



Complaints procedure for postgraduate research students engaged in teaching

(Agreed August 2013)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and equitable process for postgraduate research students to raise a complaint about an issue relating to their teaching activities. It should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching (as amended from time to time) which can be found at http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/pgr_cop.
- 1.2. When issues arise, every effort should be made to resolve them in a timely manner through informal means, as near to the point of origin as possible.
- 1.3. The procedure is in two parts:
 - Part 1 covers issues relating to teaching activities
 - Part 2 covers appeals against a decision by the University to end a teaching engagement.
- 1.4. At any meetings convened under the formal stages of this procedure, postgraduate research students have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague as laid down in the Employment Relations Act 1999. It is the responsibility of the postgraduate research student to decide whether or not they wish to be accompanied at meetings, and to make the necessary arrangements with their representative.

- 1.5. If a Head of School, the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) considers it appropriate to meet with the postgraduate research student to gather further information in order to consider a complaint or appeal, confirmation in writing should be sent to the individual to confirm the date, time, venue and advising them of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague. This should be sent at least 5 days before the date of the meeting. If a postgraduate research student intends to be accompanied, they should inform the Head of School/Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) within 2 days before the date of the meeting with the name of their representative.
- 1.6. Human Resources may be consulted by the Head of School/Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) during any stage of this procedure. They may attend meetings at the request of Head of School/Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) to provide guidance, support or advice.
- 1.7. Postgraduate research students shall take all reasonable steps to attend any meetings arranged under this procedure. If the postgraduate research student fails to attend such meetings without good reason, a decision may be taken in their absence.
- 1.8. This procedure should not be used in relation to problems with postgraduate research students own studies/research, appeals against adverse academic decisions, their relationship with the University as a student, issues with commercial services e.g. residences, the Edge etc; these are covered by the University's Students Complaints Procedure at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_complaints.html and http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22149/a-z_of_policies_and_key_documents/637/student_complaints.

2. Part 1: Complaints relating to teaching activities

- 2.1. The types of issues that would normally fall under this section of the procedure include, but are not limited to:
 - registration, selection and allocation of duties;
 - hours of engagement;
 - training and support;
 - concerns relating to role descriptors;
 - payment arrangements;
 - accommodation and resources.

Procedure

- 2.2. If a problem arises relating to teaching activities, postgraduate research students should, wherever possible, try to resolve the matter informally by talking to the individual responsible for the area of complaint for example, the module leader.

Stage 1

- 2.3. Where it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally through discussion with the relevant parties this procedure allows it to be raised formally with the Head of School¹ (or formal nominee).

¹ In the case of unitary faculties this would be the Dean of the Faculty

- 2.4. Postgraduate research students should put their concerns in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School (or formal nominee) will consider the complaint and notify the individual in writing of his/her decision (normally within 15 working days of receipt²). When considering the complaint, the Head of School (or formal nominee) will have the discretion to meet with the postgraduate research student and/or other individuals if he/she considers it appropriate to do so to gather further information.

Stage 2

- 2.5. If the postgraduate research student considers that their complaint has not been dealt with fully and fairly, they may appeal against the decision by putting in writing the reasons why they consider that the complaint has not been dealt with fully and fairly. This should be sent to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies within 10 working days of the receipt of the letter from the Head of School (or formal nominee) confirming his/her decision.
- 2.6. The Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) will consider the appeal and notify the individual in writing of his/her decision (normally within 15 working days of receipt). When considering the appeal, the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) will have the discretion to meet with the postgraduate research student and others if he/she considers it appropriate to do so to gather further information.
- 2.7. The decision of the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) is final.

3. Part 2: Appeals against a decision by the University to end a teaching engagement

- 3.1. This section of the procedure covers the process to follow to appeal against a decision by the Head of School (or formal nominee) to end a teaching engagement where:
- it is identified that teaching activities are interfering with the studies of a postgraduate research student;
 - the postgraduate research student regularly fails to carry out teaching activities that they have accepted without providing prior notice;
 - the standard of performance/conduct is deemed unsatisfactory by the Dean of Faculty/Head of School (or formal nominee).

Procedure

- 3.2. If a postgraduate research student is dissatisfied with the decision by the Head of School (or formal nominee)³ to end their teaching engagement, they should put details of their grounds of appeal in writing to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies, within 10 working days of receipt of the letter from the Head of School (or formal nominee).
- 3.3. The Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) will consider the appeal and, after considering the grounds of the appeal, notify the individual of his/her decision normally within 15 working days of receipt⁴. When considering the complaint, the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) will have the

² Whilst every effort will be made to adhere to this timescale, there may be occasions when this may vary for example, if a meeting is required it is possible that the decision may be delayed.

³ In the case of unitary faculties this would be the Dean of the Faculty.

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discretion to meet with the postgraduate research student and others if he/she considers it appropriate to do so to gather further information.

- 3.4. The decision of the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (or formal nominee) is final.

4. Further information

For further information or guidance on these procedures, please contact your Faculty Human Resources Manager. Contact details can be found at <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/contact>. Postgraduate research students may also seek advice from the LUU's Advice Centre or, if a member of a trade union, their local trade union representative.

5. Review

This procedure will be reviewed in partnership with Leeds University Union during session 2013/14 and in line with any agreed changes made to the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching.