



Student Complaint Policy

How to make a formal complaint and how we investigate it.

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1. Introduction

This is the procedure you use when something has gone wrong, and you want SLP College (the College) to know about it and put it right. It applies to every student at the College, on either of our two programmes. Section 2 explains what happens if your complaint concerns the University of Chichester or Trinity College London.

The College deals with your complaint fairly, promptly, and in confidence, so far as the law and this procedure allow, and makes it as easy as possible for you to raise a concern.

1.1 Timescales

Most of the timescales in this procedure are working days: any day that is not a Saturday, a Sunday, a bank holiday in England, or a day the College is closed to students and staff, including the Christmas and summer closure periods. Some are calendar days or months instead, the 42-day deadline to bring a complaint and the 3-month deadline for a recent former student to do so (Section 4), the deadline to ask for a Stage 3 review (Section 5), the deadline for the Stage 2 written outcome (Section 4), the Completion of Procedures letter deadline (Section 6), and the twelve-month deadline to go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (Section 6). Each timescale below says which kind it is at the point it appears, so you never have to guess.

1.2 What this procedure does not cover

This procedure is for complaints. It does not cover the following, and each of these goes to a different place instead.

- An academic appeal is not a complaint. If you want to challenge an academic decision, such as a mark, a progression decision, or the result of an assessment, this is an academic appeal, not a complaint, and it does not fall under this procedure. If you are on a University of Chichester-validated programme, academic appeals are dealt with under the Academic Appeals Procedure (POL-020) and the Academic Regulations (POL-101), and the University of Chichester's own Academic Regulations. If you are on a diploma awarded by Trinity College London, academic appeals about an assessment outcome or your final result are dealt with under Trinity College London's own Results Review and Appeals Procedure, which you can use directly: <https://www.trinitycollege.com/help/customer-services/appeals>
- A disciplinary matter about your own conduct is dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure (POL-036).
- Bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct is dealt with under the Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (POL-058).
- An admissions matter, such as a decision on your application or audition, is dealt with under the Admissions and Auditions Policy (POL-032).
- A Dance and Drama Award (DaDA) funding decision, including your tuition fee support or your Disabled Students' Allowance, is dealt with under the Tuition Fee, Refund and Cancellation Policy (POL-033), which explains how to appeal it. This is a different route from a complaint about the College.
- A staff grievance is dealt with under the College's own staff grievance procedure.
- A safeguarding concern is not dealt with under this procedure in the same way as other complaints. If what you tell the College raises a safeguarding concern, the College deals with it

immediately under its safeguarding policy, as explained in Section 8. Any complaint you have also made is paused while the safeguarding concern is dealt with, not cancelled, and the College will tell you what is happening.

1.3 Who can use this procedure

You can use this procedure if you are a current student at SLP College, on either the University of Chichester-validated programmes or the Trinity College London diploma programmes.

You can also use this procedure if you left the College recently and are reporting something that happened while you were a student. You should normally make your complaint within 3 months of leaving the College. If you did not know about the matter until after you had already left, the 3 months run from when you found out, not from your leaving date. Tell the College when you found out, so it can apply the deadline correctly.

If you are under 18, a parent or guardian can make a complaint on your behalf, or support you in making your own complaint, with your consent. Section 8 sets out how this works in more detail.

If a group of you have the same complaint, you can nominate one person to make it on behalf of the group, and the College will deal with it as a single complaint.

1.4 Anonymous concerns

You can raise a concern without giving your name. The College takes an anonymous concern seriously and looks into it to the extent it can. But the College cannot update you on what happens, cannot investigate as thoroughly as it can when it knows who has raised a concern and can ask follow-up questions, and cannot always take the same action it could if you were identifiable. If you want the College to resolve your complaint and inform you of the outcome, you need to provide your name.

1.5 The three stages

This procedure has three stages:

- Stage 1 is an informal attempt to resolve your concern, set out in Section 3.
- Stage 2 is a formal complaint, decided in writing, set out in Section 4.
- Stage 3 is a review of the Stage 2 decision, available if you are still unhappy with it, set out in Section 5.

Section 6 explains what happens after Stage 3, and Section 2 explains how this works if your complaint involves the University of Chichester or Trinity College London.

2. If your complaint involves the University of Chichester or Trinity College London

Before you raise a complaint, you need to know who deals with it. This section decides that, before you reach Stage 1.

2.1 How this procedure decides who deals with your complaint

If your complaint concerns something that SLP College itself does, delivers, or is responsible for, the College will deal with it in full under Stages 1 to 3 of this procedure. If your complaint is about something the University of Chichester owns, its academic regulations, an assessment decision, a progression decision, or the award of your degree, the College signposts you to the University's own procedure

instead. If your complaint has parts that belong together, the College splits it and clearly explains how each part is being handled.

