ACCESS@SW15 COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

**Introduction**

While we hope that you will have no cause to complain about the service you receive at Access@SW15, we recognise that there will be the rare occasion when your expectations may not be met.

As a department of the University of Roehampton, Access@SW15 policy draws on the University ‘Complaints Procedure for Students.’ The procedures for Access@SW15 Stage 1 (informal) below are for complaints originating in the Assessment Centre, which do not fall within the remit of the standard University guidance to students.

**For customers of the Assessment Centre:**

* A complaint is defined as any written communication using the words ‘complaint’ or ‘complain’.
* In the instance of a verbal communication using these words, the customer will be asked to put the issue in writing.
* In instances where a third party is acting on behalf of the complainant, written and signed evidence of their authority to act should be provided. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
* The complaint should be received within one month of the alleged event, actions or lack of actions.
* Instigating a complaint gives ACCESS@SW15 permission to investigate. Information you submit will remain confidential as far as this is consistent with the right of any other parties to know of allegations that are made against them.
* Staff (including assessors) will normally be asked to respond to any allegations made against them.
* Complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, professionally and in a non-confrontational manner. Feedback from complaints is important to us and will be reviewed to improve our service delivery.

**Complaints Procedure: Making a complaint – Access@SW15 stage 1 (informal)**

* Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint informally with the individual who holds responsibility for the matter which is the subject of the complaint.
* Where the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the complaint should be raised with the Centre Manager. They or their nominee, will continue attempts to resolve the complaint on an informal basis to the satisfaction of all those involved.
* The complaint should be made in writing. A letter or Email should be marked for the attention of the Centre Manager. A complaint about the Centre Manager should be referred to the Assistant Director of Student Affairs. The Centre Manager will liaise with the Director of Student Affairs regarding any complaint about the Centre Manager.

The complaint should contain (where appropriate):

* The reason for your complaint, with sufficient detail to allow investigation.
* Names of people involved, where known.
* The outcome that would satisfy you.
* Your full contact details or those of your appointed representative and your preferred method of written contact, if different to the method you’ve used to contact us before.
* Your complaint will be acknowledged within 24 working hours of receipt.
* We will issue a full response within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint and all accompanying information. This response will indicate if your complaint was upheld and the reason for the decision. If we require further time to fully investigate your case we will issue an interim communication within this period and will let you know when you can expect a full response.

**PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE UNIVERSITY ABOUT ACCESS@SW15**

Full details of the University of Roehampton’s policy can be found by clicking here: [Complaints Procedure for Students](http://studentzone.roehampton.ac.uk/complaints/StudentComplaintsProcedure.pdf)

**STAGE 1 - INFORMAL DISCUSSION**

If you wish to make a complaint, or are considering doing so, you should first contact the University’s Deputy University Secretary, Andrew Skinner. Initial contact can be by telephone call to 020 8392 3103/3821, or e-mail: a.skinner@roehampton.ac.uk

Please does this before you write a letter of complaint to any member of the University.

If appropriate the Deputy University Secretary may ask you to make an appointment in order to discuss the matter more fully.

The Deputy University Secretary has an independent role in the Complaints Procedure, ensuring that both you and the University follow procedures appropriately, and will advise you on how to proceed and may be able to help you to address your concerns informally, either by advising you on how to proceed or by contacting staff on your behalf, and advising the outcome.

**STAGE 2 - LODGING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

If the substance of your complaint cannot be solved informally, or if the matter is considered particularly serious, the Deputy University Secretary will ask you to submit a Complaints Form, or to present your complaint in a letter.

The Form or letter must be signed and addressed to the Deputy University Secretary, who will act as your contact in relation to the complaint. Please do not write directly to the Department or College or any other member of staff of the University.

The submission of a Complaints Form or letter, and its date of receipt, will represent the commencement of consideration under the Formal Complaints Procedure.

Your submission will be referred by the Deputy University Secretary, for consideration, to an appropriate senior member of staff in the Department or College of the University. This member of staff will be asked to investigate your complaint and to advise the Deputy University Secretary accordingly in writing of their response and any action proposed. The Deputy University Secretary will advise you of this outcome by letter, and of any action you should take in relation to it.

