

Student Advice Service's

# GUIDANCE ON FILLING IN THE FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM



This guidance may assist you in filling in your Formal Complaint Form.

A copy of the Formal Complaint Form can be downloaded from [this web page](#), on the right-hand side under Related webpages.

Things to remember when submitting your complaint:

- Read the [Procedure](#) and get advice from your College Tutor or the Student Advice Service.
- Complete all sections of the form and include evidence.
- You would usually receive a response by email within 7 days to confirm the next steps.
- If you have any questions, contact [StudentComplaints@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:StudentComplaints@admin.cam.ac.uk) or the [Student Advice Service](#).

The form has 10 sections.

*Section 1* requires you to complete your personal details such as your name, College, email/CRSid, Course of study, etc.

*Section 2* encourages you to provide details of any disability you may have and reasonable adjustments you require during this process but also those that may be relevant to the investigation. If you have one, you can submit your Student Support Document with the rest of the application.

*Section 3* offers an opportunity to provide reasons and evidence for a late submission. This section only applies to those students who submit a complaint after the 28-day deadline and wish to provide reasons for lateness.

*Section 4* requires you to indicate the individuals or institutions (e.g. a department, a University service, a staff member) against which you are complaining. For example, this could be a complaint against your Supervisor, a department staff member, or a staff member within a University support service, etc.

Section 5 is your opportunity to describe what has happened and what you may have done to try to resolve the situation. For example, your complaint could be about the frequency of meeting with your Supervisor and the level of detail in their feedback on your work. Your complaint should include information about:

- what you and the Supervisor agreed upon in terms of the frequency of meetings;
- how many meetings have you had to date and the length of those meetings?
- any information from the University (and/or your department) on how frequently these meetings are expected to take place. This information might be laid out in the Code of Practice for Research Students or the Student Handbook from the department;
- issues the quality and quantity of feedback received and examples;
- when issues first arose, what have you done to try and resolve them? For instance, you might have raised this with your Supervisor, via email or in person. Indicate what their response was and whether this resolved the issue or if you feel it may have disadvantaged you in any way;
- if you have raised this with the Supervisor or you did not feel able to do so, have you discussed this with anyone else in the department or your College? If so, indicate with whom and the outcome of that discussion.
- be clear, concise and factual when presenting your case;
- if you need to provide background information that is relevant to your case, you might wish to do so in chronological order. If you have a long list of events you could either include them in a table (Date, Event, Summary, Relevance to the complaint). Alternatively, you could structure this section into paragraphs in chronological order.

Date	Event	Summary	Relevance

*Section 6* requires you to indicate what action has been taken to try to resolve the complaint at Local Resolution. If you did not attempt to resolve matters through Local Resolution, explain why.

*Section 7* lays out a table where you need to include all evidence submitted to support the complaint. Depending on the issues raised, evidence may include medical letters, supervision reports, emails, a Student Support Document (SSD), a Code of Practice, a Student Guide or Handbook, University Regulations, etc.

*Section 8* is an opportunity to indicate your desired outcome. This could include an apology, financial compensation, or disciplinary action against the subject/s of your complaint, access to more supervision or other learning provision, etc. The outcome you are hoping for should be proportionate to the issue experienced and the effect it had on your student experience.

*Section 9* requires you to tick the boxes indicating your agreement with the statements listed in the table. All statements must be agreed upon except for the fourth which asks if you wish for your College Tutor to be informed of your complaint and the outcome. This is optional and non-agreement with this statement will not affect your complaint.

*Section 10* is an optional statement to indicate whether you agree that the University informs your College Tutor that you initiated a complaint and the outcome and reasons for the outcome of the complaint.

You should sign and submit the complaint form.