

Raising concerns with College

One of the principal functions of the College is to assist students with their education. Those who work in College are striving to create and maintain a suitable environment for scholarly activity and personal development. It is important that the College is able to act quickly and reasonably in response to suggestions, concerns and complaints raised by its students. Details of how to do this are set out below. The College will always take complaints seriously and students can expect them to be dealt with fairly, quickly and courteously.

1. Comments and suggestions

1.1. Broadly speaking, where a service provided by the College seems in need of improvement, the best person to inform will be the person immediately responsible for its provision. Where this is not possible, or where the response is considered to be unsatisfactory the concern may usually be raised with your tutor or the Senior Tutor. To find which members of staff is responsible, students should check the staff contacts page on the Venn (<https://intranet.cai.cam.ac.uk/contacts/staff-contacts>).

1.2 If a student has a concern about the quality or manner of the teaching they are receiving in supervisions or in University lectures or classes then they should raise these with their Director of Studies in the first instance or with their tutor or the Senior Tutor if it is their Director of Studies who is the focus of the concern.

1.3 College policy is directed by the College Council, subject to review in certain areas by the General Meeting of the Master and Fellows. The President and Vice-President of the GCSU and the President and Vice-President of the MCR sit as observers for unreserved business at the College Council and can influence the direction of policy in that forum. There is also student representation on several committees and sub-committees appointed by the College Council and the General Meeting, including (at least for the time being) the following:

- the Education and Research Committee;
- the Domestic and Catering Committee;
- the Student Domestic Sub-Committee;
- the Works and Accommodation Committee;
- the Security Sub-Committee;
- the Computing, Communications and Records Sub-Committee;
- the Clubs and Societies Sub-Committee;
- the Gardens Sub-Committee;
- the Chapel and Patronage Sub-Committee.

It will often be appropriate for students' concerns to be raised at meetings of the College Council or one of the committees listed (and generally, where concerns relate to the business of a committee, that will be the most appropriate place for them to be raised in the first instance). The officers of the GCSU or the MCR may be asked to identify the relevant student representatives and to initiate discussions with them.

1.4. Sometimes the concerns students have will relate more to their dealings with the University, or another College. Where the University is involved, there may be a document available describing the best way of raising concerns. Although the College will usually have no jurisdiction in such a case, it may have a role assigned to it in the procedures described, and the tutors and Senior Tutor, as well as Directors of Studies or other Fellows who teach in the relevant Faculty or Department, may be able to give advice and assistance. Similarly, where another College is involved, although this College will have no jurisdiction, its officers may be able to give advice and to assist in the raising of the concerns with appropriate person or body. Advice and assistance may also be available in all these cases from the officers of the Cambridge University Students Union or of the Graduate Union.

2. Informal and formal complaints

2.1. All complaints about the conduct of fellow students should be raised with the Tutor for Discipline under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. See Paragraph 4.

2.2. The concerns students have may sometimes amount to complaints rather than to comments or suggestions for improvement. Nevertheless, in many cases, at least in the first instance, it may be more productive for the concerns to be raised in the form of comments and suggestions as outlined in the last section.

2.3. Where students do wish to raise concerns about the College, one of its fellows or a member of staff in the form of complaints, there are three different routes that they can take: complaints about their accommodation and the servicing and maintenance thereof; complaints about staff behaviour; complaints about the behaviour of fellows.

Accommodation complaints

2.4. Complaints about accommodation and the maintenance and servicing thereof can be made through the [Student and Staff Accommodation Complaints Procedure](#), details of which can be found on the Venn.

Complaints about staff behaviour

2.5. Complaints about the behaviour of members of College staff can be made through the [Students' Complaints Procedure-Staff Behaviour](#), details of which can be found on the Venn. Complaints can be formal or informal in nature and will follow the procedures of employment law regarding the College's relationship with its members of staff.

Complaints about of the behaviour of Fellows

2.6. If students wish to make a complaint about the behaviour of a fellow, they should write to the Senior Tutor (or to the Registry if it is the Senior Tutor whose conduct is the subject of a complaint, where another College Officer will be deputed to examine the complaint). They may wish to raise the issue first with their tutor and the tutor will then pass on the issue to the Senior Tutor with their student's consent.

2.6.1. The Senior Tutor will, within a week, meet with the student to discuss the issue and they will agree whether the student wishes to make an informal or formal complaint.

2.6.2. In the case of an *informal complaint* the Senior Tutor will then make any enquiries that seem necessary and, except in cases delayed by the referral of questions to other officers or committees, will endeavour to produce a considered response in writing within a month of their first receipt of the complaint along with a further offer to discuss the response in person. Any remedial action required will be taken with the minimum of delay.

2.6.3. A *formal complaint* will be made to the Master (or to the President if the complaint is about the Master). If a complaint has not been already been made informally, the Master or President will ask the Senior Tutor (or another College Officer if the complaint is about the Senior Tutor) to examine the complaint and to submit a written record of the examination, to be attached to the letter of complaint received and to the letters already sent to the student and to the officer.

2.6.4. Once the Master (or President) has all the papers then/he shall decide to take one of the three following courses of action: a) dismiss the complaint and write to the student explaining the reasons for this; b) refer the complaint back to the Senior Tutor to be dealt with on an informal basis (only if the complaint has not already been dealt with informally); c) follow the procedures outlined in Statute 56 Part III [Discipline, Dismissal and Removal from Office] for the instituting of a Discipline Committee.

3. External review

Any student who has pursued a complaint appropriately within the College and remains dissatisfied with its handling may take the matter up with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Information about the Office and its work is available at www.oiahe.org.uk or from the Senior Tutor's Assistant, who also has copies of forms that may be used to raise concerns with the office.

4. Raising concerns about other students

4.1. Students are expected to abide by the College Regulations at all times and failure to do so is treated seriously. The College will take action against students who have failed to abide by Regulations in accordance with the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) but students are also able to access this procedure when they wish to raise a concern about another student's behaviour.

4.2. The College is committed to providing equal opportunities for learning and personal development to all its students, in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and will act to ensure that this commitment is upheld by all its members. Any form of discrimination or harassment whether undertaken in physical or virtual spheres will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

4.3. The Tutor for Discipline is responsible for upholding discipline in the College and complaints about other students should be raised with them. Details of how this may be

done are laid out in the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) and also in the [Brief Guide to the Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).

5. Harassment and discrimination

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities for learning and personal development to all its students, in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#). It may happen, however, that despite the College's best endeavours students still feel that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination on these grounds.

The following are among actions liable to disciplinary investigation and possible sanction via the College authorities:

- Physical or sexual harassment; this includes unwanted comments of a sexual nature, innuendo, sexual invitations, or physical contact
- Predatory behaviour, especially in respect of students new to Cambridge
- Language, terminology or imagery that is misogynistic or sexist, or that abusively objectifies men or women
- Abusive language relating to religion, disability or age
- Racist, homophobic or heterosexist language
- Spreading of malicious or salacious rumours about individuals or groups by social media or other means.

Conduct will be taken to amount to unacceptable harassment if any reasonable person could have complained about it, whether or not it was intended to be intimidating, hostile or offensive, and whether or not it has been repeated. Students who feel they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination can contact the College Discrimination or Harassment Contact (cdhc@cai.cam.ac.uk) for advice and support. They can also contact their tutor or the Senior Tutor for advice and support. Students wishing to make a complaint about harassment or discrimination can do so through the procedures for complaints against staff, students or fellows as laid out above and will be supported through the process.

The College's policy on harassment and sexual assault is in the College Regulations (13).

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