You will have the right to reply to this ‘Outcome Letter’ containing the University’s initial decision about your complaint. If in the light of the response you still feel that the complaint remains unresolved from your point of view, you should notify the Deputy University Secretary, by letter in reply, stating clearly your reasons for wishing to pursue the matter further.

**STAGE 3 - PURSUING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

If the Deputy University Secretary finds that your grounds for pursuing your complaint are not justified, you will be advised why, and a ‘Letter of Completion’ will be issued to you. This letter will advise that the University has completed its investigation of your complaint, has provided its final decision on it and does not intend to take the matter any further.

Details of how to take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), should you wish to do so, will be included in this letter. Please note that you will need to have a ‘Letter of Completion’ in order to apply to the Independent Adjudicator. The OIA service is free to students, but you must follow their procedures.

However, if your reasons for pursuing a complaint are considered to be justified, the Deputy University Secretary will arrange a hearing of the complaint by a panel of three senior staff of the University. An independent member of the University’s governing body, the Council, may be invited to be a member or Chair of the Panel as Council Members have an independent role and are not University staff members. The Deputy University Secretary will ensure that all Panel members chosen will have had no previous connection with the investigation of your complaint. Student Complaints Procedure Nov11 4 of 5

The Panel will interview both you as the complainant, and persons complained against, and will determine the University’s decision on the complaint.

The Deputy University Secretary will confirm the decision of the Panel, and any recommendations, of this hearing to you. A ‘Letter of Completion’ will be issued to you, indicating that the University has completed its investigation of your complaint, has provided its final decision on it and does not intend to take the matter any further. Details of how to take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), should you wish to do so, will be included in this letter.

Please note that you will need to have a ‘Letter of Completion of Procedures’ in order to apply to the Independent Adjudicator. The OIA service is free to students, but you must follow their procedures.

**TIMESCALE FOR THE PROCEDURE**

The University will make every endeavour to deal with your complaint quickly. If there is a delay because of the nature of your complaint, or due to staff availability, you will be kept informed of progress.

• You should receive an acknowledgement of any written submission within five working days of its receipt, provided that you have followed the guidelines

• You will normally receive an initial written response to your written complaint within 28 days of its receipt, provided that you have followed the guidelines

• You will normally receive a final response to your complaint within three calendar months from receipt of a formal submission, provided that you have followed the guidelines; but if your complaint is complex, or involves several departments, this timescale may be extended

If there are any exceptional time constraints relating to responding to your complaint, you will be advised at the earliest opportunity. Please note that these may emerge during consideration of your complaint, and it may not be possible to advise you of them at the beginning of the process. Student Complaints Procedure Nov11 5 of 5

**NOTE TO ALL STUDENTS: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

• Seek help from the Roehampton Students’ Union;

• Be notified of the reasons for a complaint being upheld or not upheld, or any delay in a decision;

• Be interviewed by a Complaints Panel, at an appropriate point in their proceedings (ONLY if you get beyond STAGE 2);

• Be accompanied by a friend at meetings related to the Complaints Procedure (but this should not be the Students’ Union President or any other member of Council);

**WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE:**

• To state clearly the substance of your complaint;

• To indicate as clearly as you can the remedy that you seek;

• To follow the correct procedures as advised;

• To provide written statements on request;

• To attend a Complaints Panel, or any other meeting about your complaint, when requested.

When writing to the Deputy University Secretary, please address correspondence to:

Mr Andrew Skinner, Deputy University Secretary

Froebel College, University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PJ

Please note that any complaints about the Deputy University Secretary should be referred in the first instance to the Vice-Chancellor’s Office.

Deputy University Secretary November 2011

Full details of the University of Roehampton’s can be found by clicking here [Complaints Procedure for Students](http://studentzone.roehampton.ac.uk/complaints/StudentComplaintsProcedure.pdf)

Who else can I turn to?

DSA-QAG, the body that audits assessment centres, can offer advice:

DSA-QAG Central Administration Unit

Second Floor, Centrum House

38 Queen Street

Glasgow

G1 3DX

Tel: 0141 548 8006

administration@dsa-qag.org.uk

www.dsa-qag.org.uk