UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Student Complaints Policy and Procedures

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1 Introduction

1.1 Your experience at the University of Limerick (UL) is of paramount importance to us, and we are committed to providing a high-quality experience at all times and in all areas and activities. However, if you ever feel that the quality of academic or service delivery falls short of what may reasonably be expected, this document details how best to raise and resolve issues.

1.2 The University recognises that, from time to time, students may have legitimate complaints about its provision, facilities, services and staff. We aim to ensure that student complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. In addition, to help us improve our services and enhance the student experience, we aim to learn from the outcomes of investigations into complaints.

1.3 Complaints you make or concerns you raise will be treated sensitively and professionally. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for students with disabilities, so if you have a disability, we will take this into account when applying these policies and procedures and will make reasonable adjustments to them, as appropriate.

1.4 Wherever possible, your concerns about your programme, services provided by the University or any other aspect of your experience at UL should be dealt with at the earliest opportunity and through informal discussion with the parties concerned. Where it is not possible to resolve your concerns informally to your satisfaction, you may wish to initiate a formal complaint. In such cases, you must do so by following this Student Complaints Policy and Procedures.

1.5 It is important to note that UL distinguishes between complaints and academic appeals (see 'Definitions' below), and there are separate procedures attached to each. (For information on academic appeals, refer to the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures.) If you are unclear what this means for your situation, please seek advice from the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs.

1.6 The person making a complaint will not be subject to recrimination. This means that if you make a complaint in good faith and in accordance with this procedure, you will not suffer any disadvantage or reproach and your studies will not be prejudiced.

1.7 You can seek advice or guidance on any aspect of this procedure from your students' union or the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of these regulations:

2.1 'Complaint' is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by UL or with the actions or lack of actions by UL or members of staff. Any complaint against a named member of staff will be addressed as a complaint against UL. Grounds for complaint might include:

- Dissatisfaction with the standard of academic or service provision (e.g. course

design, curriculum content and structure, assessment arrangements and information, student support mechanisms, and resources and facilities)
- Dissatisfaction with the quality of supervision or tuition
- Issues of inappropriate conduct by a member of staff
- Failure on the part of UL to meet stated obligations (e.g. those set out in the prospectus or on the website)

Note: This Student Complaints Policy and Procedures may **not** be used to challenge academic judgement concerning performance and progress or to appeal against the decision of an Exam Board.

2.2 'Academic appeal' is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an Exam Board on student progress, assessment and awards at all levels of programme provided, including research studies. This includes challenges to the outcomes of the I grade process.

2.3 'Student', unless specifically qualified otherwise, is defined as any person pursuing a module or programme of study at all award levels offered by UL, that is, including research programmes, whether or not they are currently in attendance, studying by distance/online, suspended, on leave of absence or on placement.

2.4 'Former student' is defined as any student no longer pursuing a module or programme of study offered by UL – they have either successfully completed their studies or their studies have been terminated for any other reason.

2.5 'Friend' is defined as a currently registered student of UL, a sabbatical officer of the UL Students' Union, a member of UL staff, an academic advisor or a parent.

2.6 'University' is defined as the University of Limerick (also referred to as UL) and shall encompass all activities, property and assets under the formal authority of the Governing Authority, including property occupied by the Students' Union and assets purchased by the Students' Union from public funds. For the purposes of this procedure, the term 'University' also encompasses any individual or organisation contracted by UL to deliver services on behalf of UL.

2.7 'Material irregularity' means that the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures or has not acted with procedural fairness and that this failing on the part of the University is so significant that it has had a material impact on the outcome of the process. In other words, had it not been for this failing, the outcome would probably have been substantively different.

3 General principles

3.1 Wherever possible, the University will seek to adhere to the time limits outlined in this procedure. However, in cases where there are special circumstances that require variance from specified time limits, students will be advised of the reasons for this by the officer handling the case.

3.2 A student making a complaint will be given the opportunity to attend in person any hearing or meeting convened in accordance with this procedure. However, subject to the student having been properly notified of the date and time of a hearing or meeting (see 3.6 below), UL reserves the right to proceed with the hearing or meeting in the absence of the student.

3.3 A student making a complaint shall have the right to be accompanied to any meeting or hearing by a 'friend', as defined above. The role of the friend is to provide moral support during a meeting or hearing. The friend may make representations on behalf of the student. The friend cannot be a witness to the case under consideration. Legal representation is not permitted at any meeting or hearing convened under the provisions of this procedure.

