PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS BY PERSONS EXTERNAL TO THE UNIVERSITY

The University welcomes all constructive feedback on its activities, whether positive or negative, and understands that, from time to time, people or organisations external to the University may feel their expectations have not been met by the University, its staff or students. This procedure aims to provide a mechanism which will deal with any such complaints in a timely and open way.

1. Who may raise a complaint using this procedure?
   - Anyone who is affected by the activities of the University including those receiving or seeking a service or those who have been subject to a decision of the University.
   - Students may not use this procedure and are directed in the first instance to the Students Handbook of Regulations. Copies can be obtained from Registry or by downloading from the intranet at http://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/regulationsandpolicies/studentregs/
   - Staff may not use this procedure and are directed in the first instance to the staff grievance procedure at http://www.hud.ac.uk/hr/policies/?id=1000018
   - Any complaints in relation to the recruitment or selection of staff are excluded from this procedure, since these are covered by the Recruitment and Selection Procedure, a copy of which can be found at http://www.hud.ac.uk/hr/policies/policymenu/index.php?id=100280

2. Before you raise a complaint

Please consider whether there are more appropriate procedures to make your point such as suggestion schemes or other feedback mechanisms. If you require any further information on what more appropriate procedures may be available, you should contact the University Secretary at the Office of the University Secretary, The University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH.

3. What information should the complaint contain?
   - The background to the complaint including dates and times of any particular incidents and the names of any people against whom you are complaining or who can provide evidence in support of your complaint.
   - Any specific issues which you want to be addressed.
   - What outcome(s) you hope to achieve from the complaints process.
   - Complaints should not contain offensive or abusive language. Vexatious and malicious complaints (ie repeated or persistent complaints which are trivial or untrue, made purposely to abuse this complaints procedure) or those
accompanyed by abusive or aggressive behaviour will not be dealt with under this procedure.

4. Stage 1 - Making an initial complaint (informal)

4.1 Complaints can often be resolved satisfactorily and dealt with quickly on an informal basis. If possible, talk informally to the person most directly involved in the situation you wish to complain about and as soon as possible after the situation arises. You should, in any event, make your complaint within 1 calendar month of the event.

4.2 The staff member will attempt to resolve the complaint and, within 7 working days of it being received will acknowledge its receipt and as soon as possible thereafter, will write to you with one of the following outcomes:

- The complaint has been resolved.
- The complaint requires more time to investigate the matter(s) raised.
- The complaint can be resolved (stating a specified timescale for resolution, if possible).
- The complaint cannot be resolved in the way you require and you can pursue a formal complaint if you wish.

5. Making a formal complaint

5.1 Stage 2 – Initiating a formal complaint

5.1.1 To initiate a formal complaint you must complete a complaint form which can be found at the end of this document. Formal complaints must be submitted within 1 month of the event complained of occurring, or if you have made an informal complaint in accordance with clause 4.1 above, within 12 working days of the date of the letter notifying you of the outcome to your informal complaint.

5.1.2 Completed forms should be passed to the appropriate Dean of School, Director or Head of Service who will acknowledge receipt (and, if possible, make an initial response) within 7 working days. S/he will then undertake a full investigation. If you are unsure about the identity of the person to whom you should submit the form, you can send it to: The University Secretary, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH, who will forward it to the appropriate person.

5.1.3 A full and considered response will usually be made within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed in that time for good reason (such as staff unavailability due to holidays) or the matter is complex, you will be advised of a revised timescale.

5.1.4 If the complaint relates to the conduct of a member of staff, this will be investigated under the staff disciplinary procedure. You will receive a response in accordance with the timescale of that procedure (the University
reserves the right to maintain confidentiality in relation to staff disciplinary matters). This will signal the conclusion of the matter. No stage 3 Final Review process is available for staff disciplinary matters.

5.2 **Stage 3 – Final Review**

5.2.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision from Stage 2, you may refer the matter to the appropriate member of the University’s Senior Management Team. The letter you receive at the end of Stage 2 will tell you who this is but it will usually be one of the following:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning): complaints against students.
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise): complaints about research or about University partners both home and abroad.
- University Secretary: complaints relating to any other service supplied by the University or complaints about University Council members or otherwise relating to the business of the University Council or its committees.

5.2.2 To initiate a final review you must write to the appropriate person above and indicate in your letter who has previously dealt with your complaint and why you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2. To initiate a final review you must write to the appropriate person within 12 working days of the date of the letter notifying you of the outcome to your formal complaint.

5.2.3 The final review will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of your letter and the outcome will be reported to you in writing. This decision is final and there will be no further avenue of review in the University. If there is an external review body to whom the matter can be referred, (such as the Information Commissioner) we will advise you of this when we report the outcome of the final review.

6. **What you can expect from the University**

We will:

- Deal impartially with your complaint within the time frames set out above and in a polite and straightforward way.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process, revealing information to others only to the extent necessary to complete a proper investigation and make a considered response and keeping the record of your complaint separate from other records.
- Ensure that no complaint made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in the future.
External complaints form

This form is to be completed under Stage 2 of the procedure for complaints by persons external to the University.

Please complete in block capitals or type

Personal Details

Title: …… Name:…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint:
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Postcode:……………………. Telephone/Mobile number:……………………………………

Outline of complaint, including dates of actions (please use additional sheets if necessary):
Please explain here what steps you have taken, together with dates, to resolve your complaint locally (as per the informal procedure):


Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received:


Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:


As part of the investigation of your complaint any members of staff or students mentioned may be made aware of the complaint, as will the Dean/Head of the Academic or Service Department involved.

Declaration
I declare that the information given in this form is true, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed:.............................................. Date:..............................................

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Complaints relating to Schools: Dean of the School to which the complaint relates.

Complaints relating to Services (including the Business Gateway): Director or Head of Service to which the complaint relates.

If you are unsure to whom the form should be returned (and for matters relating to Freedom of Information), please send it to the University Secretary who will ensure it reaches the appropriate recipient.

The University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH

This form is available in alternative formats, including large font, Braille and an electronic version. If you would like an alternative format of this form, please contact University Secretary on 01484 473000 or at The University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH.