

The Robert Gordon University Complaints Handling Procedure: A Guide for Members of the Public

The Robert Gordon University is committed to providing an excellent education and high quality services to all those who used them regardless of whether they are students at the university or members of the public.

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your written consent to complain for you.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of a student or an applicant then it will aid the university to deal with your complaint if you provide this written consent for you to deal with the complaint on their behalf. Due to Data Protection legislation we will not be able to address the substance of the complaint until we have received consent from the individual who the complaint is being made on behalf of.

Should you wish advice on how you might complaint you should contact:

Dr Duncan Cockburn
Policy Advisor
The Robert Gordon University
Garthdee House
Garthdee Road
Aberdeen AB10 7QB

Phone: 01224 262195
Email: complaints@rgu.ac.uk

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all students. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please contact us using the contact details above.

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

A complaint may relate to (though is not limited to) the following:

- (a) the quality and standard of service;
- (b) failure to provide a service;
- (c) the quality of facilities or learning resources;
- (d) treatment by or attitude of a staff member, student or contractor;
- (e) inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, student or contractor;

- (f) the failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative process; and/or
- (g) dissatisfaction with the University's policy, although it is recognised that policy is set at the discretion of the University.

Your complaint may involve more than one of the University's services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include (though are not limited to):

- (a) a routine, first-time request for a service;
- (b) a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act;
- (c) a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice;
- (d) a response to an invitation to provide feedback through a formal mechanism such as a questionnaire or committee membership will generally not be treated as a complaint;
- (e) an insurance claim;
- (f) an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal;
- (g) an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where the University's procedure has been completed and a decision has been issued;
- (h) a grievance by a member of staff which is eligible for handling through the grievance procedure;
- (i) an appeal about an academic judgement of an Assessment Board relating to assessment, progression and/or award (refer *Academic Regulation A3 – Section 1*, paragraph 6.2);
- (j) an academic decision relating to admission to a course of the University.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by the services of the University can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf you will need their personal written consent. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at the university, by phone, in writing, email via our complaints form available at www.rgu.ac.uk/complaints

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned, as then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

We recognised that on occasions it may be difficult for you to know which service to complain to. Below we have provided some contact details that may assist you, but if you are still uncertain about who to complain to then please contact:

Dr Duncan Cockburn
 Director of Planning and Policy
 The Robert Gordon University
 Garthdee House
 Garthdee Road
 Aberdeen AB10 7QB

Phone: 01224 262194
 Email: complaints@rgu.ac.uk

To complain about...	contact
The general facilities and estate of the university	Estates and Property Services
The sports centre	RGU:SPORT
The library	Library Services
Catering at the university	Estates and Property Services
University accommodation	Estates and Property Services

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. Where possible, your concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member, tutor, university representative or School/Department Office. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

We will give you our decision at stage one in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage two of the complaints procedure. You may choose to do this immediately or shortly after you get our initial decision.

Stage two – investigation

Stage two deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage one and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. We have a complaint form, which will help you to state your complaint clearly to us. Although we will also accept complaints that are made in person or on the phone,

we encourage you to complete the complaint form in the interests of clarity and in order to best assist the investigation process.

It will greatly assist the university in dealing with your complaint if you submit this form to:

Dr Duncan Cockburn
Director of Planning and Policy
The Robert Gordon University
Garthdee House
Garthdee Road
Aberdeen AB10 7QB

Phone: 01224 262194
Email: complaints@rgu.ac.uk

When using stage two we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:	By Post
SPSO	SPSO
4 Melville Street	Freepost EH641
Edinburgh	Edinburgh
EH3 7NS	EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.