

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Metanoia's complaints policy and procedure is designed for situations where a student/candidate is dissatisfied with the decisions and/or actions of Metanoia Institute, or its staff, in relation to programme content and/or delivery, learning and teaching, administrative policies, procedures and processes and/or the conduct of a member or members of staff.

This is different from an academic appeal (which covers assessment issues) or an ethical complaint (which covers fitness to practise issues in respect of academic staff).

### **Informal Complaint (Stage 1)**

1. In the first instance you should discuss your complaint directly with the person concerned.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved in this way you should contact your Faculty Head who will make notes about your complaint and who will also speak with the member of staff concerned.
3. If your complaint is with your Faculty Head, and you have undertaken step 1 of this procedure, please contact the Academic Quality Manager who will make notes about your grievance and speak with the member of staff concerned.
4. Where appropriate, and agreed by the parties involved, a mediation meeting will be set up to discuss the complaint and to see if it is possible to resolve it at this stage.

### **Formal Complaint (Stage 2)**

In the event that the process detailed in points 1 - 4 above does not lead to a resolution, or if the complainant wishes to pursue the matter formally in the first instance, then the following procedure will apply.

1. The complainant makes a preliminary submission to the Academic Quality Manager outlining a summary of the complaint within 10 working days of the meeting where the grievance could not be resolved.
2. The Academic Quality Manager will appoint a Faculty Head, not previously involved with the case, to investigate the complaint within 10 working days of the submission.
3. More extensive details of the complaint will be sought from the complainant. These will then be forwarded to the complained against for a response, who has 10 working days to respond to the complaint.
4. The documentation will then be forwarded to the appointed Faculty Head. Please note that at this stage, materials are only made available to the parties themselves and to the appointed Faculty Head with the matter overseen by the Academic Quality Manager.
5. The appointed Faculty Head reviews all of the submitted materials. In the event that they want some aspect of these clarified they will contact the Academic Quality Manager who will endeavour to acquire such additional information from either of the parties; this may involve a short interview with the parties concerned, at which they may be accompanied by another individual of their choosing (but excluding legal practitioners).

6. After 15 working days following the consideration of all available information the appointed Faculty Head will make one of the following decisions:
  - a) Complaint dismissed
  - b) Complaint upheld
  - c) Complaint partially upheld
7. The Faculty Heads submit a joint report in writing to the Academic Quality Manager who in turn informs the parties of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld with a number of conditions the reports should stipulate a time boundary in which the issues that have been identified should be addressed.
8. The Academic Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring that the conditions are met within the agreed time frame.

### **Formal Appeal (Stage 3)**

In the event that the complainant is still not satisfied, they may lodge a formal appeal within ten working days of receiving the outcome at Stage 2.

9. The complainant should write to the Academic Quality Manager outlining their reasons for continuing dissatisfaction and any specific remedies they are seeking.
10. The Academic Quality Manager will then appoint two Faculty Heads, not previously involved with the case, to convene a panel to investigate the complaint within 20 working days of the submission.
11. The documentation will then be forwarded to the two appointed Faculty Heads. Please note that at this stage, materials are only made available to the parties themselves and to the two appointed Faculty Heads with the matter overseen by the Academic Quality Manager.
12. The appointed Faculty Heads review all of the submitted materials and conduct a hearing to which all relevant parties will be invited to give verbal statements. Questions may be posed to the complainant by the two Faculty Heads and by the Academic Quality Manager; questions may be posed to the complained against by the two Faculty Heads, by the Academic Quality Manager and by the complainant. All parties may be accompanied to the hearing by another individual of their choosing (but excluding legal practitioners).
13. After 15 working days following the consideration of all available information the appointed Faculty Head will make one of the following decisions:
  - d) Complaint dismissed
  - e) Complaint upheld
  - f) Complaint partially upheld
14. The Faculty Heads submit a joint report in writing to the Academic Quality Manager who in turn informs the parties of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld with a number of conditions the reports should stipulate a time boundary in which the issues that have been identified should be addressed.
15. The Academic Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring that the conditions are met within the agreed time frame.
16. Wherever possible, the complaint will be investigated within the time frames given above. However, if a complaint is received on or after 1<sup>st</sup> June, there may be a delay in the above procedures due to staff commitments to viva examinations and assessment boards as well as staff holiday absence.

#### **External Appeal (Stage 4)**

17. In the event that the complainant is still not satisfied, they may lodge an external appeal with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator within three months of receiving notification that Metanoia Institute's internal procedures have been completed, write to:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education  
Third floor, Kings Reach,  
38-50 Kings Road,  
Reading, RG1 3AA,  
United Kingdom

enclosing a copy of the final decision of Metanoia Institute and stating the reasons for seeking redress from the OIAHE ([www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)).