This means that a complaint about your timetable, a member of staff, the facilities, or the support you have received remains with SLP College throughout, regardless of which programme you are on. A complaint about how your assessment was marked, or a decision about your progression or your degree, is a matter for the University of Chichester, because it is Chichester's decision to make, not the College's.

2.2 If your complaint touches the University of Chichester

If any part of your complaint is a matter for the University of Chichester, the University's own procedure applies to that part. You can read it in the University's Academic Regulations, published on the University's website: <https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support>.

The University's own deadline to bring a complaint directly to it is 42 calendar days from the date of the matter you are complaining about. If your complaint touches both the College and the University, do not wait for SLP College's own process to finish before also telling the University about the part that is theirs to decide; waiting could mean you miss their 42-day deadline. Your HE Student Agreement tells you that SLP College and the University will work together to agree who deals with what, so that you do not have to work it out yourself; this does not change the University's own deadline, so raise a mixed complaint with both the College and, where relevant, the University as early as you can.

2.3 If Trinity College London awards your qualification

If you are studying for a Level 6 Diploma awarded by Trinity College London, the position is different from a Chichester-owned matter, described above.

Trinity College London does not run a general complaints process, and there is no route through Trinity College London to escalate a complaint about SLP College's own delivery, service, facilities, support, or conduct. Trinity College London leaves this entirely to SLP College. This means that if your complaint concerns something SLP College does, provides, or is responsible for, SLP College's decision at the end of Stage 3 is the final step within this procedure. Section 6 explains what happens after that. There is no partner organisation for the College to signpost you to for that kind of complaint, and this procedure does not create one.

The one exception is an academic appeal, explained in Section 1: if your complaint is actually about an assessment outcome or your final result, this is not a complaint under this procedure at all, for either cohort, and Trinity College London has its own Results Review and Appeals Procedure for it, which you use directly: <https://www.trinitycollege.com/help/customer-services/appeals>.

2.4 Worked examples

- You are unhappy that agreed learning support arrangements, such as extra time or study skills sessions, were not put in place. This concerns SLP College's own delivery, so the College deals with it in full under Stages 1 to 3 of this procedure.
- You think a piece of coursework was marked unfairly. This is an academic appeal, not a complaint. Whichever programme you are on, it does not fall under this procedure. See Section 1.
- You are on a University of Chichester-validated programme, and you think you should have progressed to the next year of your course. This is the University's decision to make, so the College signposts you to the University's own procedure.

- You are on the Trinity College London diploma, and you are unhappy with how a member of staff spoke to you in a rehearsal. This is about SLP College's own conduct, so the College deals with it in full under Stages 1 to 3; there is no Trinity College London route for this kind of complaint. Section 6 explains what happens after Stage 3.
- You are on a University of Chichester-validated programme, and your complaint has two parts: the facilities in a studio you use were unsafe, and you also think this affected how a Board of Examiners assessed your work. The first part stays with SLP College under Stages 1 to 3. The second part is a matter for the University, and the College will tell you how to raise it with them, signpost you to their procedure, and explain how the two parts connect.

If you are unsure which of these your complaint is, tell the College what has happened, and it will confirm how it is being handled before asking you to take any further steps.

3. Stage 1: Resolving things informally

Most concerns are sorted out quickly, by talking to the person closest to what's happened, your course leader, a member of staff you work with, or the Vice Principal. Raise it with them as soon as you can, in person, by email, or however is easiest for you.

The College aims to resolve a Stage 1 concern quickly, usually within a few days. There is no fixed deadline for Stage 1, because an informal conversation does not need one. If it is not resolving things, move to Stage 2.

Stage 1 is not always the right place to start. If the matter is serious, or it would not be appropriate to raise it informally, for example, because your complaint is about a senior member of staff, or because the person you would normally raise it with is the person your complaint is about, go straight to Stage 2 instead.

If Stage 1 does not resolve your concern, or you decide not to use it, you can make a formal complaint under Stage 2 at any time.

4. Stage 2: Making a formal complaint

If Stage 1 has not resolved things, or was not the right place to start, you can make a formal complaint.

4.1 Making your complaint

Put your complaint in writing, normally by email, to the Vice Principal. Tell the College what has happened, when, who was involved, and what outcome you are looking for. If the Vice Principal is involved in what you are complaining about, or otherwise conflicted, send it to the Head of Operations instead, who will deal with it.

4.2 When to make your complaint

Make your complaint within 42 calendar days of the matter you are complaining about. If you are a recent former student, Section 1 explains your deadline.