3.4 The standard of proof to be adopted during the application of this procedure will be the balance of probabilities.

3.5 If it is determined, at any stage, that a false allegation has been made by a student or students with vexatious or mischievous intent, the University may initiate an appropriate disciplinary process against the person or persons making the allegation.

3.6 Written communications will be sent to the student's UL email address. Students are expected to check their UL email account regularly. Written communications may also be sent to the current term-time address (during semester) or home address (out of semester) as recorded on the University's student records system. Students are responsible for ensuring that these contact details are kept up to date. Non-receipt of properly addressed and dispatched correspondence will not be accepted as valid grounds for delay or annulment of procedures or outcomes under this procedure, nor will it be accepted as grounds for appeal.

3.7 All references to the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs include his/her nominees who are working under his/her authority or other appropriate officer nominated by the Provost & Deputy President.

3.8 Documentation relating to a formal complaint brought by a student will be retained in accordance with UL's Records Management and Retention Policy.

3.9 When a complaint includes an allegation of bullying, harassment or intimidation by a member of staff, the case will be referred to UL's Policy and Procedures for Student Dignity and Respect.

3.10 This procedure may not be invoked where the substance of the complaint has already or is currently being considered by the Office of the Ombudsman, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, a court or a tribunal or is subject to an ongoing police investigation.

3.11 The University will not usually consider complaints that are made anonymously or requests made by students for complaints to be considered anonymously. It is a principle of natural justice that a person being complained about shall have a right to

know the identity of the complainant. The University will consider anonymous complaints only where there is a compelling reason, supported by evidence, to do so.

3.12 The University undertakes to treat all complaints with confidentiality. Disclosure of evidence will be restricted to those parties involved in the complaint and its consideration, which will usually include the parties being complained about.

3.13 A student making a complaint is expected to use the established procedures and channels of communication to bring and resolve formal complaints. The complainant can expect UL staff members who are involved in the complaint to assist in resolving the complaint in an impartial, fair and professional manner. While the University recognises that bringing a complaint can be a stressful experience for students, we ask that correspondence and other contact be in line with acceptable behaviour towards staff. Behaviour that we consider to be unacceptable is outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (section 6 of the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures). Unacceptable behaviour may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

4 Who can make a complaint?

4.1 You can bring a complaint in accordance with this Student Complaints Procedure if you are a student or former student of UL. The matter being complained about must have occurred during your time as a student. If you are a former student and wish to complain about an aspect of the University's provision that you have experienced since you ceased to be a student, you cannot bring a complaint under this procedure. However, you can contact the UL Alumni office, whose staff will endeavour to assist you.

4.2 A person applying to study at UL may not bring a complaint under this Student Complaints Procedure unless they are also a student or former student bringing a complaint in accordance with paragraph 4.1 above. Note that UL operates a separate Admissions Appeal Process.

4.3 If you are a student in a partner institution (such as Mary Immaculate College) on a programme that is validated by UL, the student complaints procedures of that partner institution will usually apply and, therefore, you cannot bring a complaint in accordance with this UL Student Complaints Procedure. However, in the case of complaints concerning matters of academic delivery only and where you have exhausted the complaints procedure of the partner institution, you shall usually have a right of appeal to UL in accordance with the appeals procedure of this Student Complaints Procedure (see paragraph 9.1 below). If you are unclear what this means for your situation, please seek advice from the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs office.

4.4 You can only make a complaint if you are the person who has been affected by the matters being complained about. While you may appoint a representative to deal with your complaint on your behalf, an unappointed third party may not bring a complaint on your behalf. Should you wish to appoint a representative, you must notify the Associate

Vice President Academic Affairs in writing of the name, email address and postal address of your representative and their relationship to you (e.g. friend, family member, UL staff member, trade union representative, legal representative, etc.). Where you appoint such a representative, all subsequent communications will be with that representative, and any representations or submissions you wish to make should be made via your representative.

4.5 A group of students may collectively bring a complaint where the matter being complained about is common to all complainants (a 'group complaint'). In such cases, with the written agreement of the other complainants, one student should be nominated by the group as the spokesperson and correspondent. Each member of the group must be able to demonstrate that he/she has been personally affected by the matter being complained about. All members of the group complaining shall support the investigation and attend the hearing. Following the completion of the investigation process, each student named in the group complaint will receive a letter confirming the outcome of the investigation.

5 What is not covered by this procedure?

Where existing appeals processes are available, these will be applicable and not be considered under this Student Complaints Policy and Procedures. Below is a list of examples where this policy does not apply:

5.1 Complaints or appeals against decisions of Exam Boards, including complaints about academic judgement and outcomes of the I grade procedure. Such matters must be considered in accordance with academic appeal regulations (as specified in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures).

5.2 Complaints concerning the actions of other students. Such matters must be considered in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

5.3 Complaints or appeals arising from actions or decisions taken under the Student Code of Conduct, which will be considered solely under that code.

5.4 Complaints or appeals arising from actions or decisions taken under the Fitness to Practise Policy, which will be considered solely under that policy.

5.5 Complaints or appeals arising from actions or decisions taken under the Fitness to Study policy, which will be considered solely under that policy.

5.6 Complaints or appeals concerning the admissions process, which will be considered in accordance with the Admissions Appeal Process.

5.7 Complaints concerning UL Student Life or the Postgraduate Students' Union, which should be directed to the relevant union in accordance with that union's own complaints procedures.

5.8 Complaints relating to on-campus student accommodation, which should be directed to

Campus Life Services (CLS) in accordance with CLS's own complaints procedures.

5.9 Complaints concerning matters that fall within the remit of the Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (the Financial Regulator) and Financial Services and Pension Ombudsman, specifically debt advice and instalment credit, which will be considered in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure (FCA Regulated Activities).

6 How can I make a complaint?

6.1 There are a number of ways to make your concerns heard, and most problems can be resolved early on and informally with the relevant parties. Bear in mind that whatever your concern or complaint, it is important that you raise it promptly so that it can be addressed and a satisfactory solution found as soon as possible.

6.2 There are many opportunities to provide comments or report concerns about your studies or wellbeing to teaching staff, your academic advisor, course boards, the Students' Union and any other relevant UL divisions/service units. However, if you have a particular complaint, you should, in the first instance, raise it informally with an appropriate member of staff (Stage 1 of the complaints procedure, as outlined below).

If the issue or problem cannot be resolved informally in this way, you will need to move to the next, formal stage of the complaints procedure (Stage 2, detailed below).

6.3 You must state clearly the remedy you are seeking as an outcome of your complaint.

6.4 An informal resolution can be agreed at any point, and if you wish to withdraw your complaint, you may do so at any time.

6.5 There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

Stage 1: Informal resolution with the parties concerned (section 7 below).

Stage 2: Formal complaint to the Dean of Faculty or Director of the relevant service unit for investigation and decision (section 8 below).

Stage 3: Appeal against the formal complaint decision to the Provost & Deputy President (section 9 below).

At the end of Stage 3, once the University's procedures have been completed, a Completion of Procedures letter, which summarises the outcome of your complaint, will be issued to you. If you choose not to progress the matter to Stage 3, you may request a Completion of Procedures letter at the end of Stage 2.

6.6 If you wish to bring a formal complaint, you must do so within 90 days of the occurrence of the matter being complained about (see paragraph 8.4 below).

6.7 The length of time required to consider your complaint will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint. The timescales for each stage of the process are detailed below.

6.8 At the end of the process, the University will determine that your complaint is either not justified (in which no further action is required), wholly justified, or partially justified. Where you complaint is justified (either wholly or partially), a range of possible outcomes is available (see paragraph 8.18 below).

6.9 At the end of the process, should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request that the Office of the Ombudsman review your case (section 10 below). This is an independent external review. Note that under the rules of the Office of the Ombudsman scheme, for your case to be eligible for review by the Ombudsman, you must have exhausted the University's internal procedures and have been issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. Cases relating to immigration advice should be sent to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service.

7 Stage 1: Informal resolution

7.1 In the first instance, you should raise your complaint with the member of UL staff directly involved in or responsible for the matter being complained about. If you are not comfortable raising your complaint with that person, you should instead contact that person's line manager. You may, for example, need to speak to one of the following:

- The module leader
- Your course director
- Your head of school/department
- Your academic advisor
- The Disabilities Support Services Officer
- A learning centre manager
- A manager of any relevant UL division

7.2 If you are unsure who you need to contact, you should seek guidance from the Students' Union or the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs. They will be able to advise you of the most appropriate person with whom you should raise your complaint and how to contact them.

