the world, which develops the engineering leaders of the future.

Its mission is to build challenging and enriching educational experiences which are free, student-centric and aligned with the needs of industry.

1.2 Objectives

The aims of this Student Complaints Policy are:

- to explain what constitutes a Complaint ;
- to make clear alternative options to a Complaint;
- to lay out the procedure for making a Complaint ; and
- to explain what will happen after a Complaint has been made.

1.3 Scope

This Student Complaints Policy applies to all Concerns and Complaints relating to the Services provided by The Dyson Institute to its Students, across all aspects of its provision (for example, academic delivery, student support and educational facilities).

This Student Complaints Policy is intended to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved and early informal resolution is encouraged. Both staff and Students are assured that all complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Any person named in a complaint will be given details of the complaint as soon as is reasonably practicable and will have the right to reply as part of any investigation.

The Student Complaints Procedure under this Policy comprises of three stages:

- Stage 1: an informal approach with emphasis on conciliation and local resolution;
- Stage 2: a formal procedure which may include mediation;
- Stage 3: a request for a review of stages 1 and 2 to the Director of The Dyson Institute.

This procedure is for all Students enrolled at The Dyson Institute. A Student who wishes to make a Complaint must invoke the informal stage within one calendar month of any alleged incident which is the cause of the complaint. Students who have left The Dyson Institute either through completion of studies or who have withdrawn for any other reason may invoke this procedure within three months following either the date on which their studies were terminated, or the date on which they completed their studies (this being the date they received their final results).

Concerns and Complaints relating to a Student's employment with Dyson Technology should be raised informally through the Programme Lead, who will support them in addressing this Concern. If progression to a formal Complaint is required, the Programme Lead will support the student in following the Grievance Policy outlined in the Working@Dyson policy handbook.

Concerns and Complaints relating to the Dyson Village accommodation should be raised informally to the Dyson Village Representative who will raise the concern to the Operations Manager, who will support the student in addressing the issue.

A Student may raise issues in relation to which The Dyson Institute may need to consider taking action under different Dyson Institute Policies – for example a related appeal against an Academic Misconduct decision when pursuing a Complaint under this Policy. In these circumstances the Quality and Standards team will decide how to progress matters in the best interests of all parties involved. This may involve deciding which matter should take precedence or whether interlinked matters can be considered together under one Policy.

2.0 Definitions

In this Student Complaints Policy, all references to a post holder in The Dyson Institute should also be read as referring to any person (including external parties) to whom the roles and responsibilities of that post holder have been delegated.

2.1 Concern

A Concern is an informal oral or written expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of a service or facility provided by or on behalf of The Dyson Institute by a Student.

2.2 Complaint

A Complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of a service or facility provided by or on behalf of The Dyson Institute by a Student. A Complaint must be made in writing, following the process set out in this Student Complaints Policy.

2.3 Academic Appeal

An Academic Appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards. An academic appeal must be made in writing, following the process outlined in The Dyson Institute's Academic Appeals Policy.

2.4 Student

Student means a registered Student of The Dyson Institute as defined in its Academic Regulations

3.0 Student Complaints Procedure

3.1 Raising a concern

A Student must take reasonable steps to address their Concern informally.

Avenues a Student should consider include:

- meeting with the staff member responsible for the service with which they are dissatisfied to discuss their Concern directly;
- discussing the issue with a relevant member of staff;
- discussing their concern with the Staff Student Liaison Committee or Undergraduate Experience Committee;
- recording their concern in the students Concerns, Complaints and Feedback portal;
- recording their concern in the Module Evaluation Questionnaire; and
- recording their concern in the Annual Survey.

Any Student wishing to disagree with a decision of the Board of Examiners (e.g. progression from stage to stage, award of credit, decisions relating to academic misconduct penalties and decisions relating to mitigating circumstances) should be submitted as an Academic Appeal by following the process outlined in The Dyson Institute's Academic Appeals Policy.

3.2 Monitoring concerns

It is important that The Dyson Institute monitors all Concerns raised by Students and responds proactively where appropriate. All concerns will be properly considered and investigated.

Any concerns which have been raised independently by more than one Student should be discussed by The Dyson Institute's Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis, who will monitor the situation and take action as appropriate.

3.3 Stage 1 Complaint

In the event that a Student's Concern cannot be resolved the Student should log or record a complaint via the students Concerns, Complaints and Feedback portal.

The Student should state:

- the nature of the Complaint;
- the actions already taken to resolve the issue; and
- the form of resolution sought.

If the Student has not taken steps to address the issue informally, a Quality and Standards representative may advise this as a first course of action and offer support in facilitating mediation where appropriate.

If the Quality and Standards representative believes that the Concern is more appropriately addressed by another Dyson Institute or Dyson policy, they will advise the Student accordingly.

If the Student has already taken appropriate measures to resolve the Concern informally, a Quality and Standards representative will designate an appropriate member of staff to investigate the complaint. The designated member of staff will meet with all parties and make every effort to facilitate a mutually satisfactory

resolution. In any event the Student will usually receive a full response to their Complaint within 15 working days and will be asked, on the basis of this response, whether they wish to close their Stage 1 Complaint.

The Dyson Institute reserves its rights to make reasonable extensions to this timetable to take account of vacation periods.

3.4 Stage 2 Complaint

If, after having tried to resolve the matter through the route outlined at 3.3 above, the Student remains dissatisfied, they should initiate stage 2 of their complaint.

3.3.1 Initiating a Stage 2 Complaint

A Student may initiate a Stage 2 Complaint by:

- choosing not to close their Stage 1 Complaint on the Concerns, Complaints and Feedback Portal; or
- if the Stage 1 Complaint has already been closed, by initiating a complaint through the Concerns, Complaints and Feedback Portal, providing the case number of the stage 1 complaint that they wish to be escalated.

The Dyson Institute will not usually consider Stage 2 Complaints where the Student previously chose to close the relevant Stage 1 Complaint, unless:

- the Student closed the Stage 1 Complaint in error, in which case they should inform The Dyson Institute within two working days;
- the Student closed the Stage 1 Complaint under duress; or
- the Student can provide evidence that the resolution agreed at Stage 1 has not been upheld.

A member of The Dyson Institute's Quality and Standards team advise any member(s) of staff concerned, through their line manager and in writing, that the Complaint has been received and the substance of the Complaint.

If the Student has already taken reasonable steps to informally resolve the issue, and has completed Stage 1 of this Policy, a designated representative from the Quality and Standards team will consider the associated evidence, written or otherwise, and hold such discussions as deemed appropriate. To this end, students and staff may be asked to provide any documentary evidence relevant to the Complaint or give written evidence. All parties must be given at least five working days' notice before any meeting to which they may be invited. An earlier meeting may be arranged with the agreement of all parties.

Following their investigation, the Quality and Standards representative will report their findings, alongside a recommendation as to an appropriate remedy or redress if required. Any remedy must be agreed with the appropriate Dyson Institute staff members or governance bodies before the Student is informed of the decision.

The Quality and Standards representative will write to the Student within 10 working days, to confirm:

- whether the Complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- the reasoning behind this decision; and
- the action that will be taken as a result of the Decision.

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they can request a review of the decision under Stage 3 of this Policy.

In the event that the Quality and Standards representative decides that due to the substance of the Complaint it would be appropriate for the Complaint to be referred to a Complaints Panel Meeting then the Student will be advised within 10 working days if a referral is to be made.

If the convening of the Complaints Panel is required, the Quality and Standards Team must write to the Student in question:

- informing them of the decision to convene the Complaints Panel;
- confirming the date on which the Complaints Panel Meeting will be held (the Student must be given at least 10 working days' notice);
- offering the Student the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Complaints Panel, either in person or virtually;
- offering the Student opportunity to submit a written statement to the Complaints Panel;
- providing copies of the evidence to be considered by the Complaints Panel;
- providing details of the composition of the Complaints Panel and providing the Student with the right to submit representations regarding its composition within five working days;
- outlining the students' right to be accompanied to the meeting; and
- requesting a confirmation of attendance within ten working days of the letter being issued.

3.3.2 Complaints Panel

If the Quality and Standards Team convenes a Complaints Panel Meeting, the Complaints Panel will usually consist of:

- an external representative from Dyson Technology, with no knowledge of the Student or the issue, to act as Chair.
- a member of the Academic team;
- a member of the Operations team;
- a member of the Undergraduate Experience Team; and
- a representative nominated by the Student, selected from a list of trained individuals.

Student can bring along a person of their preference as an observer.

The membership of the Complaints Panel may vary to ensure there can be no perception of bias: this may require using further non-Dyson Institute staff as panel members.

Any reasonable concerns which the student has regarding the composition, or any perception of conflicts of interest or bias of the Complaints Panel must be addressed within five working days of any representations made by the Student.

3.3.3 Attendance at the Complaints Panel meeting

All reasonable attempts will be made to find a mutually agreeable date to convene the panel with the student(s). If this is not possible within 20 working days, then the Complaints Panel will make a decision taking into account any representations from the Student and advise the Student of this decision accordingly. Attempts to contact the Student will be recorded on the Student file including, copy letters and emails.