If what you are complaining about is not a single incident, for example, an arrangement that was never put in place, or something that kept happening over a period of time, the 42 days runs from the most recent occurrence, not the first one. You do not lose the right to complain about an ongoing problem just

because it started more than 42 days ago; what matters is whether it was still happening, or still unresolved, within the 42 days before you complained.

The College can accept a complaint made later than this where there is a good reason for the delay.

4.3 What happens next

The College acknowledges receipt of your complaint within 10 working days.

The Vice Principal (or the Head of Operations, if they are handling it instead) then looks into what happened. This is proportionate to what you are complaining about; a straightforward matter gets a quick, focused check; a more serious or complex one gets a fuller investigation, which may include speaking to you and anyone else involved. Whoever looks into your complaint was not involved in the matter you are complaining about and has no personal interest in the outcome.

You will receive a written decision within 28 calendar days of the College's receipt of your complaint. It tells you what the College found, what it decided, and why, and explains how to request a review if you are unhappy with the decision.

4.4 If you are unhappy with the decision

Section 5 explains how to ask for a review.

5. Stage 3: Asking for a review

If you're unhappy with the Stage 2 decision, you can request a review. Stage 3 is a review of the Stage 2 decision by someone more senior who has not been involved before, on the grounds set out below, rather than a fresh investigation of your complaint from the start.

5.1 Grounds for a review

You can ask for a review if you think:

- The procedure at Stage 2 was not followed properly.
- The Stage 2 decision was unreasonable, given the evidence available at the time.
- There is genuinely new evidence that could not reasonably have been given at Stage 2.

Simply disagreeing with the Stage 2 outcome is not, on its own, a ground for a review.

5.2 Asking for a review

Ask in writing, normally by email, to the Principal, within 14 calendar days of receiving the Stage 2 decision, setting out which of the grounds above applies and why. The College can accept a later request where there is a good reason for the delay.

5.3 Who carries out the review

The Principal normally carries out the review. If the Principal was involved in the matter you are complaining about, or otherwise conflicted, the Head of Operations carries it out instead. Nobody can review a decision they made themselves, so where the Head of Operations has already decided your complaint at Stage 2, because the Vice Principal was conflicted, and the Principal is also conflicted at Stage 3, the Head of Academic Studies carries out the review instead.

5.4 The decision

You will receive a written decision within 20 working days of the College's receipt of your review request. It tells you what the College decided and why. This is normally the end of the College's own process. Section 6 explains what happens next.

6. If you are still unhappy: taking it further)

Stage 3 is normally the end of the College's own process, but what happens after it depends on your programme.

6.1 Higher education students

If you are on a University of Chichester-validated programme, once SLP College's internal process is finished, or, where the relevant part of your complaint was the University's to decide, once the University's own process is finished, the College sends you a Completion of Procedures letter within 28 days. This letter confirms that the internal process is complete and states the exact date by which you can take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA): twelve months from the date of the letter. There is no discretion to extend this deadline, so act promptly upon receiving it.

SLP College sends this letter itself in every case, including where the University of Chichester dealt with the relevant part of your complaint.

SLP College is a member of the OIA Scheme in its own right, because it delivers programmes leading to a University of Chichester award. This means you will have access to the OIA once the internal process is complete, just like students at any other member institution.

The OIA cannot look at everything. It cannot, for example, reconsider an academic judgement, a genuine assessment decision about the quality of your work, rather than whether the right process was followed. Its website explains what it can and cannot consider, and how to bring a complaint to it.

6.2 Diploma students

If you are on a Trinity College London diploma, SLP College's own decision at the end of Stage 3 is final for anything within this procedure's scope, including a complaint about SLP College's own delivery, service, facilities, support, or conduct. Trinity College London does not run a general complaints process, so there is no route through Trinity to escalate a complaint of this kind.

SLP College is a member of the OIA Scheme, as Section 6.1 explains. The College is confirming with the OIA whether students on the Diploma can use the scheme, and will update this policy once it has an answer. When your complaint is concluded, the College will inform you in writing of any further avenues available to you.

The one exception is an academic appeal, explained in Sections 1 and 2: an assessment or results appeal is never within this procedure's scope for either cohort, and for a diploma student, it goes directly to Trinity College London's own Results Review and Appeals Procedure:

<https://www.trinitycollege.com/help/customer-services/appeals>.

6.3 Your legal rights are unaffected

Using this procedure, or the OIA where it applies to you, does not affect your right to bring a claim through the courts if you choose to.

7. Support and reasonable adjustments

You don't have to go through this procedure on your own. You can be accompanied at any meeting held as part of this procedure by a friend, a family member, or anyone else you choose, other than someone acting in a legal capacity.

If you need a reasonable adjustment to take part in this procedure, for example, more time, a different format for correspondence, or a different way of communicating, tell whoever is dealing with your complaint, and the College will put it in place. The Reasonable Adjustments Policy (POL-049) explains how this works in more detail.

