Complaints Procedure for Students and NQNs

1. INTRODUCTION

Norland is committed to providing a high level service to all its students and NQNs. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from us or you have a concern about Norland, we need you to let us know. This will help us to improve our standards of excellence.

This procedure provides a mechanism for addressing concerns raised by students and NQNs promptly, fairly and effectively in order to help Norland achieve the highest quality in its education provision. It is written with reference to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework – Handling Complaints and Appeals 2015, and the Office for Students General Ongoing Condition of Registration C2:

The Provider must:

1. Co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, including the subscription requirements.
2. Make students aware of their ability to use the scheme.

A separate procedure is available for external stakeholders such as clients, Norlanders or members of the public.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 Norland seeks to minimise student and NQN complaints by ensuring that students have opportunities to participate in formal decision-making processes at all levels and by encouraging regular feedback through Student Representatives and other engagement activities.

2.2 In the event that you are dissatisfied with a Norland service, we will seek to:

(a) resolve the matter at the earliest possible opportunity and, where appropriate, through informal processes;

(b) investigate fairly and thoroughly;

(c) ensure the process is unbiased.

2.3 It is the intention of the procedure that complaints are resolved quickly and informally where possible.

2.4 In order to achieve this, Norland asks that you raise the problem as soon as it arises.

2.5 Details of your complaint will remain confidential to those involved. However, people who are the subject of the complaint have the right of reply and the complaint will therefore be discussed with them so that they can help find a resolution.

2.6 In the interest of fairness, you, and anyone else directly involved in the complaint, will be entitled to see all the evidence which will be considered and have right of reply.

2.7 If there is to be a hearing, all those directly involved will have the right to attend, be accompanied by a friend and to be heard.

2.8 Anonymous complaints or evidence will be considered but may not be given the same weighting and will only be considered if the evidence is corroborated. This may be anonymous corroboration.

2.9 If there are allegations of a criminal offence, Norland may refer the matter to the police and suspend its own proceedings until the outcome of any criminal proceedings are known, other than where Norland needs to act in the interests of the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and third parties, including visitors.

2.10 You will not be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint. However, if it is later discovered that a complaint was malicious or vexatious, Norland may consider referring you to its Student Cause for Action and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

2.11 Norland will use any complaint made as an opportunity to improve its services. An anonymised log will be kept of all complaints, both informal and formal, by the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance). The nature of the complaint, how long it took to resolve, how it was resolved and at which stage it was resolved will all be recorded and reported annually to the Academic Board, SLT and Board of Directors.

3. WHO MAY USE THIS PROCEDURE AND IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES

3.1 You may only use this procedure if you are a registered student at Norland at the time you make your complaint or your complaint is made within 30 calendar days of ceasing to be a registered student. For the purposes of this procedure, Newly Qualified Nannies are considered registered students. However, they are also employees with an employment contract, so it may be that the complaint should be directed towards the employer. We will support the NQN to identify the source of the complaint and the appropriate procedures to follow.

3.2 The procedure is available for you to raise concerns about your Norland experience, for example with respect to the teaching or support services Norland has provided for you.

3.3 This procedure does not cover academic appeals which are dealt with under the Academic Regulations for Taught Provision which can be found on the document hub here.

3.4 The complaints procedure is principally for the use of individual students. Where several students have a common complaint, they may raise the matter as a group. To do so they will need to identify one of their number to act as a spokesperson. It will be the spokesperson who will act on behalf of the group and normally only the spokesperson will attend the meetings

on behalf of the group. At the formal stages, each member of the group must sign the statement of the complaint for it to be accepted as a valid group complaint.

3.5 Parents, carers or other interested parties may not complain on a student's behalf and will be directed, if appropriate, to the Complaints Procedure for External Stakeholders.

4. HOW TO COMPLAIN

There are one informal and two formal stages to this Complaints Procedure. In summary, they are:

4.1 *Stage 1 - Informal Stage*

At this stage you should raise the issue with the person most directly responsible, with the aim of resolving it as soon as possible. The complaint can be raised by phone, email or in person. Exceptionally if you feel unable to raise the matter yourself, the Student Engagement Manager, with your consent, will be willing to help you unless there is a conflict of interest. It is expected that both sides will make a genuine and reasonable attempt to resolve any issues at this stage and this may include meeting face to face to discuss the issues and set out the remedy you are seeking. It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved at this stage, with both parties willing to listen and cooperate.

