

Document title	KMMS Student Complaints Policy
Version	3
Effective Date	September 2025
Date for review	Academic Year 2028/29
Developing committee/board	Undergraduate Programme Board
Approved by/date	KMMS Education and Research Board/June 2025

**Kent and Medway Medical School
Student Complaints Policy**

Table of Contents

KMMS Student Complaints Policy	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. General Principles	4
3. What is a Complaint?	4
4. Who can make a complaint?	5
5. Collective or group complaints	5
6. Anonymous complaints	5
7. Third Party complaints.....	6
8. Complaints regarding serious staff misconduct	6
9. Accommodation Issues or Tenancy Dispute	7
10. Consumer Rights and Protection Law Issues	7
11. Complaints relating to Academic Appeals	7
12. Timescales for making a complaint	7
13. Support during the complaints process	8
14. Reasonable adjustments	8
15. Frivolous or vexatious complaints.....	8
16. Suspension or Termination of a complaint	9
17. Recording and Monitoring	9

KMMS Student Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) Student Complaints Policy and procedure sets out the way in which a complaint can be made by a KMMS student, and the procedures for investigating and responding to a complaint.
- 1.2. KMMS are committed to providing all students with a high-quality education and student experience. However, we recognise that there may be instances where students have legitimate complaints regarding their course, the services or facilities provided by the School or either University. We take all such complaints seriously, deal with them confidentially when possible, and ensure students are not disadvantaged for raising a complaint.
- 1.3. The student complaints policy and procedure is designed to ensure that all student complaints are heard and responded to in a manner that is timely, fair, transparent, and based on the consideration of relevant evidence. As far as is reasonably possible, we safeguard the interests and wellbeing of any student making a complaint and staff who may be named or otherwise involved in a complaint.
- 1.4. The student complaints policy and procedure has been developed in accordance with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals](#).
- 1.5. The student complaints policy and procedure is overseen by the University of Kent's Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office. The University of Kent is responsible for the investigation of the complaint, student record, and storage of complaint files. If the complaint concerns a Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) service, staff member or facility it may be referred to CCCU complaint procedures.
- 1.6. This policy is distinct from the KMMS Appeals Procedure. In some rare instances, a complaint may overlap with an Academic Appeal. Where this applies, the University of Kent's Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office will adopt a proportional response to ensure that the requirements of both procedures are enacted in the best interests of all parties. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office reserve the right to defer investigation of a complaint until the Academic Appeal has been resolved.

2. General Principles

2.1. We will ensure that the KMMS Student Complaints Procedure is:

- Accessible - we aim to be responsive to the needs of students and provide clear information, advice and support with access to representation by either Students' Union ([Kent Students Union Advice Service](#) or [CCSU Advice](#))
- Clear - we will give a clear definition of a complaint and explain the complaints process in clear language, which is easy to understand and well signposted
- Timely - we will give clear time limits in which to bring complaints and will identify those complaints that require swift resolution. We will normally complete all formal complaints within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal complaint. However, there may be circumstances which mean that the complaint may take longer, for example, liaison with other departments or external agencies. Should there be any delay in the complaint process students will be advised and kept up to date.
- Fair - we will ensure that all staff involved in the decision making are independent, trained in complaint investigation, and well-resourced and that each party is given an equal opportunity to present their case. Students will not be disadvantaged because of bringing a complaint
- Independent - decisions will be taken by people without either perceived or actual conflicts of interest at all stages
- Confidential - a complaint will be treated with an appropriate level of confidentiality and will normally only be disclosed to those involved in its investigation
- Action taken - KMMS will ensure appropriate action is taken and will use the process to improve the student experience.

2.2. During the complaints process a KMMS student should:

- Be respectful and courteous in the submission of a complaint.
- Provide a full explanation of the complaint in a timely fashion, along with supporting evidence.
- Seek a resolution that is reasonable, constructive, and proportionate.
- Co-operate with this procedure as far as they are reasonably able.

3. What is a Complaint?

3.1. The University have adopted the following definition for a student complaint from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education's [Good](#)

Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals.

“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.”

3.2. Examples of a complaint can include (not exhaustive):

- Failure by KMMS to provide a satisfactory service
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the University.
- Complaints regarding staff misconduct (KMMS, University of Kent, CCCU or staff on placement) such as staff behaviour, unfair treatment, or bias
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme by KMMS, teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided by
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services
- Infringement of a student’s right to freedom of speech within the law
- Infringement of a student’s right to academic freedom
- Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of KMMS (please note your complaint may be referred to an appropriate third party for resolution)

4. Who can make a complaint?

- 4.1. Complaints can be made by registered students on a KMMS programme or award, including:
- students on approved periods of interruption
 - recent graduates (within three months of graduation).

5. Collective or group complaints

- 5.1. Complaints will normally be made by individual students, but where appropriate, groups of students are permitted to make a collective complaint where the subject matter is the same or similar. In such circumstances, the group should appoint a spokesperson. Due to the complexity, group complaints will normally be automatically progressed to the formal stage of this procedure.

6. Anonymous complaints

- 6.1. KMMS will ensure students who raise concerns are supported appropriately. However, the University may not be able to act on complaints that are made anonymously. This is because the University is under an obligation to deal with allegations in a fair and reasonable way and in accordance with the rules of natural justice. Natural justice means that adjudication is unbiased and given in good faith and that each party is aware of the arguments and documents given by the other. In cases of doubt as to whether to raise a complaint, a student can seek confidential, independent advice from the Student unions ([Kent Student's Union Advice Service](#) or [CCSU Advice](#)).