7.3 You must make it clear from the outset what remedy you are seeking as an outcome of your complaint.

7.4 The person with whom you have raised your complaint will investigate and endeavour to resolve your complaint appropriately and should notify you of their findings and any outcomes in writing.

8 Stage 2: Formal complaint

8.1 If you are dissatisfied with the attempts to resolve your complaint informally, you may escalate your complaint to the next stage by raising a formal complaint.

8.2 In exceptional circumstances, where the serious nature of the complaint means that it would not be appropriate to attempt an informal resolution, the complaint may, at your request and with the agreement of the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs, be

initiated as a formal complaint without having to seek an informal resolution.

8.3 To raise a formal complaint, you must complete a Stage 2 Student Complaint Form and submit the completed form to the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs. The form may be submitted either in hard copy or by email to ulstudentcomplaints@ul.ie.

8.4 The form must be received within 90 days of the occurrence of the matter you are complaining about. Any complaint received after the 90-day limit will be regarded as 'out of time' and will not be considered unless you can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs, good reason for not having been able to submit your complaint on time.

8.5 Your completed form must set out all the facts and arguments on which you wish to rely, and you must submit with your form all evidence on which you wish to rely, including any witness statements.

8.6 You must set out what attempts you have made to resolve the complaint informally and explain why you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal resolution.

8.7 You must state the remedy you are seeking, i.e. how you would like to see the matter resolved.

8.8 The form must be completed in full. UL will usually only consider a formal complaint that has been submitted on a fully completed Stage 2 Student Complaint Form.

8.9 The Associate Vice President Academic Affairs will write to you to acknowledge receipt of the form, usually within 10 working days of receiving it.

8.10 The Associate Vice President Academic Affairs will forward your complaint to the appropriate investigating officer, usually within 10 working days of receiving the completed form.

8.11 In the case of a complaint concerning academic delivery, the investigating officer will usually be the Dean of Faculty, and in the case of a complaint concerning service delivery, the investigating officer will usually be the Director of the relevant service unit. However, where the Dean or Director, or a superior to the Dean or Director, is a party to the complaint, the next most senior member of staff in the line management structure who is not a party to the complaint will be appointed as the investigating officer. Where the President is a party to the complaint, the Chancellor or his/her nominee will act as the investigating officer.

8.12 The investigating officer will investigate your complaint and will have discretion to determine the most appropriate way in which to undertake the investigation.

8.13 If your complaint refers to a named individual, he/she has the right to be informed and represented and to respond before any conclusions are reached. The individual in question will be invited to submit a written statement and may be invited for an interview to discuss the complaint. You will have access to the statement provided by

the individual in question, and he/she will have access to your statements.

8.14 You may be invited to meet the investigating officer to discuss your complaint. Where the investigating officer considers it necessary or beneficial to meet with you, you will usually be given at least five working days' notice of such a meeting, and you can choose to be accompanied by a friend (see definition of 'friend' at paragraph 2.5 above). The investigating officer may choose to have another member of staff who is not implicated in the complaint investigated present at the meeting.

8.15 The investigating officer will consider whether or not it would be appropriate to seek to resolve the complaint by means of an alternative dispute resolution process, such as mediation, for example.

8.16 When the investigation is concluded, you will be informed in writing of the outcome of your complaint. This will include a summary of the facts as found by the investigating officer, the decision and clear reasons for that decision, and any remedial actions arising from that decision.

8.17 The decision of the investigating officer will be one of the following:

i) That your complaint is justified
ii) That your complaint is justified in part
iii) That your complaint is not justified

8.18 Where your complaint is justified, either wholly or in part, the investigating officer will normally determine one or more remedial actions. These may include:

i) A formal apology
ii) Remedial action to be taken by the relevant individual(s) or area(s)
iii) Specified members of staff required to undertake specific training and development
iv) A review of relevant UL policies or procedures
v) Financial compensation (where appropriate)
vi) A recommendation that the disciplinary process be initiated in relation to a member of UL staff
vii) Any other appropriate remedy

8.19 The investigating officer will, where relevant, be responsible for communicating relevant remedial actions to affected members of staff and for monitoring the implementation or application of such remedial actions.