The person most directly responsible for the issue will attempt to resolve the complaint informally by asking the student the following questions:

- What specifically is the concern about and which area(s) of Norland is/are involved?
- What outcome is the student hoping for and can it be achieved?
- Is the concern straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
- Can it be resolved on the spot by providing, where appropriate, an explanation, an alternative solution or an apology?
- Can someone else assist in seeking resolution?
- Would it be helpful to use confidential mediation, and are all parties willing to do so?
- What assistance or support can be provided to the student in taking this forward?

If responsibility for the issue raised lies in the staff members' area of work, every attempt should be made to resolve the concern at source in consultation with you. If responsibility lies elsewhere, the staff member will work with relevant colleagues to help resolve your concern, rather than simply passing you on to another person.

Where it is clear early resolution is not appropriate or possible, and that a concern will need to proceed immediately to the formal stage, you will be directed promptly to the relevant procedure. We will inform you of any time limits for submission and where and how to access advice and support. The informal stage ends when one of the following applies:

(a) A remedy that is acceptable to you has been put forward and you consider the matter resolved.

(b) You are not satisfied with the remedy proposed within 15 working days (or

whatever longer period was agreed) of your informal meeting with the person(s) to whom you complained.

(c) You have been unable to arrange a meeting with the person(s) concerned within 15 working days of you contacting them or you have not received a response to your initial email.

If a resolution is found that is acceptable to you, the staff member will report that the complaint has now been resolved to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), who will record anonymised details on the Complaints Log.

4.2 ***Stage 2 - Formal Stage***

If you have been unable to resolve your complaint informally, you should put your complaint in writing, addressed to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), stating with whom you attempted to raise the matter informally, the outcome and why you remain dissatisfied.

On receipt of the complaint, the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) will consider the following questions:

- Is this a complaint or academic appeal? Should the student be referred to another procedure?
- Was early resolution attempted? If not, should the matter be referred back to that stage?
- Has the student set out clearly what the complaint is about and which area(s) of Norland is/are involved?
- Has the student provided evidence in support of the complaint?
- What outcome is the student hoping for and can it be achieved?
- Is the complaint suitable for mediation or conciliation?
- What assistance or support can be provided to the student in taking this forward?

Some complaints may require us to take particularly swift action. These may include, but are not limited to:

- complaints involving a threat of serious harm.
- cases where the impact of the issues raised has detrimental consequences for your mental health or where you display significant distress.
- complaints relating to disability support.
- issues of serious and repeated service failure and/or significant delay.
- issues of a highly sensitive nature.

4.3 ***Stage 3 – Review***

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, you can request a review. A request for a review may be submitted on the following grounds:

- Procedures were not correctly followed at the formal stage

- The outcome was unreasonable
- New material evidence has come to light which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage before it can be escalated to the review stage.

You must submit a request for review in writing by email to the Vice Chancellor.

5. THE PROCEDURE

5.1 *The Informal Stage*

5.1.1 Any complaint should normally be raised directly with the person(s) concerned or responsible for that service as soon as possible after the experience that gave rise to the complaint. A complaint that is raised more than 30 calendar days after the incident will be difficult to follow up and will not normally be accepted other than where you can show good cause for the delay (such as independently certified medical or other extenuating circumstances).

5.1.2 Once you have raised your complaint, you will be sent the Informal Resolution Complaints Form. On the form, you should state the nature of your complaint and the remedy you are seeking. You should return your form to the person responsible for that service as soon as possible.

5.1.3 You will be invited to attend a meeting with the person responsible for the service and you may wish to be accompanied by a friend or the Student Engagement Manager. It may help to put your thoughts in writing prior to the meeting and to take notes during the meeting. A note-taker will be present at the meeting. If a meeting is not possible or appropriate, you should email the person(s).