If a Student has indicated that they do not wish to attend the Complaints Panel, the Complaints Panel will make a decision taking into account any representations from the Student and advise the Student of this decision accordingly.

If a Student has indicated that they are attending but is prevented from doing so for good reason which can be evidenced, and the Student advises the Chair of the Complaints Panel before the Meeting, the Meeting will be deferred to a later date.

If the Student has indicated that they are attending but fails to attend and does not inform the Chair of the Complaints Panel prior to the Meeting, the Meeting will go ahead and a decision on fact will be reached based on the information available to the Academic Appeal Panel.

3.3.4 Conduct of the Complaints Panel meeting

The Complaints Panel will hear both the Complaint and any response. The Complaints Panel will then determine whether on a balance of probabilities the Student's Complaint is justified and whether the resolution offered would or has provided a reasonable response or resolution of the Complaint.

The Complaints Panel will have access to all previous documentation related to the Complaint as well as any representations prepared by the Student and any member of staff responding to the Complaint whether on their own behalf or on behalf of their module or stream or service area. All representations must be provided five working days before the date of the Meeting of the Complaints Panel and will be shared with the parties to the Complaint. No additional evidence can be tabled at the Meeting except in exceptional circumstances.

If the Complaints Panel is required to consider witness evidence, it is the responsibility of the parties to supply those witness statements and ensure that any witnesses are informed of the date of the Meeting and are available to attend (either virtually or in person). Vulnerable persons will not normally be expected to produce statements and may be entitled to Reasonable Adjustments to the Complaints Panel procedure as noted at section 7.0 of this Policy.

It is expected that anyone wishing to have their evidence heard will attend the Meeting. In the event that a person who has provided evidence does not wish to attend any statement submitted must be signed and dated. In these cases, the Complaints Panel must give consideration to the fact that the witness has not been present to respond to questions.

The order of the Meeting of the Complaints Panel will be as follows:

- a) Introduction by the Chair of the Complaints Panel and agenda (all participants present).
- b) Presentation of Complaint by Student (witnesses only present when called)
- c) Student summary of Complaint.
- d) Opportunity for questions by Complaints Panel and responding staff member.
- e) Dyson Institute staff response (witnesses only present when called).
- f) Opportunity for questions by Complaints Panel and Student.
- g) Dyson Institute summary of response.
- h) Adjournment for Chair and Complaints Panel members to consider the submissions in private. Either side may be required to be available to provide clarification or further information to the Complaints Panel.

A written record must be kept of all meetings of the Meeting by the clerk to the Panel. The clerk to the Complaints Panel will be a member of Quality and Standards Team, who will provide administrative support but will not constitute a member of the Complaints Panel or participate in its decision making.

3.3.5 Outcome of the Complaints Panel meeting

At the conclusion of the Meeting, the Complaints Panel may make one of the following decisions in relation to the Complaint:

- To reject the Complaint in all or in part; or
- To uphold the Complaint in all or in part and make any recommendations which it sees fit on the substance of the Complaint including any required remedial action and/or compensation.

The outcome of the Meeting shall be communicated to the Student in writing by the Chair of the Complaints Panel, noting the reasons for the decision, within five working days of the Meeting.

The outcome letter will make the Student aware that they can seek a review of the Decision under Stage 3 of this Policy if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

3.5 Stage 3: request for review

If the Student does not consider that their Complaint has been resolved by the outcome of Stage 2 of this Policy, then the Student may request that the Stage 2 Decision is reviewed under Stage 3 of this Policy.

The request for Review at Stage 3 must be made by the Student in writing to the Director of The Dyson Institute within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 Decision or any correspondence confirming the outcome of any resolution undertaken under Stage 2. The request should set out why the outcome of Stage 2 does not resolve the Complaint. No new evidence can be introduced at this point.

If a Meeting of the Complaint Panel had not been convened at Stage 2 the Director will first consider, taking account of the substance of the Complaint, whether the Complaint should first be referred back to the Complaint Panel. The decision of the Director to refer the matter back to the Complaint Panel will be final and the Student will be advised within five working days if a referral is to be made.

If a Meeting of the Complaint Panel was convened at Stage 2 or the Director decides that a referral is not appropriate then the Director will conduct a Review of the Stage 2 Decision and advise the Student in writing of the outcome of the Stage 3 Review within 10 working days. The Stage 3 Decision of the Director will be final.

