



Treoirlínte do mhic léinn Gearáin ó Mhic Léinn

Guidelines for Students Student Complaints

Author: Tom O'Hara, Student Complaints Officer

Guidelines for Students

Student Complaints

The following guidelines are here to assist students through each step of the complaints process. A key principle of this procedure is that, in general, complaints are best dealt with at the most local level possible.

Please refer to the Student Complaints Procedure document for further information before submitting a complaint.

Timeframes: Complaints should be made as soon as possible. Complaints that have not been made within **3 months** of the incident will not normally be accepted. Complaints made in good faith, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not, will not result in a negative consequence for students.

Supports: If you have an issue or a complaint, please remember there are number of supports available to students; [Student Services | Maynooth University](#).

Complaints concerning the following can be dealt with under this process:

- Academic, administrative, or student support service processes or procedures.
- The standard or quality of services and facilities provided.
- Unfair treatment by the university or its staff.
- An alleged action or inaction by the university or a member of its staff.



This procedure involves three tiers/steps to handle student issues and complaints. Guidelines are provided for each stage below:

[Step 1: Raising the issue informally at local level](#)

[Step 2: Making a formal complaint at department/school/unit level](#)

[Step 3: Making a formal complaint at university level](#)

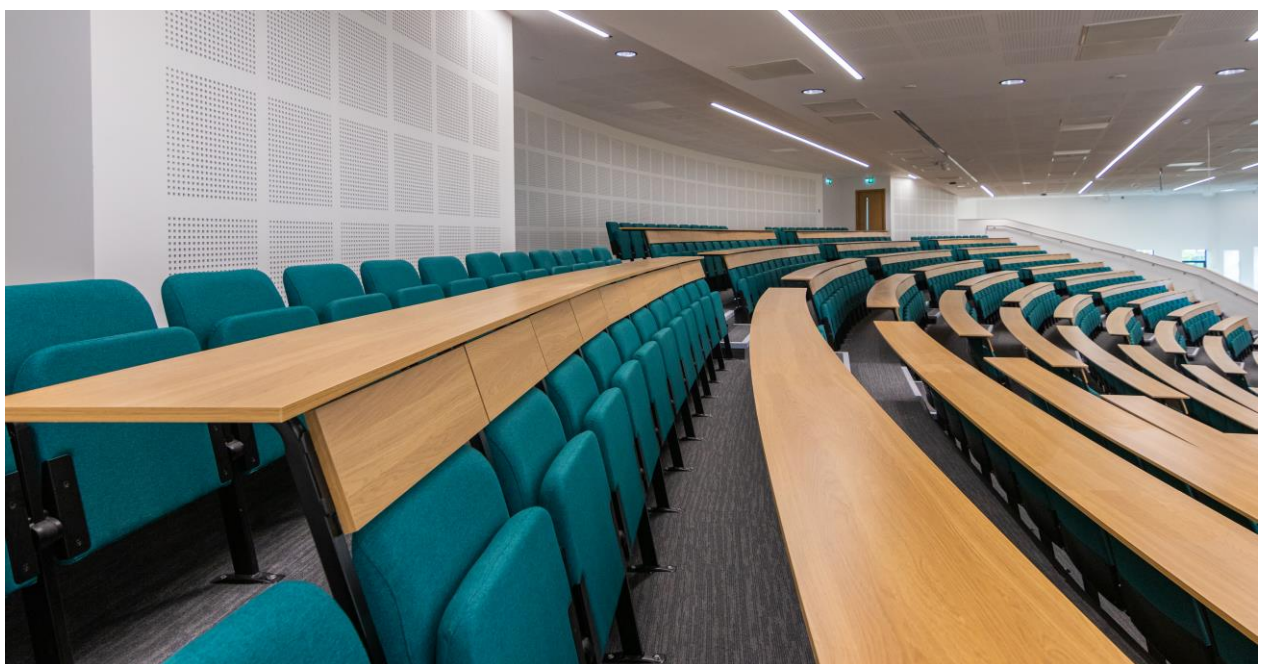


Step 1: Raising the issue informally at local level

- If you have an issue in relation to the services provided by Maynooth University or its staff, you should firstly attempt to raise it directly with the person responsible/involved if possible.
- If your issue relates to something else, please check on the [student complaints homepage](#) where some of the most common types of student issues are listed which may assist in directing your concern. If you are still unsure about how to proceed, please contact the student complaints officer at student.complaints@mu.ie for further advice.
- You can communicate your concern in person, by phone or through electronic means. Staff and office contact information are available on the Maynooth University website.
- Please raise your issue as soon as possible as most issues can be resolved quickly and effectively at an informal, local level.
- Tell the person concerned how the issue has impacted you and how you would like for it to be resolved.
- Please remember to be calm and courteous when raising your issue as our staff, like our students should be treated with respect and dignity. Communicating your issue in a clear and measured manner will allow the person/persons to understand your concern, how it may have affected you and work with you to achieve a resolution promptly.
- Please make a written record of your attempts to raise and resolve the issue informally and retain any correspondence, as this may be referred to if you escalate the issue to a formal complaint.
- If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of local resolution with the person/persons involved, you may escalate the issue to a formal complaint to the relevant Department/School or Unit.

Step 2: Making a formal complaint at department/school/unit level

- If you have been unable to find a satisfactory resolution at the informal local level, you may make a formal complaint to the relevant department, school or unit.
