



S P Jain  
London School  
of Management  
LONDON

## Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

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### Purpose

1. This document sets out SP Jain London School of Management's policy and procedure for dealing with complaints from students on programmes leading to awards from S P Jain London School of Management ('the School' or 'SPJUK').
2. This document has been developed by reference to the Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals published by the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

### What is a complaint?

3. For the purposes of this document, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a student with any action of lack of action by the School, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of, the School.
4. Examples of complaints include:
  - a. poor quality of IT services by the School.
  - b. misleading or incorrect information in a prospectus or programme handbook.
5. A complaint can be about the School or about a service provided by another organisation on the School's behalf, such as an internship provider.
6. This document does not apply to dissatisfaction with, or challenges to, grades or marks. These should be dealt with through the School's Appeals procedure.

### **Relationship with other policies and procedures**

7. Where there are concerns about the conduct of other students these may be more appropriately addressed through the Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure or the Academic Integrity Policy, depending on the nature of the concern. It will be at the discretion of the Registrar to refer a concern to the appropriate policy.
8. Where there are concerns about the conduct of staff, a decision will be made by the Registrar in conjunction with the Chief Operating Officer about whether the concerns are more appropriately addressed through the Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

### **Timeframe for complaints**

9. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event or issue occurs. Normally, the School will not accept a complaint about an action or lack of action which took place more than a month before the complainant raises the issue or lodges a formal complaint.

### **Who can complain?**

10. This policy applies to students enrolled on programmes at SPJUK.
11. A student complaint can be made by an individual student or group of students. In the case of a group complaint, the School will ask the group to nominate a group representative and communicate to the group through that representative.
12. The School will not accept:
  - a. student complaints from third parties unless they are acting as the complainant's representative
  - b. anonymous complaints, unless there is compelling case to investigate it supported by evidence. However, complainants may ask for their complaint, or elements of the complaint, to remain confidential to others involved in the procedure. An example might be where a student provides a witness statement from a fellow student about a member of staff and wishes for the identity of that fellow student not to be shown to the member of staff.

### **The complaints procedure**

#### Early resolution

13. Complaints dealt with informally, at an early stage, have the best chance of being resolved quickly and efficiently.
14. Students considering or wishing to make a complaint about an academic issue should raise the issue with the with the Programme Lead who will then explore with the complainant the details of the underlying issue, what outcome the complainant is seeking or hoping for and the potential for achieving that through early resolution.

15. If the complainant is about a service issue it should be raised with the Registrar.
16. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Registrar may suggest early resolution using conciliation. Conciliation is a voluntary process where an impartial, third party helps parties to a dispute resolve issues confidentially.
17. The School aims to complete the early resolution stage within 14 days of the complainant raising the issue. At the end of an attempt at early resolution, the Programme Lead or Registrar will write to the complainant setting out the outcome.

#### Formal complaint

18. If early resolution was attempted but failed to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, or if the complainant wishes not to engage in early resolution, or if the issues raised in the complaint are complex, serious or contentious, and require to be formally investigated, then the formal complaint stage is initiated.
19. Complainants wishing to make a formal complaint should do so using the Student Complaints Form (at Annex A). This form asks for details about the action or lack of action giving rise to the complaint and how the complainant would like the complaint resolved. It also asks for evidence about the case, such as emails or other correspondence, documents published by the School or notes of conversations.
20. The completed Students Complaints Form should be submitted to the Registrar.
21. If the form submitted does not provide enough information to determine whether the incident can and should be investigated as part of this procedure, the complainant may be asked to add more information and resubmit it. This may extend the time it takes to investigate the complaint.
22. If the completed form describes a matter which cannot be investigated under this procedure, Academic Services may refer some or all of it to a different procedure or reject it entirely. If it is rejected, the complainant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter explaining the rejection and details of how the complainant may apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education for an external review.
23. If the completed form describes a complaint which can be investigated under this procedure, the Chief Operating Officer will commission a senior member of SPJUK staff with no prior knowledge of the case to investigate it. The complainant will be told who that member of staff is, so that they may raise any objections (for example, because of a perception of bias).
24. The member of staff investigating the complaint may talk to other staff and students and consider documents and other evidence. They will then produce a report of their investigation describing the process they followed, the information they considered, the conclusions they have drawn and any recommendations for remedial action by the School.

25. The written report will be considered by the Chief Operating Officer, who will then write to the complainant setting out the outcome of the investigation.
26. Where the investigation finds the complaint is unfounded, the outcome will be that the complaint is rejected and the complainant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter explaining the rejection and details of how the complainant may apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education for an external review.
27. Where the investigation finds the complaint is wholly or partly substantiated, the outcome will be:
  - to suggest a resolution of the complaint through conciliation (where conciliation has not been tried before); or,
  - an explanation or offer of remedial action or redress by the School. This might be an apology to the complainant, a description of the changes the School is making to ensure the action does not happen again and/or an offer of compensation; or,
  - the convening of a formal hearing to consider the complaint in more detail. This may happen where the issues or events giving rise to the complaint are contested and/or involve several other people.
28. The complainant should receive the outcome of the investigation within one month of lodging the formal complaint.