5.1.4 At the meeting, you and the person responsible for the service will discuss the complaint and try to reach an informal resolution. Together, you will complete part C of the form. Normally within 5 working days following the meeting or your email, the person(s) will either:

- email you (or your spokesperson, in the case of a group complaint) with a summary of what was discussed if a meeting was held, or addressing the points you have raised if by email, what (if any) remedy is proposed and the timescale for its implementation;

or

- respond to propose a timescale for resolution.

Unless agreed otherwise with you, this timescale should be no longer than 10 working days from the date of the email.

5.1.5 Exceptionally, where you feel unable to approach the person(s) concerned, you may ask the Student Engagement Manager to put your complaint and act as a spokesperson on your behalf. However, we cannot investigate properly, respond appropriately or have a right of reply if a complainant remains anonymous and it may not, therefore, be possible to deal with the matter in a way that is satisfactory to all parties.

5.1.6 Where you have been unable to arrange a meeting within a reasonable amount of time (5 working days would be normal) of contacting the person(s) concerned, or no acceptable resolution has been received within 10 working days following a meeting (unless you have agreed otherwise), you should email the person(s) advising them you will be making a formal complaint.

5.1.7 The informal stage ends when one of the following applies:

(a) A remedy that is acceptable to you has been put forward and you consider the matter resolved.

(b) You are not satisfied with the remedy proposed within 15 working days (or whatever longer period was agreed) of your informal meeting with the person(s) to whom you complained.

(c) You have been unable to arrange a meeting with the person(s) concerned within 5 working days of your contacting them or not received a response to your initial email.

5.1.8 A record of the informal resolution stage will be kept on the Informal Resolution Complaints Form – see Appendix 1.

5.1.9 The staff member will send the Informal Resolution Complaints Form to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), who will record anonymised details on the Complaints Log.

5.2 ***Formal Stage***

5.2.1 In order for the complaint to be considered formally, you must put the complaint in writing and send it to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance). Your details, the details of the complaint, the remedy sought and any supporting evidence should be included. You should also explain how you have attempted to raise the matter informally and why you remain dissatisfied. You should attach an email or other written confirmation to the complaint to evidence that the matter has been raised informally. Unless you can demonstrate that you have been unable to receive an informal resolution of your complaint, you may be asked to return the informal stage before a formal complaint can be considered.

5.2.2 A formal complaint must be submitted to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) no later than 10 working days after the email concluding the informal stage as described in 5.1.5.

5.2.3 You should expect to receive an acknowledgment from the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) within 5 working days of your formal complaint being received.

5.2.4 We aim to resolve a formal complaint, which has previously been raised informally, within 15 working days of receipt. If there is likely to be a delay you will be informed of this and the reasons for it.

5.2.5 You, or the spokesperson if a group complaint, will be offered a personal meeting with the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), or nominee, in order that you can explain your complaint and why you remain dissatisfied. At that meeting, which may include a member of academic staff, an administrator will be present to take notes. You will be given a copy of these notes for your records. You may be accompanied to this meeting by a friend or the Student Engagement Manager, but you should inform Norland that you wish to be accompanied and give them the name of your supporter.

5.2.6 The Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), or nominee, may undertake whatever investigation is considered appropriate in order to establish the facts of the case and, if meetings are held with members of staff, notes will be taken by an administrator and you will be entitled to a copy of those notes. Similarly, if the complaint is about a member of staff, he or she will be entitled to see all the relevant documentation, including the notes of your meeting with the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance), or nominee. All evidence considered as part of the complaint, including email correspondence, will be shared with all relevant parties. It should be noted that if an external investigation is subsequently made into your complaint, for example by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), or by the QAA under its Concerns Procedure, all records, emails and reports linked to the complaint will be made available to them.

5.2.7 You will receive a written decision which addresses the points you have made and gives reasons for the conclusion reached. The letter will also advise you of your right to refer the matter to Stage 3.

5.2.8 Where recommendations are made as a consequence of your complaint, you will be entitled to know what these may be and when they will be implemented.

5.2.9 A record of the formal stage will be kept on the Formal Resolution Complaints Form – see Appendix 2.

5.2.10 The Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) will record anonymised details of the complaint and the suggested resolution on the Complaints Log.

5.3 ***Stage 3 – Review***

5.3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, you can request a review.