8. If you're under 18

This section explains how a parent or guardian can be involved, and what happens if your complaint also raises a safeguarding concern.

You can file a complaint yourself under this procedure, just like any other student. You do not need a parent or guardian to do this for you.

A parent or guardian can make a complaint on your behalf, or support you in making your own complaint, if you consent to this. Where it is relevant to deciding your complaint fairly, the College may need to share information about it with a parent or guardian even where you have not asked it to, for example, where your welfare or safety is involved. The College will not disclose a complaint to a parent or guardian simply because you are under 18.

If what you tell the College as part of a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, the College will deal with it immediately under its safeguarding policy, as explained in Section 1. Any complaint you have also made is paused while the safeguarding concern is dealt with, not cancelled, and the College will keep you informed.

9. Confidentiality, records and your information

The College handles your complaint in confidence, so far as the law and this procedure allow. Section 8 explains the position where you are under 18.

9.1 Who sees your complaint

Only the people who need to know about your complaint to investigate and decide it see the details, normally whoever is dealing with your complaint at each stage, and anyone they need to speak to as part of looking into it, including someone your complaint is about. Where your complaint is about another person, fairness means they need to know what is being said about them and have a chance to respond, even though this means your complaint is not entirely private to you.

9.2 How long the College keeps your complaint record

The College keeps a record of your complaint for 6 years from the date it is closed. This matches the College's usual practice for records of this kind and reflects the time period within which someone could still bring a legal claim related to the matter.

9.3 The legal basis for handling sensitive information in a complaint

A complaint sometimes involves sensitive personal information, for example, about your health, a safeguarding matter, or your age, if you are under 18. Where this happens, the College's legal basis for handling it under Article 9 of the UK GDPR depends on the complaint's subject matter.

For a complaint generally, investigating it, deciding it, and, where relevant, defending the College's own position, the College relies on the "establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims" basis (Article 9(2)(f)). This is the basis for handling a complaint file as a whole.

Where a complaint alleges conduct that could be unlawful, such as harassment, discrimination, or assault, the College also relies on the "preventing or detecting unlawful acts" basis (Article 9(2)(g) and Schedule 1 to the Data Protection Act 2018).

Where a complaint leads to an actual safeguarding referral, not simply because it mentions a safeguarding-related topic, the College relies on the safeguarding basis in the same Schedule, in addition to the bases above.

9.4 Your wider data protection rights

The Student and Applicant Privacy Notice (POL-082) explains, in full, how the College handles your personal data generally:

- The legal basis for other kinds of processing.
- Your rights over your information.
- Who else the College shares data with.
- How to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled.

This section only covers what is specific to a complaint under this procedure.

10. Unreasonable or repeated complaints

Occasionally, a complaint or the way it is pursued becomes unreasonable, for example, when it is repeated after being fully answered with nothing new added, when contact becomes excessive or abusive, or when a complaint is pursued for a purpose other than resolving a genuine concern. This is different from a complaint the College disagrees with or has not upheld, to which this section does not apply.

Where this happens, the Vice Principal (or, if they decided the original complaint, the Head of Operations) can decide to limit how the College deals with further contact on the matter, for example, by requiring contact in a single format, or by confirming that a matter has been fully answered and will not be responded to again. This decision is made separately from any decision on the substance of the complaint itself, by whoever in the usual conflict-of-interest chain has not already decided that complaint. The College will explain this decision to you in writing and tell you if there is anything further you can do.

11. How the College learns from complaints

The College reviews what complaints tell it, not just how each one was resolved.

The Head of Operations keeps a record of complaints made under this procedure and reports a summary to the Senior Leadership Team each year, covering what complaints were about, how they were resolved,

and what the College has changed as a result. This feeds into the College's regular review of this procedure, so it keeps working well in practice, not just on paper.

12. Contacts

- To raise a Stage 1 concern: speak to your course leader, a member of staff you work with, or the Vice Principal.
- To make a Stage 2 formal complaint: The Vice Principal (or the Head of Operations, where the Vice Principal is conflicted).
- To ask for a Stage 3 review: the Principal (or the Head of Operations, or the Head of Academic Studies, where conflicted, see Section 5).

For general questions about this procedure, contact the Head of Operations.

13. Related policies

- Academic Appeals Procedure (POL-020)
- Academic Regulations (POL-101)
- Admissions and Auditions Policy (POL-032)
- Tuition Fee, Refund and Cancellation Policy (POL-033)
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure (POL-036)
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy (POL-049)
- Safeguarding Policy (POL-052)
- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (POL-058)
- Student and Applicant Privacy Notice (POL-082)

Change Log

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1.0	28 August 2026	First issue
