



BLACKFRIARS HALL

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

1. Blackfriars Hall will take seriously complaints about any aspect of its operation, and will endeavour wherever possible to resolve complaints promptly and locally.
2. The Complaints and Appeals Procedure outlined below is intended to be followed in cases of disagreement regarding academic matters, accommodation, and finance.
3. The Hall has separate procedures for complaints involving harassment (e.g. bullying, victimisation, racial or sexual harassment), detailed in the Student Handbook.
4. The Complaints and Appeals Procedure does not apply to appeals against the outcome of a general, academic or disciplinary procedure. Separate procedures, set out in Bylaws XI A and XI B, apply to such appeals.
5. It is expected that the majority of cases will be settled by the complainant resolving his/her grievance with the relevant tutor or staff member. Where such resolution has been attempted but not reached, complainants may initiate an informal procedure. Should a complainant wish to register a grievance in writing, a formal procedure may be adopted.
6. Anonymous complaints or complaints made on behalf of another will not be considered unless compelling and clear reasons warrant an exception being made.
7. Disciplinary action may be taken against
 - anyone who victimises or retaliates against a student bringing a complaint in good faith;
 - any student who brings malicious or vexatious complaints.

Informal Procedure

8. Under the informal procedure, a student is asked to raise his or her complaint with the relevant Hall Officer.
 - For academic matters the relevant Hall Officer is the Senior Tutor.
 - For accommodation and finance matters the relevant Hall Officer is the Hall Bursar.
 - For welfare matters the relevant Hall Officer is the Welfare Officer.

A complaint about a Hall Officer should be referred to the Regent or the Vice-Regent.



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9. The informal procedure is intended to encourage discussion and understanding of the problem, and in some cases may lead to its resolution without submission of a formal complaint. The complainant may choose to be accompanied at any stage of the informal procedure by another member of the Hall.

10. The relevant Hall Officer will normally arrange a meeting with the complainant with the following aims:

- to seek to offer confidential advice and/or try to find a remedy, or facilitate a reconciliation;
- to note any withdrawal of a complaint;
- to record any outcome in a written response to the complainant.

11. The outcome of an initial meeting may involve instigation of action under another Hall procedure.

Formal Procedure

12. All formal complaints must be made in writing to the Regent, or, in his absence, the Vice-Regent. The formal procedure will normally be used only when the informal procedure has not achieved a resolution. In cases where a complainant has initiated a formal procedure immediately, the Regent may refer the complaint to an earlier stage in the Complaints and Appeals process. Formal complaints will not normally be considered more than three months after the occasion giving rise to the complaint, nor in cases when the matter is being addressed under another Hall procedure.

13. If a formal complaint is pursued, the Regent will convene an ad hoc committee of three or more members of the Governing Body, not including the student's tutor(s) or College Adviser, to hear the complaint. All members of such a committee will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality. The ad hoc committee may choose to invite a representative of the MCR to any hearing, in order to provide a student perspective to inform the committee's decision.

14. The complainant may take advice in advance of the hearing and may choose to be represented at the hearing, to make a written submission in advance, or to appear before the committee. Complainants appearing before the committee may choose to be accompanied by a member of Hall. The complainant, all representatives, tutors and members of staff involved in the presentation of the case will withdraw to allow the committee to make a decision. The committee's decision will be conveyed in writing to the Governing Body, and a copy given to the complainant.



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Conference of Colleges Appeals Tribunal (CCAT)

15. If a complaint remains unresolved after the Hall's internal procedures have been exhausted, a student may appeal to the Conference of Colleges Appeals Tribunal (CCAT). The student should submit such an appeal to the Secretariat of the Conference of Colleges within five days of the ad hoc Committee's determination. Information on the procedure for applying to the Tribunal is available from the Academic Registrar. Having considered a complaint, the Tribunal will issue its decision and this will conclude the Hall's procedures for the formal examination of a complaint.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

16. If a complaint remains unresolved after the CCAT procedures have been exhausted, a student may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (see www.oiahe.org.uk for further information). Application forms and guidance notes are available from the Academic Registrar. Please note that complaints relating to student discipline and academic matters are within the scope of the OIAHE, but complaints relating to matters of academic judgement (i.e. about academic performance or admissions) cannot be dealt with by the OIAHE.

Monitoring Arrangements

17. The Academic Registrar will keep a yearly register of the number of complaints made using the formal procedure, and a summary of numbers and outcomes will be submitted to the Governing Body, along with recommendations for any action required in response to the issues identified in complaints. The register will indicate the number of formal complaints made and whether they have been resolved by the ad hoc Committee, with details of any recommendations or referrals.



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Michaelmas Term 2022