- Contact information for every department/school/unit is available on the Maynooth University website: [Departments | Maynooth University](#) under the 'contact us' section of each department/school/unit.
- Students should make the complaint in writing to the head of the department/school/unit concerned stating clearly that it is a formal complaint.
- Please use appropriate and respectful language when compiling your complaint and ensure that it is factual.
- If you are submitting a formal complaint in writing, please ensure to include the following information at a minimum:
 1. Your name, email, student number, address and contact number.
 2. A clear description of your complaint, including relevant dates and times where applicable.
 3. A clear list of the specific issues, starting with the most important issue of concern to you.
 4. A clear statement of what you are seeking to achieve (resolution).
 5. Where possible, you should include any relevant evidence, such as copies of emails or relevant documents.
- When making your complaint, please note that it will be shown to the person (or people) about whom the complaint is made.
- Please note that your complaint may be shared with external agencies if deemed necessary (For example, Gardai/Tusla)



Step 3: Making a formal complaint at university Level

- Where a student or a group of students have been unable to find a satisfactory resolution to their formal complaint made at department/school/unit level (Step 2), they may escalate their complaint to a university level complaint.
- You may submit a complaint at this level by completing the [university level complaint form](#) and emailing it to the student complaints officer at Student.complaints@mu.ie.
- If you have not made a formal complaint to the relevant department/school/unit (Step 2) please explain why in the section provided as the complaints officer may seek clarification on this.
- In submitting complaints under this procedure, students are reminded of the expectation outlined in the rules & regulations for Students. Complaints deemed frivolous, vexatious or containing false information will be rejected. If the complaints committee considers that a complaint is malicious it may refer it to the student discipline process of the University.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- The student complaints officer may seek clarification or additional information from you if required.
- The student complaints officer will seek responses from persons named in your complaint who will be shown your complaint. Please bare this in mind when drafting your complaint.
- Your complaint will then be summarised and along with the original complaint, be presented to the complaints committee for consideration.
- While the process is primarily paper based on written submissions, the committee may request an in-person meeting with either or both parties at its discretion. For more information on in-person meetings please refer to the Student Complaints Procedure document.
- The decision of the Committee will be communicated to you, the staff member(s) who were the subject of the complaint, the relevant head of dept/unit and the University Executive.
- If you believe that there was a material breach of the process in the handling of a complaint by the student complaints officer or the complaints committee, you may appeal the decision in writing to the registrar. If the appeal is upheld, the registrar will ask the complaints committee to review the matter again.