8.20 The investigating officer will endeavour to conclude the investigation and notify you of the outcome within 25 working days of receipt of the complaint from the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs. In more complex cases or during periods such as UL vacations, when parties to the complaint may not be available, this timescale may not be achievable. In such cases and in accordance with paragraph 3.2 above, you will be notified of any delay.

9 Stage 3: Appeal against the formal complaint decision

9.1 If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome or if you are a student of a partner institution (see paragraph 4.3 above) and have exhausted the complaints procedures of that institution, you have the right to request the Provost & Deputy President to refer the matter to a Student Complaints Appeal Panel for consideration. Such a request must be received by the Provost & Deputy President within 10 working days of the date of notification of the Stage 2 outcome or, in the case of a partner institution, within 10 working days of the completion of that institution's procedures. Where such a request is not received by the deadline, UL's internal procedures are completed. Such a request will not be considered if Stage 2 of the process has not been completed.

9.2 Such a request must be submitted to the Provost & Deputy President on the Stage 3 Student Complaint Appeal Form. The completed form must stipulate clearly and unambiguously the grounds upon which the request is based and include a comprehensive statement explaining why the grounds have been met. All evidence submitted must relate only to the grounds for the request. The form may be submitted either in hard copy or by email to ulstudentcomplaints@ul.ie. The Provost & Deputy President will acknowledge receipt of the request in writing, usually within five working days.

9.3 Where the Provost & Deputy President is a party to the complaint or has otherwise been involved in the consideration of the complaint, an alternative senior manager will take on the responsibilities of the Provost & Deputy President. Where a superior to the Provost & Deputy President is a party to the complaint, the next most senior member of staff in the line management structure who is not a party to the complaint will take on the responsibilities of the Provost & Deputy President.

9.4 The only possible grounds for referring the matter to a Student Complaints Appeal Panel are as follows:

a) That there was a material irregularity in the consideration of your complaint at Stage 2
b) That new evidence has come to light to support your complaint, which could not reasonably have been made available at the time the complaint was submitted, and that this new evidence would have had a material impact on the outcome
c) That the outcome was manifestly unreasonable in light of the evidence
d) That no reasons for the decision were given or that the reasons given do not support the decision

9.5 The Provost & Deputy President will consider the request against these grounds and only these grounds. The Provost & Deputy President may request you or any other party to provide further information or clarification.

9.6 Where, in the opinion of the Provost & Deputy President, there is evidence that one or more of the grounds might have been met, the Provost & Deputy President shall accept the request and refer the matter to a Student Complaints Appeal Panel for consideration.

9.7 Where, in the opinion of the Provost & Deputy President, there is no such evidence, the Provost & Deputy President shall reject the request. In this case, the Stage 2 decision shall stand, there shall be no further opportunities for appeal, the University's internal procedures are completed and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

9.8 The Provost & Deputy President shall notify you in writing of the decision, and the reasons for it, usually within 15 working days of receiving the request. Where it is not possible for the Provost & Deputy President to meet this deadline, you will be informed and advised of the reasons for the delay.

9.9 Pending the outcome of any appeal, the original decision will stand.

9.10 Where the matter is referred to a Student Complaints Appeal Panel for consideration, the composition of the panel will be as follows:

a) Provost & Deputy President or nominee (chairperson)
b) Two senior members of staff from an area of UL that is not a subject of the complaint
c) President of the Students' Union, or nominee who shall be a sabbatical officer of the Students' Union

9.11 The administrative support for the work of the Student Complaints Appeal Panel will be provided by the Office of the Provost & Deputy President.

9.12 No member of the panel shall have had any previous involvement in the case or been involved in your teaching or assessment.

9.13 The quorum for a meeting of the Student Complaints Appeal Panel is three, one of whom must be the chairperson.

9.14 The appeal hearing shall usually be held within 25 working days of the written notification of the Provost & Deputy President's decision to refer the matter to a Student Complaints Appeal Panel. Where it is not possible for the hearing to be held within this timeframe, you will be informed and advised of the reasons for the delay. Wherever possible, the date set will be at your convenience.

9.15 Your expenses for attending a Student Complaints Appeal Panel hearing will not usually be reimbursed by the University.