A review may be requested on the following grounds:

- procedures were not correctly followed at the formal stage
- the outcome was unreasonable
- new material evidence has come to light which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

5.3.2 The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage before it can be escalated to the review stage.

5.3.3 You must submit a request for review in writing by email to the Vice Chancellor within 5 working days of receiving notification from the formal stage.

5.3.4 The Vice Chancellor or their nominee will review the case within 10 working days from the date the review was requested.

5.3.5 The Vice Chancellor or their nominee will review the Informal Resolution Complaints Form, the Formal Resolution Complaints Form and the rationale for your request for review and will make a decision about whether or not a reasonable resolution was suggested. There are two outcomes from this review:

a) the Vice Chancellor or their nominee agrees with you that the resolution suggested is not reasonable and, in this case, the matter will be referred back to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) for reconsideration.

b) the Vice Chancellor or their nominee decides that the resolution offered is appropriate to the initial complaint.

5.3.6 You will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing within 15 working days from the date the review was requested.

5.3.7 The Vice Chancellor or their nominee will report the outcome of the review to the Pro Vice Chancellor (HR & Compliance) using the Vice Chancellor's Review Form (see Appendix 3) who will record anonymised details on the Complaints Log.

5.3.8 A Completion of Procedures letter (see **Appendix 4** for the template) will then be issued to you as soon as possible but no later than 5 workings days after you have been notified of the outcome.

5.3.9 If you remain unhappy with the outcome of Norland's internal procedures, you may then refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for consideration if it is eligible under its procedures. This must be done within twelve months of the date on which the Completion of Procedures letter was issued. Information on the process can be found at http://www.oiahe.org.uk/about-us/using-the-scheme.aspx

6. TIMESCALES

6.1 Norland will not normally consider a complaint which is raised more than 30 calendar days after the incident giving rise to the complaint unless there are good and independently verifiable reasons for the delay.

6.2 In the event that you feel there are good reasons for the delay, you should let Norland know of those reasons and should support this with independently verifiable evidence in writing from a relevant professional (eg. GP or other registered clinician).

6.3 Norland aims to resolve matters as quickly as possible. Norland aims to give decisions within the following timescales:

(a) Informal: not normally more than 10 working days of the matter being raised with the person responsible (see 5.1.6)

(b) Stage 1: within 15 working days of Norland receiving a formal complaint (see 5.2.4)

(c) Stage 2: within 20 working days of initial receipt of the complaint at Stage 2 (see 5.3.2)

If the matter requires further investigation and the time scales cannot be achieved, you will be informed of the delay in writing and the reasons for it.

Appendix 1

Informal Resolution Complaints Form

Section A – to be completed by the student
Student Name
Describe the nature of your complaint succinctly and accurately.
State the resolution or remedy that you would like
Section B to be completed by staff
Name of staff member dealing with the informal stage

What specifically is the concern about and which area(s) of Norland is/are involved?
Is the concern straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation? Yes/No
Can it be resolved on the spot by providing, where appropriate, an explanation, an alternative solution or an apology? Yes/No
Can someone else assist in seeking resolution? Yes/No
Would it be helpful to use confidential mediation, and are all parties willing to do so? Yes/No
Section C to be completed by the student and staff together
Date of informal meeting with student
Record of discussion
Resolution suggested
Resolution agreed by student? Yes/No
Proceed to Formal Stage? Yes/No

Appendix 2 Formal Resolution Form

Formal Resolution Complaints Form

Section A – to be completed by the person dealing with the Formal Resolution Stage
Student/s Name/s
Name of person dealing with the Formal Resolution Stage – usually Pro Vice Chancellor (HR and Compliance)
Was informal resolution attempted? Yes/No
If no, please state why not. If yes, please state why this failed.
Has evidence been provided to support the complaint? Yes/No
If yes, please state the nature of this evidence

State the resolution or remedy that the student would like and whether this if reasonable and can be achieved.
Section B to be completed by Pro Vice Chancellor (HR and Compliance) or nominee at or after the formal meeting with the complainant
Date of formal meeting with student
Record of discussion
Resolution suggested (if applicable)
Resolution agreed by student? Yes/No (if applicable)
Proceed to Investigation Stage? Yes/No
Section C - Investigation
Please outline the nature of the investigation: Dates and records of meeting with others Details of findings

