



Document name	FAQs for Student Dignity Complaints in relation to Staff Members
Responsible Team	Human Resources
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These FAQs explain how students can make a complaint about the behaviour of a staff member at the University of Nottingham (UoN), using the Procedure for Student Dignity Complaints about Staff which is part of the [Dignity at Nottingham Policy](#).

Students can make a complaint if they believe they have experienced bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and sexual misconduct from a member of University staff, as defined in the Dignity at Nottingham Policy.

In the process:

- The student making the complaint is referred to as the Reporting Party.
- The staff member named in the complaint is referred to as the Responding Party
- “Staff” includes University employees and individuals engaged as workers by the University.

This procedure is designed to ensure that student complaints are heard and handled fairly.

1. How can a student submit a dignity complaint about a staff member?

Students can submit a complaint in one of two ways:

- Through the [Report + Support](#) platform
- By contacting the Human Resources (HR) Employment Relations team

If a student contacts HR directly, their permission will be requested before any details are added to the Report + Support system.

2. What happens after a complaint is submitted?

Once a complaint is submitted:

- The Report + Support team will reach out to offer support and discuss how the student would like the report to be handled, and they will notify HR (if they weren't originally contacted).
- HR will acknowledge the report and review its scope.

An independent manager (usually a Head of School or Department) will be notified of the report by HR. A risk assessment will be carried out, and any necessary interim measures will

be put in place whilst the complaint is being considered, and the student will be informed of any changes which impact them.

3. Who are Human Resources (HR) and what is their role in this process?

[HR](#) are a department within the University who provide advice and guidance on staff matters and help support employment-related concerns. When a student raises a complaint about a staff member, HR supports the process by providing advice, guiding managers, and helping coordinate any investigations.

4. What if the complaint does not fall within the scope of this procedure?

If a complaint does not meet the scope of this procedure, it may be referred to a more appropriate University process, such as:

- Student Complaints Code of Practice - for concerns about University action or lack of action, or about the service provided
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure - for cases requiring action such as suspension

Further details about how such decisions are made can be found in section 5.7 of the procedure.

5. What interim measures might be put in place my complaint is handled under this procedure?

Depending on the circumstances, interim measures could include:

- Reducing or avoiding contact between the student and staff member
- Adjusting working or supervision arrangements

These measures are reviewed and updated as needed while the complaint is being considered.

6. What is informal resolution?

In some cases, informal resolution may be suggested first to help resolve the situation. This could include a facilitated conversation or mediation.

7. What if informal resolution is inappropriate?

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, or seems to be initially inappropriate, the matter will proceed under formal resolution.

HR will assign the case to a new, suitable independent Complaint Manager, usually someone more senior than the staff member involved.

8. What happens once a Complaint Manager is assigned?

The student will be invited to a meeting with the Complaint Manager to discuss their complaint and what they hope will happen next. Following the meeting, the Complaint Manager may:

- Make a decision about the complaint
- Pause to gather more information
- Start a formal investigation

The student will be informed of the next steps in writing.

9. Will the staff member be told about the complaint?

Yes, but only what's necessary. The Complaint Manager will assess what information needs to be shared with the staff member (Responding Party).

If a formal investigation begins, the Responding Party will be informed by the Complaint Manager and will be given relevant information about the case in order to respond to the complaint.

10. What does a formal investigation involve and how long will it take?

If an investigation is needed:

- An Investigating Officer will be appointed.
- A Terms of Reference (ToR) will be written to explain the purpose, scope and timeline of the investigation.
- The student can suggest anything they feel should be added to the ToR.

The Investigating Officer will:

- Interview the student, staff member and any relevant witnesses
- Review any necessary documents

11. What support is available during an investigation?

Students can bring a fellow student or a University staff member not involved in the case to formal meetings.

If students are disabled or require any [reasonable adjustments](#), they may request to be accompanied by someone else for additional support such as a carer or an individual from disability support services, in addition to any chosen companion.

Students can also be accompanied by someone who can provide support with communication in English, in addition to any chosen companion.

Details about support and reasonable adjustments are in section 5.2 of the procedure.

12. What happens after the investigation?

The Investigating Officer will write a report with their findings. The Complaint Manager will review the report and decide:

- If the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
- What actions (if any) will follow, such as disciplinary steps

Decisions are based on the basis of a balance of probabilities, i.e. that a relevant act or omission is more likely to have occurred than not.

Students will be informed of any outcome that directly affects them, for example, changes to supervision or teaching.

13. How will students be informed of the outcome?

The Complaint Manager will ask how the student prefers to receive the outcome, in writing, in person, or via Teams. A copy of the investigation report will also be shared.

Students will not receive details of any internal disciplinary action affecting the staff member.

14. How will the outcome be shared with the staff member?

The Complaint Manager will decide what information to share with the staff member. This may include:

- Any findings relevant to them
- Next steps, such as behavioural expectations or disciplinary action

15. Can a student appeal the outcome?

Yes. If a student disagrees with the outcome, they can request an appeal, but it must be based on specific grounds listed in section 4.5 of the procedure.

16. What if the student is not satisfied with the University's handling of the complaint?

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent body that handles student complaints in England and Wales under the Higher Education Act 2004.

If the student is unhappy with the University's final decision, they can complain to the OIA after the University process is complete. Students will need to submit the Completion of Procedures Letter to the OIA. Further information can be found on the [OIA website](#).

17. Can students share information from the process?

Information shared with anyone in connection with this process is likely to include confidential information and/or the personal data of others. It is therefore important that the handling of personal data is in accordance with [University policy](#).

If students have questions related to confidentiality, they can seek appropriate advice from HR. Further information can be found in section 5.3 of the procedure.

18. Does the University report matters/complaints to the police?

Students are not required to report their complaint to the police; this is their choice. However, the University reserves the right to report allegations raised under this procedure to the police and/or any relevant local authority at any time, where it considers there may be a risk to the safety of any member of the University community.

19. What happens if a student decides to withdraw their complaint?

If a student decides not to continue with their complaint, they should let HR or the Complaint Manager know. However, the University may still investigate if it believes it's necessary to protect others or uphold community safety.