#### Formal hearing

29. Where the outcome of the investigation is a formal hearing, the hearing shall be organised and serviced by a member of the Registry team. Its membership shall be two members of senior staff with no prior involvement in the case, one of whom shall be designated as the Chair.
30. A complainant whose complaint is to be considered by in a formal hearing will be notified in writing, a minimum of 10 days prior to the date of the hearing, of the following:
  - the membership of the Panel and their right to object to a Panel member;
  - their right to be accompanied/represented at the hearing by a friend or representative (but normally not a legal representative);
  - the names of any witnesses called by the School;
  - their right to call witnesses and the arrangements for doing that;
  - their right to question any witnesses through the Chair;
  - their right to submit documentary evidence prior to the hearing and the time limits for doing that;
  - the content of any documentation intended to be used or referred to in the meeting or as part of the meeting.

31. The complainant will have the right to object to a Panel member, for example on the grounds of bias. If an objection is made, it must be done no later than five days prior to the Panel hearing, with supporting information as to why the Panel member is considered by the complainant to be unsuitable. The Chief Operating Officer will consider whether the complainant's representation is valid, whether an alternative Panel member can be allocated in sufficient time for the meeting to continue as scheduled, or whether the meeting may need to be postponed pending further consideration.
32. The complainant will have the right to submit documentary evidence to the Panel. This must be done no later than five days prior to the hearing.
33. The complainant will have the right to call witnesses to appear at the hearing. The complainant must inform the Panel about any witnesses they are calling no later than five days prior to the Panel hearing. It is the complainant's responsibility to inform any witnesses they are calling about the time and venue of the Panel hearing. Should any witnesses called by the complainant not appear at the hearing, the panel may proceed to hear the case.
34. If further evidence comes to light, prior to or at the Panel meeting, which the complainant or the School has not already had access to, the evidence will be provided to both parties and the Chair will consider how or whether to proceed with the Panel meeting.
35. If the complainant does not appear before the panel, the panel may proceed to hear the case if it is satisfied that proper notice of the hearing has been given to the complainant, and there are no grounds for believing that the complainant might have good and proper reasons for not attending. Otherwise, the hearing may be adjourned, usually on one occasion only, for the service of further notice to the complainant. If it is decided to deal with the case in the absence of the complainant, no matter shall be introduced which is not contained or referred to in the particulars notified to the complainant.
36. Witnesses may be called to give evidence either by the complainant or by the Panel. Witnesses may be questioned. All questions will be put through the Panel Chair. Students who appear as witnesses shall have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative.
37. A member of the Registry team will attend the hearing to advise on regulatory and procedural matters and shall be responsible for the official record, a copy of which shall be sent to the complainant and Chair of the Panel.
38. The outcomes available to the panel are the same as those described in paragraph 25.
39. The outcome determined by the Panel must be sent to the complainant in a written report normally within seven days of the panel meeting.
40. The School aims to complete the formal complaint process within 60 days of receiving the Students Complaints Form from the complainant. Completion is defined as sending the complainant written confirmation of the outcome of the complaint, including where a formal hearing is held.

### Stage 3: appeals

41. Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint may appeal using the relevant part of the Appeals Procedure within 14 days of receiving the outcome.

### **Analysis and reporting**

42. The School keeps records of all complaints and provides Academic Board with an annual report on complaints so that Academic Board may be assured that the School is handling complaints according to this procedure. The annual report also allows Academic Board to reflect on complaints received and their outcomes in the context of its oversight of academic standards and quality.

## Students Complaints form

This form is for students who want to make a formal complaint about something the School (or a member of staff) has done or not done. It should be used in conjunction with the School's Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Normally, the formal complaints process should be used only where an attempt at early resolution has not worked.

Please complete all parts of the form and submit it to the Chief Operating Officer with any evidence you have to support it.

Evidence may include:

- Emails, letters or other kinds of correspondence.
- Any documents published by the School or the other organisation you are complaining about.
- Notes of conversations.
- Details of any other students or staff who may have witnessed or experienced the issue or event you are complaining about. We may contact these people as part of any investigation.

### Student Details

Name	
Student ID	
Course	
Telephone number	
Email or postal address for correspondence about this complaint	

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a student with any action or lack of action by the School, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of, the School.

**Please describe your complaint, giving as much information and detail as possible including when the issues or events took place.**

**Have you tried to find an early resolution to your complaint?** (Please see the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure for more information about early resolution)

Yes	
No	

If you have tried to find an early resolution, please tell us why that didn't work.

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If you haven't tried to find an early resolution, please tell us why not.

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Please tell us how your complaint could be resolved to your satisfaction.

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Signature	
Date	