

Wolfson College Student Complaints Procedure

Wolfson College is committed to monitoring and evaluating its provision for its students to ensure that they meet the needs of student members.

The complaints procedure aims to:

1. Be easily accessible
2. Resolve complaints informally at a local level wherever possible
3. Encourage prompt review and decision-making
4. Ensure a full and fair investigation
5. Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality wherever possible
6. Provide an effective response and appropriate redress
7. Feed back into College processes to ensure that provisions for students are improved

All complaints are given full consideration and you will not be disadvantaged for making a genuine complaint. Where complainants fail to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate their allegations or to identify themselves, the College reserves the right not to take the complaint further.

What is a complaint?

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction about:

1. Standards of provisions for students
2. Actions or lack of actions by the College or its staff
3. Provision of services by the College affecting college members

The complaints procedure does NOT cover:

1. Requests for new or different provisions for students.
2. Students who have a complaint about a University department. In such cases the student should refer their complaint to the Proctors:
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/complaintsandacademicappeals/complaints/>
3. Harassment (including bullying) by another member of College. A separate procedure applies for dealing with harassment, including bullying. Please refer to http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/sites/wolfson.ox.ac.uk/files/wolfson_college_harassment_policy_for_web.pdf
4. Appeals or complaints about action taken as a result of Disciplinary Procedures. Students wishing to appeal against a decision of the Vicegerent should refer to the College Regulations.

Stage 1: Informal

Whenever appropriate, issues should be resolved informally through normal contacts and discussion between staff, students, Fellows, Common Room Members and other interested parties without the need to instigate formal procedures. An issue or complaint should therefore initially be raised through someone close to its origin (the relevant administrator, person responsible for a particular provision, event organiser, etc). If you wish to complain about your treatment by a specific individual, you should try to approach this person in the first instance (if appropriate) or their line-manager if you do wish to raise the matter with the person directly.

You can contact the relevant person by email, face-to-face or by phone. Contact details may be found at <http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/contact-information>. Key contacts are set out in the table at the end of this note. If you are unsure as to the relevant person to approach, you should seek advice from the Bursar, the HR Manager or the Senior Tutor.

Students are also able to seek (initial) help and advice from:

- Oxford University Student Union's Student Advice Service. Please see <http://ousu.org/advice/student-advice-service/> for details.
- Your College Advisor. Please contact the Academic Registrar if you are not sure of your Advisor's details.

An issue or complaint may initially be raised verbally or by email, and you should indicate the outcome that you seek to resolve the complaint. You should raise the issue or complaint as soon as possible after the actions or lack of actions which prompted it. The greater the time delay from an action or lack of action to submission of the complaint, the more difficult it will be for the College to deal with the complaint effectively.

The person receiving the issue or complaint should seek to discover and understand the nature of the problem and if possible resolve it there and then. If the complaint is made in writing, the complainant should be offered the opportunity to discuss the complaint in person or by telephone. The relevant member of staff will seek to offer advice and where possible will try to find an informal resolution. We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

If a complaint covers more than one area of the College (for example because it involves more than one service), the person first receiving the complaint should ensure that responsibility for investigating and responding to the complaint is quickly agreed, and liaise with all relevant parties as necessary.

Stage 2 – Formal

If you are not happy with the outcome of Stage 1 you should register a formal complaint. This must be done in writing (letter or e-mail) to the College manager responsible for the area of service and/or member of staff. All formal complaints will be logged and you will receive a written acknowledgement within 5 working days.

It will help us to deal with your complaint quickly if you provide:

1. Your name and email address;
2. Details of your concern or complaint;
3. Supporting evidence for your complaint (this can be sent in addition to the letter if applicable);
4. Why informal resolution was unsuccessful or inappropriate or why you were not satisfied with the response you received;
5. What you would like us to do to resolve your complaint.

Our aim is to investigate your complaint fully and give you a reply as soon as possible, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. In some cases an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

A written record will be kept of all decisions, correspondence and meetings relating to the investigation of your complaint. At the end of the investigation you will be told the conclusion, the reasons for the decision, and action to be taken, if any.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the response to Stage 2, you have a right of appeal to a higher authority within the College. This will be either the College Officer with overall responsibility for the area/person about which you have complained, or if your formal complaint was investigated by that College Officer, the President. You have 30 calendar days from the end of the Stage 2 investigation to make an appeal. The College Officer or President will consider the written records of the matter and reach a conclusion. This is the final stage in the College's complaints procedure. You will receive a Completion of Procedures letter at this stage.

External Review

If, further to Stage 3, you are still unsatisfied, you may take the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education, which provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The OIA will consider cases only when the College's own internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. The OIA Complaint Form must be received by the OIA no later than 12 months after the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter. Further information about the OIA scheme is available at <http://oiahe.org.uk>.

Appendix: Key contact details

This table lists key contact details for college staff members. E-mail address and phone numbers can be found here: <http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/contact-information> (or ask at the Lodge).

Area of College operation	Informal contact	College member responsible
Academic Administration	Academic Office staff	Academic Registrar
Accommodation	Accommodation Officer	Home Bursar
Accounts	Accounts Office staff	Accountant
Admissions	Admissions Officer	Academic Registrar
Archives	Archivist	Fellow Archivist
Catering	Catering Office staff	Steward
Clusters	Cluster Head	Senior Tutor
Common Room	Common Room Administrator	Chair of SCC
Communications	Communications Office	Communications Officer
Development	Senior Development Officer	Development Director
Disability-related issues (students)	Disability Co-ordinator	Disability Lead
Events	Events and Conferences staff	Events and Conferences Manager
Housekeeping	Housekeeping team supervisor	Home Bursar
HR	HR Manager	Bursar
IT	IT Office staff	IT Manager
Library	Library staff	Librarian
Lodge	Lodge Supervisor	Home Bursar
Maintenance	Maintenance Supervisor	Home Bursar
Minibus	Lodge Supervisor	Home Bursar
Nursery	Day Nursery Manager	Home Bursar
Student club or society	Common Room Administrator	Chair of SCC
Welfare	Welfare Officers	Senior Tutor

If your complaint concerns actions taken (or not taken) by a senior College Officer (e.g. Senior Tutor, Bursar, Vicegerent or Development Director), you should address your complaint to the President. If your complaint concerns the President, you should contact the Vicegerent in the first instance.