The outcome of the Stage 3 Review could include the original Stage 2 Decision being upheld, overturned or amended, or the matter being remitted back to a Meeting of the Complaint Panel for reconsideration afresh.

Following the Complaint's resolution, a Completion of Procedures letter must be issued by the Director within 28 days of the completion of all internal processes relating to the Complaint.

3.6 Outcomes of the Student Complaints Procedure

Where a Complaint refers to a member of staff, the outcome of the Complaint and reasoning will be shared with all parties concerned and line managers of academic staff.

If the Complaint relates to The Director of The Dyson Institute, the Quality and Standards lead will approach the Chair of Council to consider their report and any amendments to the Student Complaint Procedure required including the referral of any Stage 3 Review to a member of Council or senior member of another Institution.

The Student Complaints process is to be completed typically within 90 working days.

Should a student still be dissatisfied following the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter, they may raise their complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). Any request for review must be received by the OIAHE within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

4.0 Support through the Complaints process

During all stages of the procedure, students may be accompanied to meetings by a member of The Dyson Institute; usually either a member of staff, a Dyson employee or a fellow student.

Only in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement may a student be accompanied by someone who is neither a member of The Dyson Institute, nor a Dyson employee.

The role of the companion is to offer support and advice to the student: they cannot formally represent the student.

Staff may be accompanied by a work colleague, or member of their trade union.

5.0 Complaints against staff

Complaints by students about staff must be handled by an individual independent of the situation, to avoid a conflict of interest. The Quality and Standards lead must report any conflicts of interest to the Director of The Dyson Institute who will arrange for an alternative staff member to lead the investigation. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to appoint a non-Dyson Institute staff member to investigate.

It is also The Dyson Institute's duty to ensure that all staff are treated fairly throughout any Complaints Procedure initiated under this Policy. Therefore, any staff member has the right to be supported through this process, and to be advised of any Complaint made against them at the outset and to have access to any evidence presented in support of any Complaint as well as the right to reply to that Complaint at any stage of the Complaint procedure.

If a Complaint made against a staff member under this Policy is of a disciplinary nature or raises allegation which are better suited to a disciplinary investigation, then the Director may decide that the Complaints procedure under this Policy is suspended until the disciplinary matter has been concluded.

If a case is considered sufficiently serious or is proven against a member of staff this will be referred to Human Resources to decide whether further investigation should take place under the procedures outlined in the Working@Dyson policy handbook.

6.0 Complaints of a sensitive nature

Complaints of a sensitive nature, such as those relating to bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination or any other serious misconduct will be investigated in accordance with Dyson's Respect@Work Policy.

If evidence emerges during the course of the standard complaints investigation procedure that suggests that the complaint is of a sensitive nature, the process may be suspended and instead investigated in accordance with the process outlined in Dyson's Respect@Work Policy.

7.0 Reasonable adjustments

In the case of individuals with additional needs, reasonable adjustments can be made in order to prevent placing the student at a disadvantage. This may include holding meetings by video conferencing, telephone conferencing, Skype or other appropriate means.

8.0 Confidentiality

The Dyson Institute will process all personal information in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

Any Complaint raised by a student will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. However, it may be necessary to discuss the Complaint with staff or other Students in order to properly investigate.

In the event that the confidentiality of any Complaint under this Policy is breached by a member of staff or a Student then The Dyson Institute reserves the right to refer any breach for consideration under its disciplinary procedure.

9.0 Third Party Complaints

The Dyson Institute will not accept any Complaint made on behalf of a Student unless a signed statement by the Student is sent to the Quality and Standards team. This includes Complaints made by a parent, spouse or guardian or partner of the Student.

10.0 Anonymous Complaints

The Dyson Institute will only accept anonymous complaints in exceptional circumstances as a proper investigation can only be carried out where all the background information including the identity of all affected parties can be identified.

11.0 Group Complaints

If a number of Students wish to submit a group complaint, they will be required to nominate one Student to act as a spokesperson and to lead any communication with The Dyson Institute under this Policy. The Complaint form must be completed and signed by that nominated Student and a document attached containing the names, details and signatures of the other Students who are seeking to support the Complaint.

The evidence submitted to support the Complaint must be agreed by the group of Students and provided with the Complaint Form. No additional evidence will be accepted after submission of the Complaint form unless there are exceptional grounds.

12.0 Vexatious or Malicious Complaints

The Dyson Institute reserves the right to refer any Student through its disciplinary procedures should it be found that any Complaint submitted under this Policy is vexatious or malicious. A vexatious or malicious Complaint is defined as a Complaint which is trivial or untrue and only put forward as an abuse of process or to undermine the credibility or character of another person.