9.16 At least 10 working days in advance of the hearing, the University will write to you and ask that within five working days you:

- Confirm your attendance at the hearing
- Confirm the name and relationship of any friend who will be accompanying you to the hearing (see paragraph 2.5 above for a definition of 'friend')
- Confirm the name and relationship of any witnesses you wish to call during the hearing
- Provide any additional evidence that you wish the Student Complaints Appeal Panel

to consider that has not previously been submitted at Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the complaints process
- Provide an indication of the outcome you are seeking

9.17 You, the members of the Student Complaints Appeal Panel and the investigating officer whose Stage 2 decision is being appealed will receive the same documentation prior to the hearing, including:
- Your original complaint submission and your appeal submission, along with all supporting evidence
- The Stage 2 outcome letter
- Any other documents that may be considered relevant

9.18 Submitting additional evidence will not be permitted except orally during the hearing. Tabled evidence will not be permitted.

9.19 The panel may ask questions of:
- You
- Any witnesses whom you wish to call
- The investigating officer whose decision is being appealed
- Any witnesses whom the investigating officer wishes to call
- Where appropriate and at the discretion of the chairperson, any persons who are party to your complaint

9.20 You/all members of the group complaining are expected to attend the hearing in person. In the event of your/group members' non-attendance, the Student Complaints Appeal Panel hearing will proceed. Exceptionally, this condition may be waived by the chairperson of the panel where there is evidence to show that you or members of the group are unable to comply, e.g. where you or members of the group are too incapacitated by illness to attend. Should you or members of the group not be able to attend, a representative will not be allowed to attend on your behalf.

9.21 You have the right to call witnesses to provide information pertinent to the issues under consideration at the appeal hearing. The investigating officer whose decision is being appealed also has the right to call witnesses to provide information pertinent to the issues under consideration at the appeal hearing. Witnesses will not usually be allowed to ask questions and are permitted to be present only when giving evidence.

9.22 Student Complaints Appeal Panel hearings shall be held in private.

9.23 At the conclusion of the hearing, the Student Complaints Appeal Panel will decide, on the balance of probabilities, either:

i) That one or more of the grounds for appeal are met, in which case the appeal is upheld

or

ii) That no ground for appeal is met, in which case the appeal is rejected and the Stage 2 decision shall stand. There shall be no further opportunities for appeal, and the

University's internal procedures are completed

9.24 Where the Student Complaints Appeal Panel upholds your appeal, it will reach one of the following determinations:

i) To vary both the decision and remedial actions as determined by the investigating officer at Stage 2
ii) To affirm the decision but vary the remedial actions as determined by the investigating officer at Stage 2
iii) To vary the decision as determined by the investigating officer at Stage 2 but affirm the remedial actions
iv) To affirm both the decision and the remedial actions as determined by the investigating officer at Stage 2
v) To require the investigating officer to consider the complaint afresh
vi) To require a different investigating officer, not previously involved in the case, to consider the complaint afresh
vii) To require the investigating officer to give or clarify reasons for his/her decision

9.25 In the event that the Student Complaints Appeal Panel does not reach a consensus, the chairperson shall make the final decision.

9.26 You and the investigating officer will be informed, in writing, of the outcome of the appeal hearing within five working days. The outcome letter will include the reasons for the Student Complaints Appeal Panel's decision and will constitute the Completion of Procedures letter.

9.27 The decision of the Student Complaints Appeal Panel is final and cannot be the subject of a further appeal. This is considered the end of the University's internal procedures.

10 What if I am still dissatisfied with the outcomes of the complaints process?

10.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the University's attempts to resolve your complaint, you may refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. You should familiarise yourself carefully with the requirements of the Office of the Ombudsman for making a complaint, including in relation to the timescale for doing so. Further details about the Office of the Ombudsman can be obtained from https://www.ombudsman.ie/en/.

10.2 If you are under 18 years of age and remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the University's attempts to resolve your complaint, you may refer your complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. You should familiarise yourself carefully with the requirements of the Ombudsman for Children for making a complaint, including in relation to the timescale for doing so. Further details about the Ombudsman for Children can be obtained from http://www.oco.ie/.

10.3 If your complaint refers to immigration advice, you may refer your complaint to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). You should familiarise yourself carefully with the requirements of the INIS for making a complaint, including in relation to the

timescale for doing so. Further details about the INIS can be obtained from http://www.inis.gov.ie/.

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