

Complaints Policy of the MCR of Balliol College, Oxford

Balliol College MCR views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person [or organisation] that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- To make sure every member of the MCR Committee knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired;
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the MCR and its services.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any member of the MCR; any customer of its services; and any member of the public that has cause to complain. A complaint can be received by email or in writing.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the MCR President.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required. It was adopted on 6th November 2022 and last reviewed on 16th November 2022.

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to Balliol MCR President, Balliol College, Holywell Manor, Oxford, OX1 3UH or by e-mail at mcr.complaints@balliol.ox.ac.uk.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Any receiver of a complaint should pass the complaint to the MCR President.

Complaints should contain:

- The facts of the complaint;
- The complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- The relationship of the complainant to the MCR (for example: customer, member).

If a complaint is received by any member of the MCR Committee, it should be passed immediately to the MCR President to ensure the Complaints Procedure is implemented.

If a verbal complaint is received by any person, the recipient should tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure and that complaints should be submitted in writing or by email to the MCR President.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Nonetheless, the recipient of the complaint should first notify the MCR President of the complaint against them and seek the MCR President's advice. The complaint should be passed to the MCR President in any situation.

On receiving the complaint, the MCR President records it in the complaints log. If the recipient of the complaint feels they cannot resolve the issue, the MCR President can delegate an appropriate person – ordinarily, the Returning Officer – to investigate the complaint and take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within three working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply within two weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by an independent person, appointed by the Governing Body. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Master.

The request for a review by the Governing Body should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Master may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution, for example Oxford SU, NUS, or the University.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:
www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Governing Body may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.