

Student Grievance Policy

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint or grievance is any formal expression of dissatisfaction regarding the College's provision of programs or services, the behavior or actions of College staff, faculty, or other students, or any matter in which a student believes they have been mistreated or disadvantaged. Complaints typically concern administrative issues, financial matters, technical issues, faculty performance, grading, program content, program effectiveness, or student services.

General Principles

The College treats all complaints promptly, fairly, impartially, and in confidence. No complaint made in good faith shall be used to disadvantage any person in the future. When a complaint concerns a faculty member or staff member, that individual will have sufficient opportunity to review the complaint and provide a response before any final decision is made.

Informal Resolution

Problems are best resolved locally, at the point where the issue arises. For this reason, every effort should be made to resolve a problem by communicating directly with the student or staff member involved and attempting to resolve the matter appropriately. Giving a person the opportunity to consider and respond to a concern often helps ease tension, resolve the matter, and avoid the need for escalation.

If speaking directly with the person concerned does not resolve the situation, the student should raise the issue informally with a faculty member (other than the staff member involved if the issue is with a member of staff). If the student is not satisfied with the conclusion of the discussion or with the outcome of any subsequent action, they may choose to initiate a formal Notification of Concern procedure as outlined below.

A student should only pursue the formal process if informal efforts to resolve the matter with a faculty member or Programme Leader have been unsuccessful, or, in the case of a staff member, if their line manager determines that the informal route is inappropriate.

Formal Resolution

If a problem cannot be resolved informally and the student wishes to pursue the matter, they must submit a letter of concern to Education Operations staff. This letter must be received within 30 days of the incident or matter of concern. The Education Operations staff will, where practicable, acknowledge receipt of such a letter in writing within five working days and subsequently arrange to meet with or otherwise engage with the student to discuss the problem.

The Accreditation and Compliance Manager will decide whether to seek to resolve the matter formally or informally. If the Accreditation and Compliance Manager decides to have the matter addressed formally, the Programme Leader or his/her nominee will conduct a full and fair investigation into the problem and, as soon as possible thereafter, provide a written response to the student and all others concerned to detail the findings of the investigation and any proposed remedy. This response will be copied to the Accreditation and Compliance Manager.

The College aims to resolve all formal complaints within 21 working days of receipt.

Appeal

In the event that a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the above process, they may appeal to the College Accreditation and Compliance Manager. Any such appeal must be made in writing within ten working days of the decision of the Programme Leader, and clearly set out the grounds on which the appeal is based.

The Accreditation and Compliance Manager will decide whether to review the investigation and decision of the Programme Leader or whether to carry out a fresh investigation. If the Accreditation and Compliance Manager decides to have the matter re-investigated, they or their nominee will conduct a full and fair investigation into the problem. As soon as possible after either a review or re-investigation, the Accreditation and Compliance Manager will provide a written response to the student to detail the findings of the appeal and any proposed remedy. This response will not be sent until the matter has been discussed with the Programme Leader involved.

Setanta College aims to resolve all appeals within 10 working days of receipt.

External Complaints

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

QQI serves as the state agency responsible for external quality assurance of Setanta College. Students who have exhausted the College's internal grievance process may submit a complaint to QQI. Note that QQI investigates whether the College followed its grievance procedures correctly; QQI does not overturn decisions or provide remedies directly to the learner.

Website: www.qqi.ie/complaints

Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)

1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: (202) 234-5100

Website: www.deac.org