



WTC
STUDENT COMPLAINTS
POLICY

NOVEMBER 2021

WTC Student Complaints Policy	
Purpose	To set out clearly the steps by which students can make a complaint and to clarify for the staff, HDs and Faculty on how any complaint will be dealt with and by whom.
Enquiries	Enquiries about the Complaints Policy should be directed to the Chief Operating Officer (Janey Lawry-White) at operations@wtctheology.org.uk
UKPRN	10030973
Legal Address	Suite 5, Winchcombe House, 37-39 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NA
Author	Chief Operating Officer
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Next Review	Executive Team
Staff member responsible for update	Chief Operating Officer

Introduction

WTC has a culture of continuous improvement and we welcome feedback and recommendations by students. At the same time, we recognise that there may be occasions when students are dissatisfied and that there needs to be a process in place to deal with these concerns fairly, transparently, and in a timely way.

Along with every Higher Education Institution, WTC's Complaints Policy sets out how we monitor, log and resolve complaints. Students will be directed to this policy, along with other statements and codes of conduct during their induction as WTC students. They can access all of these documents via the Student Portal (MyWTC).

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals defines a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the University's action or lack of action, or about a standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University”.¹

Regular Feedback Processes

WTC has a number of mechanisms by which comments, including complaints, can be fed back to the staff team and dealt with as soon as they arise. The primary mechanism is the **Weekly Feedback Form** completed by all Hub Directors (HDs) each week, which is monitored, and the appropriate action taken weekly during term time, by the relevant staff member at WTC. (i.e. an IT issue will be acted upon by the Director of IT; issues to do with the faculty by the relevant Dean or Director of Studies etc).

Students can also feedback via their HDs, who meet for a **weekly HD telecom** as a team with the Director of Hub Operations (DHO) via zoom. Any complaints or concerns raised in these meetings will be fed back to the respective member of the staff team to take appropriate action by the DHO.

Each Hub has a **Student Representative** who will meet formally with the academic and operational staff of WTC twice during the academic year to discuss feedback from the student body. However, Student Reps can approach any member of staff (as can all students) at any time.

WTC values mean that all staff, including senior staff, are available to talk to any student by zoom or phone on request. Students can email to make an appointment with the Principal or other staff members and time will be allocated to these conversations.

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<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/handling-complaints-and-academic-appeals/>

Students complaints procedure

WTC values the views of its students, and aims to manage complaints in a way that is sensitive to each specific case in order to serve our goal of providing an exceptional student experience. The underlying principle of our complaints process is to resolve any issue at the lowest possible level.

There are a number of informal channels through which it is hoped that most problems will be resolved. If, however, you need to pursue a complaint formally, you can be sure that WTC will treat it seriously and impartially, on the basis set out in this document. Students who wish to make a complaint should raise it directly with the appropriate member of staff, or the Faculty of HD, at the earliest opportunity. The different routes for complaints on different areas of college life are:

- *Internal Hub complaints* – please address your complaint to your Hub Director.
- *Hub Director complaints* – please address your complaint to the WTC Director of Hub Operations, Matt Dobson at DHO@wtctheology.org.uk.
- *Faculty complaints* – please address your complaint to the Faculty member themselves in the first place (or for any complaints about the module). If you are not satisfied with the response from the Faculty member, or there is no response with , please address the complaint to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (ug@wtctheology.org.uk) or the Dean of Postgraduate Studies (pg@wtctheology.org.uk) depending on which course you are studying.
- *WTC Staff complaints* - please address your complaint to the CoO (operations@wtctheology.org.uk). If your complaint is about the CoO, please address it to the Principal at principal@wtctheology.org.uk. If your complaint is about the Principal, please contact the Chair of the WTC Board. (Contact the CoO at operations@wtctheology.org.uk for the Chair's contact details.)
- In the final analysis, any personal or other complaints which are unresolved through the previous channels should be addressed to the Principal at principal@wtctheology.org.uk.

While it is relatively rare for complaints not to be resolvable internally, the University of Chester has a detailed process in place to deal with complaints which cannot be resolved within WTC. This is available for students to access via

Chester's Portal or to see upon request, and staff at WTC will help students to understand the process if this is needed.²

Process

It is our goal to recognise problems before they develop to the stage where a student considers that a formal complaint is the only way forward. In the first instance, you should talk to the appropriate person (see above) to see if the situation can be resolved before the situation has escalated to the point where a written complaint is the only way forward.

Written complaints will be logged immediately, unless they are of a frivolous nature that has no bearing on the student experience. If resolution has been attempted informally, and the student is not satisfied with the outcome or proposal, their concern then becomes a *de facto* complaint, and will be logged by WTC in our Complaints Log.

The complaint will be dealt with by the appropriate member of WTC staff (see above). They will listen to both sides of the issue with the student and other person involved (faculty, HD etc), and will make an initial response in writing within seven days of the written complaint being made. The staff member who 'owns' the complaint will be responsible to pursue the complaint to a resolution which is acceptable to the complainant, seeking advice from their supervisors and other staff members if necessary.

If the solution proposed is not acceptable to the complainant, the issue will be escalated to the Principal of WTC for action and resolution.

In the final analysis, if a resolution cannot be reached within WTC, the complaint will be escalated to the University of Chester.

The process taken and any agreements/solutions made will be logged with the complaint in writing and the records kept for a period of five years after the complaint has been made. It will then be deleted in line with our Data Retention Policy and good GDPR practice.

² Log into the Chester portal with your student log in details, and go to the Students' Policies and Guidance page for the Students' Complaints Procedure 2021.