

SECTION 30: COMPLAINTS IN RELATION TO COURSE PROCEDURE & COMPLAINTS IN RELATION TO BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

Background

There are a number of procedures open to trainees who have serious concerns about their training and who wish to raise these with the Course or the University. Before detailing them it is worth observing that all these procedures encourage trainees to initiate “informal” discussion before invoking formal procedures. This is not a way of discouraging them from drawing attention to concerns, more a hope that matters can be resolved efficiently through this route. However, if this option is not felt to be appropriate by the trainee, or they feel that the outcome of ‘informal’ discussions has not been satisfactory, they may wish to invoke formal procedures.

In the first instance “informal” discussion means drawing attention to any concerns by talking to Course Tutors, members of staff with whom the trainee feels comfortable (for example, if the trainee feels that their relationship with the Tutor is not a good one), or with the Course Directors. The Course aims to be responsive, and many matters can be resolved through these routes. However, there may be times when the course itself is the problem, and trainees might consider a more formal procedure more appropriate. These are outlined below, with hyperlinks to the fuller descriptions available on the UCL website.

Complaints in relation to course procedures

The usual reason for initiating a complaint is that the trainee believes some aspect of course procedure or regulation has not been followed appropriately, and they wish to challenge decisions made by markers, examiners or placement supervisors.

The complaints procedures related to course assessments are the same in relation to exams, research and case reports, but there is some variation in relation to placements (see below). The relevant Sections of this handbook which focus on ‘passing and failing’ should be consulted for more detailed information.

The UCL Student Complaints Procedure is available at:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-6-student-casework-framework/section-10-ucl-student-complaints-procedure>

If after bringing any concerns to the attention of the course a resolution is not found, trainees may lodge a formal complaint to the University. Prior to initiating this, trainees should initially speak with UCL’s Student Mediator (see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/student-mediator>)

Complaints in relation to bullying/harassment or discrimination at UCL

Some complaints are based not on concerns about academic procedures or course delivery, but on issues where the trainee believes that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, such as harassment or bullying. This includes sexual and racial harassment.

As a student of UCL and as an employee (or honorary employee) of the NHS trainees should be aware of the equality and diversity policies that apply both in college and while on placement. A first – and obvious – step in making these meaningful is to ensure that trainees know that such policies exist and to whom they apply, and also know how to access them.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UCL has numerous policies and procedures and sources of support covering race, gender, transitioning gender, religion and belief, LGBTQ+, and disability. The following webpage has a link to some relevant policies:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/policies/equality>

Further detailed information can be found on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/equality-diversity-inclusion>

Dignity at UCL

The following website has information on UCL's policy and procedure relating to harassment, intimidation and bullying, as well as advice for staff and students:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/dignity-ucl>

You also have the option to make an anonymous report about any harassment or bullying through [Report and Support](#). Alternatively, if you provide your name and contact details, a [Dignity Advisor](#) will then follow up with you. UCL has a network of trained Dignity Advisors who provide an informal, confidential information service to staff and students on issues relating to bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct.

You can also make a formal complaint (if appropriate) through [UCL complaint procedures](#). We would also encourage you to discuss any issues with course staff, so that we can support you and also investigate the issue, as appropriate.

Complaints related to clinical placements

Trainees spend a significant proportion of time in clinical settings, meaning that some complaints could arise from placement rather than college experience.

Managing minor and serious placement concerns

The Three North Thames courses have an agreed procedure for managing minor and serious placement concerns and the relevant document is available here:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology-doctorate/placement-quality-management-and-managing-placement-concerns>

Complaints about placement colleagues

Complaints which arise from the behaviour of NHS colleagues with whom the trainee has contact may ultimately need to be addressed through the relevant Trust and its local investigatory and disciplinary procedures. Where a placement is not in an NHS setting, the usual course of action will be to follow the investigatory and disciplinary procedures of the placement organisation, bearing in mind C&I's obligations to the trainee and UCL's duty of care to the trainee.

Supervisors and the Course will offer support to trainees who wish to activate these procedures. The first stage would be 'informal' discussion with supervisors, Course Tutors or college visitors (as appropriate) in order to consider the best course of action, with formal complaint procedures subsequently being invoked if these are deemed appropriate.

Formal procedures may include:

- making a formal complaint (if appropriate) via local trust procedures.
- 'whistleblowing' (see [C&I](#) guidance for when whistleblowing is a potential course of action)

Complaints which relate to bullying, discrimination or harassment on placement

A specific 'class' of complaint relates to the experience of bullying, discrimination or harassment. Whether at college or on placement trainees are entitled to be treated in a manner which does not conflict with policies developed to protect the rights of each individual, usually in line with relevant national legislation.

All NHS Trusts have similar policies and procedures in relation to bullying, discrimination or harassment, and although trainees are referred to the documentation prepared by their employing Trust (Camden and Islington Foundation Trust), it is safe to assume that similar policies and procedures apply across all London Trusts. For placements outside of the NHS, the usual course of action will be to follow the relevant policy and procedure of the placement organisation, bearing in mind UCL's duty of care to the trainee. Where a smaller third sector placement provider does not have a respective policy, the principles outlined in the C&I policy should be followed.

Camden and Islington Foundation Trust Bullying and Discrimination Policy and Procedure

For ease of reference, the C&I Bullying and Discrimination Policy and Procedure (August, 2019), which covers bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimization, is in Appendix 1 to this section of the handbook. (This document is current as at 06.08.21 but trainees should check it remains the applicable policy and procedure given it is updated from time to time.)

Camden and Islington Foundation Trust Grievance Policy and Procedures (March 2019)

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints relating to your employment that you wish to raise with management. For ease of reference, the C&I Grievance Policy and Procedures (March, 2019) is in Appendix 2 to this section of the handbook. (This document is current as at 06.08.21 but trainees should check these are the applicable policy and procedures given the document is updated from time to time.)