



HID Complaints and Grievance Policy

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This policy refers to all complaints and grievances relating to the learner's period of enrolment at HID. These procedures apply to complaints and formal grievances including issues regarding level of service, resources or issues involving staff or peers.

Complaints relating to the assessment process, or appeals against decisions relating to academic misconduct, student disciplinary or mitigating circumstances are considered under the Appeals Policies in Section 11 of the QAM.

Complaints from the public will be dealt with by the Academic Dean in consultation with the Board of Directors as appropriate.

It is envisaged that complaints regarding general dissatisfaction will be managed locally and in a spirit of conciliation.

1 Policy and Procedures

- No learner will be disadvantaged through availing of the Complaints and Grievances procedures. However, HID expects that in raising possible complaints or grievances, learners themselves will have observed their own obligations and responsibilities.
- Due to the seriousness with which the Institute handles complaints or grievances and the impact on available resources to manage complaints or grievances, it is expected that learners will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints or grievances.
- The intention is that most problems will be dealt with locally, in a spirit of conciliation. Thus, the formal procedures should be a last resort in the search for a solution.
- These procedures are intended to produce a speedy and efficient resolution. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay, whilst ensuring a full and fair assessment of the circumstances takes place.

- A complaint or grievance should be made as soon as practical after the issue has occurred.
- Formal grievances are treated confidentially. The complainant and representative, are also required to observe confidentiality in respect of the grievance.

1.1 Stage 1

Informal stage to facilitate resolution and reconciliation.

1. In the first instance, the learner should discuss the issue with the relevant Academic Programme Director, academic administrator or other HID staff as appropriate, or if there is a conflict of interest.
2. The Academic Programme Director will explain the complaints and grievance policy and procedure to the learner.
3. The Academic Programme Director may consult with other relevant staff members in this stage of resolution if necessary. Where possible the issue should be resolved informally between the individuals concerned.
4. A note is made on the learner's file summarising the issue and the outcome. Staff members involved are encouraged to share their experience of the process to the benefit of the Institute.

If the learner's complaint is not resolved at this level, then Stage 2 of the procedure should be followed.

1.2 Stage 2

Stage 2 is initiated if the complaint was not resolved to the learner's satisfaction at Stage 1 or if the Programme Director or other appropriate staff consider the complaint serious enough to progress directly to Stage 2 and that a more formal approach is necessary.

Where an informal process has been attempted the learner should commence the formal process within 15 business days of the completion of Stage 1.

1. The learner should make their complaint in writing on a Complaints Form available from the Registrars' Office and appended to the QAM on the college website. The learner should include all relevant detail and include any supporting documentation. The learner should also describe any previous efforts to resolve the matter and why these were unsatisfactory.
2. The Registrar collates the learner's report, the accompanying evidence with a report from the Academic Programme Director or other staff involved in Stage 1. The Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days.
3. Once complete, the Registrar forwards the appeal and the accompanying information to the Senior Management Group for their consideration. For the purposes of considering a complaint or grievance the SMG will co-opt at least one academic member of staff not directly related to the learner's programme of study. The SMG will examine the complaint and may seek further information or clarification from the learner at this stage.

4. The learner will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint and notified if any delays are anticipated.
5. The SMG will reach an outcome and recommendations may issue from the process. HID aims to complete this stage of the complaints and grievance procedure within 21 business days.
6. The Registrar will notify the learner in writing of the decision reached by the SMG and the reasons for it, together with any recommended consequent action, within the 21 business-day timeframe.

Note: A complaint may be deemed invalid because it is considered to be malicious or vexatious, or false information may have been submitted – in these cases the complainant may be referred to Student Disciplinary.

1.3. Stage 3

A learner may appeal the outcome of the complaints process on the following grounds:

- (i) Where there was substantive irregularity in how the process was conducted.
- (ii) Where relevant information emerges or was not considered that would have changed the outcome of the process.

The appeal must be made in writing, within 10 business days of receipt of the outcome of Stage 2.

The appeal, stating the grounds is sent to the Dean, Academic, who will determine if there are grounds to forward it to the Appeals Board. Refer to Section 11 of the QAM.

The Appeal Board will include membership outside of HID and at least one independent external member. The decision of the Appeal Board is final.

1.4 Final Stage

If still unsatisfied the learner may complain directly to the Awarding body, QQI. HID will co-operate with the awarding body and with the agreement of the learner, and parties named, provide any information required to facilitate resolution.

2 External Supports

For dispute resolution all learners can access information on Alternative Dispute Resolution at http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/consumer_affairs/consumer_protection/consumer_complaints/alternative_dispute_resolution_in_ireland.html

Citizens Advice:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/consumer/how_to_complain/

Further information for overseas learners can be found on the **ICOS Irish Council for International Students** website



<https://www.internationalstudents.ie/info-and-advice>

3 Complaints and Grievances Summary