7. Third Party complaints

- 7.1. A complaint from a third party will only be accepted on behalf of a student from a Student Union representative or other third party if we receive written authority from the student for them to act on their behalf. Should a complaint be received from a third party, the student (if identified) will be contacted regarding their complaint by the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office and/or the KMMS Student Life and Guidance Team.
- 7.2. Alumni or third-party complaints in relation to historical allegations of serious staff misconduct or sexual misconduct by university staff towards students can be submitted outside of the stated timeframes and should be submitted where possible through [Report+Support](#). All allegations whether recent or historical will be considered in line with the Kent [Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

8. Complaints regarding serious staff misconduct

- 8.1. Complaints from students regarding serious staff misconduct, including sexual misconduct, towards students or imbalances of power within staff/student relationships should be reported through the Report+Support tool in the first instance. This is to allow students to receive support and information on reporting mechanisms available to them. Students who wish to report incidents anonymously or wish to report historical incidents regarding staff are also encouraged to do so via Report+Support.
- 8.2. Allegations of sexual misconduct from students regarding current students will be considered under the [KMMS Student Non-Academic Discipline Procedure](#) and not the Student Complaints procedures, reported using the [KMMS Notification Form](#).

9. Accommodation Issues or Tenancy Dispute

- 9.1. Separate complaints procedures exist for the University of Kent Accommodation and Canterbury Christ Church Accommodation. Students should use these in the first instance. If it is not possible to resolve a student may submit a formal complaint.
- 9.2. Students with concerns about their private accommodation should approach the Student Union for support and advice with managing this.

10. Consumer Rights and Protection Law Issues

- 10.1. Complaints related to Consumer Rights Protection Law issues can be made by prospective students that have applied to study at KMMS, prospective students that have accepted an offer to study at KMMS and enrolled students.

11. Complaints relating to Academic Appeals

- 11.1. The Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OI) determine that an academic appeal is 'a challenge to or request for reconsideration of a decision by an academic body that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.'
- 11.2. The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure is distinct from the procedure for Academic Appeals and, in some rare instances, a complaint may overlap with an Academic Appeal.
- 11.3. Where this applies, the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office will adopt an approach that ensures the requirements of both procedures are enacted in the best interests of all parties. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office reserves the right to defer the investigation of a complaint until the Academic Appeal has been resolved and vice-versa

12. Timescales for making a complaint

- 12.1. Normally complaints raised should be submitted within three months of the incident taking place, however, the University recognises that there may be circumstances that prevents a student from submitting a formal complaint within this timeframe. Complaints raised outside of this timeframe will be

considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Appeals, Conduct and Complaints. If the case is dismissed due to the time elapsed, and there are no exceptional circumstances a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

13. Support during the complaints process

- 13.1. Students can be supported at any meetings by any member of staff (including Student Support and Wellbeing), a friend or family member not connected to the case, member of a Students' Union ([Kent Union Advice](#) or [CCSU Advice](#)), or another student of either university. Normally the individual would have a supporter role and will not speak on the student's behalf.
- 13.2. If reasonable adjustments are required for the supporter to play a larger role in the meeting, such as assisting the student present their case, the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office should be advised in advance of the meeting. It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend.
- 13.3. The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure is not a legal process; therefore, a student does not require a legal representative to access the procedure. A student may only be accompanied by a legal representative if they have received express agreement from the University. Requests for a legal representative to be present at meetings should be submitted to acco@kent.ac.uk as soon as practicably possible. Please note that the appointment of legal representation may delay the complaints process.

14. Reasonable adjustments

- 14.1. The University will make reasonable adjustments to this procedure where it is reasonable to do so to prevent a student from experiencing less favourable treatment because of a disability or impairment. In such cases, the Kent Student Support and Wellbeing team may be consulted.

15. Frivolous or vexatious complaints

- 15.1. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office reserve the right to reject any complaint without full consideration if it is considered frivolous or vexatious. Examples include (not exhaustive):

- complaints that are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive
- insistence on pursuing complaints without merit
- seeking unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes
- insistence on pursuing what may be a meritorious complaint in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value
- Complaints that repeatedly contain abusive or offensive language.

If the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office considers that the student's complaint falls into this category, the student will be advised that the complaint will not be considered further, and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

16. Suspension or Termination of a complaint

- 16.1. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office, in consultation with other departments, if necessary, will determine if the complaint is better placed being considered through other regulations or policies (such as Academic Appeals). The student will be advised of any referral to another regulation or policy and the formal complaint will be suspended or closed.
- 16.2. In exceptional circumstances the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office may terminate a complaint at any stage, where the student's behaviour in relation to the complaint or investigation is deemed unacceptable or disruptive, or where a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or malicious. In such cases, the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office may also invoke the [Student Non-Academic Discipline Procedure](#). The student will be advised of any decision made in this regard.

17. Recording and Monitoring

- 17.1. We are committed to continuous improvement and constructive handling of complaints to ensure that similar situations do not re-occur. Complaints are monitored by the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office (University of Kent) and the Directorate of Student Resolution and Student Protection (CCCU) to identify trends, areas of good practice and where improvements could be made to the Kent and Medway Medical School practices. This information will also be used to review and continuously improve the Student Complaints Procedure and improve the student experience.

- 17.2. The Head of Appeals, Conduct and Complaints (Kent) and the Head of Early Resolutions and Case Handling (CCCU) will use complaint records to submit a termly report to the KMMS Education and Research Board, the Student Experience Board (University of Kent) and Education Committee (CCCU). Recommendations within this report shall be used to enhance the quality of the student experience and will not contain any personally identifiable data.
- 17.3. A summary of actions taken in response to student complaints raised to the OIA will be periodically made available to the University of Kent's Council and CCCU's Senior Management Team.