

St Padarn's Institute Learners' Non-Academic Complaints Policy and Procedure



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Document Control Table

Document Title:	St Padarn's Institute Learners' Non-Academic Complaints Policy and Procedure		
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Version Number:	1		
Document Status:	Approved		
Date Approved:	22 August 2019		
Approved By:	St Padarn's Business Committee, St Padarn's Council		
Effective Date:	22 nd August 2019		
Date of Next Review:	June 2022		
Superseded Version:			
Related Documents:			
Document History:			
Version	Date	Author	Notes on Revisions
1	9 July 2019	Kathryn Delderfield	Additional information in section 7
2	04/02/21	Kathryn Delderfield	

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2. Introduction

This policy is intended to apply to all complaints by learners except those relating to academic assessment. Examples of a complaint might be a specific concern about the provision of a module, the behaviour of a member of staff or other learner or the provision of facilities. Our partner universities have appropriate procedures for dealing with appeals against a particular mark or qualification result and if you wish to make such an appeal you should in the first instance refer the matter in confidence to the relevant St Padarn's Tutor or Registrar.

The full complaints policy for each university can be found in the relevant handbook (available on Moodle or by emailing info@stpadarns.ac.uk). Guidelines on what grounds for appeal might be allowed are included.

3. Policy

St Padarn's expects that all those involved with its activities will treat each other with fairness, dignity, and respect, and that its delivery, processes, and administration should be excellent. However, it is recognized that from time-to-time issues may arise. These may be between learners, learners, and staff or with the delivery, processes, and administration (issues between staff are dealt with under the Representative Body of the Church in Wales Grievance policy). It is important that problems are resolved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

4. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, wherever possible, an issue should be raised informally with the other party concerned in order to seek a quick resolution. If the issue is with a St Padarn's process, service, or delivery of work the matter should be raised with the person responsible for that area.

It is recognized that there are some circumstances where this might be difficult.

4.1 Part-time learners in learning groups where an issue is disrupting the work of the group. In these circumstances, if resolution is not possible, the matter should be discussed with the group facilitator who will, if necessary, refer it in confidence to the appropriate St Padarn's Tutor who will offer support in reaching resolution in an informal manner. If the issue is with the group facilitator and cannot be resolved it should in the first instance be referred to the St Padarn's Tutor. If these measures fail, then the issue can be raised as a formal complaint.

4.2 Full-time candidates maintaining a community life through parts of every week in term time. Where a full-time candidate has an issue with another candidate, if resolution is not possible, the matter should be referred in confidence to the Tutor in Residence who will offer support in reaching an informal resolution. If no resolution is reached, then the matter can be raised as a formal complaint.

4.3 If a complaint is about abusive or discriminatory behaviour by another learner or member of staff then it should not be dealt with informally and should be referred directly to the Principal.

4.4 The balance of power in the relationship between a learner and St Padarn's staff member or volunteer (e.g., tutor, facilitator) could in some circumstances make it difficult for a learner to address an issue informally. In such cases the issue can be referred directly to the Principal.

5. Formal Complaint

If a complaint cannot be settled informally, the learner should raise it formally with the Principal, who will then appoint a senior member of staff to apply the Complaints Procedure.

N.B. If the complaint is against the Principal then the matter should be raised with the Provincial Secretary of the Church in Wales (contact details available on Church in Wales website).

6. Complaints Procedure

- 6.1** The complaint must be set out in writing and sent to the Principal, giving as much detail (specific incidents, dates etc) as possible.
- 6.2** The Principal will appoint a senior member of staff who will arrange a formal meeting to take place within 5 working days in order to discuss the complaint. The senior member of staff would normally have had no direct involvement in the issue.
- 6.3** The complainant has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a fellow learner or staff member.
- 6.4** If the complaint is against an individual the other party against whom the complaint is alleged also has the right to be heard and to be accompanied during the process.
- 6.5** The senior member of staff will write to the complainant with his/her response to the complaint within 5 working days of the hearing. If the complaint is against another individual, they also will be sent a copy of the response.
- 6.6** If it is not possible to respond to your complaint within that time, an explanation will be given for the delay and all parties concerned will be informed when a response can be expected.
- 6.7** In their response the senior member of staff dealing with the complaint will draw a conclusion and make recommendations. Even where a complaint is not upheld there may be learning that can be drawn from the experience.
- 6.8** The response will also be sent to the Principal who will assess the recommendations and ensure that the appropriate action takes place. Where a complaint against an individual is upheld this may include invoking the disciplinary process.
- 6.9** The senior staff member will write a summary and the summary and recommendations of the response will be sent to the Senior Leadership Team

and discussed to ensure the outcomes of the complaint are used to improve student experience.

- 6.10** If you the complainant is not satisfied that the matter has been adequately resolved, or if the appointed member of staff fails to deal with the written complaint, then the complainant has the right to appeal.

Everyone involved in the investigation of a complaint should maintain confidentiality on anything related to the complaint. All written records of the complaints process will be treated as confidential and kept in accordance with our data protection policy. All who are involved in the complaint and its investigation should be provided with a copy of this policy.

It is understood that the complaints process can be stressful for all involved. Appropriate support will be given to the complainant, and if the complaint is against an individual then they also should be offered appropriate support.

7. Appeal Procedure

- 7.1** If the complainant feels that the matter has not been adequately resolved and there is a right of appeal, the complainant must inform the Principal in writing within 10 working days.
- 7.2** The Principal will arrange your appeal within 10 working days of receiving written notification.
- 7.3** The complainant may be accompanied by a fellow learner or staff member at the appeal.
- 7.4** The Principal will make a decision regarding the appeal within 10 working days.
- 7.5** If it is not possible to respond to the appeal within that time, an explanation will be given for the delay and the complainant will be told when a response can be expected.
- 7.6** The decision of the Principal will close the St Padarn's Complaints process. If the complainant is studying on an accredited course with St Padarn's they may choose to take their complaint to the relevant accrediting university.

For Cardiff University please see:

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/students-applicants/complaints>

For UWTSD please see:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/>

For Durham University please see:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/study/undergraduate-module-handbook/>

In the event that you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are entitled to take the issue to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. Full details of the procedure are available from the OIA website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.