Section D – Formal Resolution Stage outcome
Date of notification to student/s:
Resolution suggested to student/s
Resolution agreed by student? Yes/No
Proceed to Review Stage? Yes/No

Appendix 3 Vice Chancellor's Review Form

Vice Chancellor's Review of Complaint Form

Section A – to be completed by the student to request a review	
Student Name	
Reason for requesting a review:	
Procedures were not followed correctly at the Formal Stage	Yes/No
The outcome of the Formal Review was unreasonable	Yes/No
New material has come to light which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process	Yes/No
Please give more detail about your reasons for requesting a review	
State the resolution or remedy that you would like	
Section B to be completed by the Vice Chancellor or nominee	

Name of staff member dealing with the informal stage	
Date of review	
Outcome of review	
Are there valid grounds for requesting a review?	Yes/No
Procedures were not followed correctly at the Formal Stage	Yes/No
The outcome of the Formal Review was unreasonable	Yes/No
New material has come to light which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process	Yes/No
The resolution suggested at the Formal Review Stage is appropriate	Yes/No
The resolution suggested at the Formal Stage was not reasonable	Yes/No
Please give more detail about the decision	
Next steps	
Confirm outcome of the Formal Stage	Yes/No
Refer back to the Formal Stage for re-consideration	Yes/No

Section C to be completed by the student and staff together
Date of informal meeting with student
Record of discussion
Resolution suggested
Resolution agreed by student? Yes/No
Proceed to Formal Stage? Yes/No

NORLAND UNIVERSITY
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Appendix 4

Completion of Procedures Letter Template

This template is for complaints closed on or after 9 July 2015.

Please note - the format may be adjusted to meet the individual circumstances of a complaint provided that the key points below are included.

Dear [*Name of complainant*],

Completion of Procedures Letter

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of *[name of higher education provider]* in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc** regarding [*please describe*] have been completed.

The issues that you raised in your *complaint / appeal etc* were* [*details*]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc was / were**: [*brief summary of the complaint etc*].

The final decision of *[name of higher education provider]* is* [*detail*] because [*reasons*].

The procedures / regulations applied were*: [*details and date as supplied to the OIA's electronic Regulations Bank*].

[*Name of provider]* subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint / appeal etc** to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint you take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules.

Should you decide to make a complaint to the OIA, your OIA Complaint Form **must be received by the OIA** within **12 months** of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA **on or before** [*insert date - e.g. if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 9 July 2015, this date should be 9 July 2016*].

[*Include here any factors of which the provider is aware which mean that it is particularly important for the student to bring the complaint promptly.]*

You can fill in the OIA's complaint form online or download a copy from the OIA website. https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/. The OIA also publishes *An Introduction to the OIA Scheme for Students*, which can be downloaded from https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/. Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. **You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.**

Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/. You may also wish to seek advice from the Students' Union about taking your complaint to the OIA.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues that have been dealt with through the provider's internal procedures.

Yours sincerely,

[Authorised signatory]

Document Control Information	
Policy title:	Complaints Procedure for Students and NQNs
Summary description:	Norland is committed to providing a high level service to all its students and NQNs. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from us or you have a concern about Norland, we need you to let us know. This will help us to improve our standards of excellence. This procedure provides a mechanism for addressing concerns raised by students and NQNs promptly, fairly and effectively in order to help Norland achieve the highest quality in its education provision.
Relates to staff/ student (include Set), NQN or Norlander:	This procedure relates to all students and NQNs looking to raise a complaint and staff responsible for handling the complaint
Version number (e.g. V1.0/EB/DD-MM-YY):	V5.0/ME/16-06-2023
Owner:	Pro Vice Chancellor (Student Experience)
Housekeeping updates only:	No
Approving body:	Academic Board
Related Norland documents:	Academic Regulations
Date of approval:	16th June 2023
Date of effect:	As above
Frequency of review (i.e. annually or every 2 years):	Every 2 years
Date of next review:	June 2025
Upload to website:	Yes