



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Queen Margaret University's complaints procedure – a guide for students

Queen Margaret University is committed to providing an excellent education and high quality services to our students from enrolment to graduation.

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- the quality and standard of any service we provide
- the quality of our facilities and learning resources
- the quality and standards of academic services and personal support services available to you
- the quality and standards of administrative processes
- unfair treatment by a student or staff member.

Your complaint may involve more than one of the University's services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a request under freedom of information or data protection legislation
- requests for compensation from the University
- things that are covered by academic appeals, such as academic judgements and decisions
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal

- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by the services of the University can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf you will need their personal written consent. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person on campus, by phone, by post, or by email.

Please see the University's [Complaints Form](#), which provides a template structure for submitting complaints.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff within the department you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Contact details

Email: complaints@gmu.ac.uk

Post: Legal Adviser, Queen Margaret University, Musselburgh, EH21 6UU

Telephone: +44 (0)131 474 0000

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.
Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. Where possible, your concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member, tutor, university representative or school office or at a staff/student liaison meeting. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. You may choose to do this immediately or shortly after you get our initial decision.

Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. We have a complaint form, which will help you to state your complaint clearly to us. Although we will also accept complaints that are made in person or on the phone, we encourage you to complete the complaint form in the interests of clarity and in order to best assist the investigation process.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

By Post:

Freepost SPSO

This is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need to use a stamp.

Freephone:

0800 377 7330

Fax:

0800 377 7331

Online contact:

www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website:

www.spsso.org.uk

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your written consent to complain for you.

Useful contacts details:

- The Students' Union: <http://qmusu.org.uk/>
- Quality Enhancement Unit: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/default.htm>
- Citizens Advice Bureau: <http://www.citizensadviceedinburgh.co.uk/>

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all students. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us in person, contact us at the above address or on the telephone or email us at complaints@qmu.ac.uk.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille)