

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

General Guidance

- a) For each case being referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee, it is mandatory to complete a Student Discipline Referral Form (SDR). This form should be accompanied by any other relevant material e.g. witness statements available at the time. The (SDR) and statements will be provided to the student in advance of any meeting.
- b) Officers authorised to take action on behalf of the Student Discipline Committee are identified in section 4.1 of the Ordinance.
- c) Where an authorised officer refers a case to the Student Discipline Committee, it will be necessary for full and final papers (including the SDR form) to be with the Committee Secretary no later than 10 working days before the date of the next relevant committee meeting. All papers will be provided to the student concerned.
- d) When an authorised officer imposes a penalty upon a student, details should be supplied to the student and copied to Ms Pat Gillen, Office of the University Secretary (OUS), using a Decision of Authorised Officer Form or the standard outcome letter template.

On-campus incidents – Coleraine, Jordanstown & Magee Campuses

The disciplinary procedures are as follows:

The Accommodation Officer (AO) receives a report regarding an alleged breach of the rules of residences by a resident. The AO reviews the report and depending on the nature and severity of the alleged breach will decide on an appropriate course of action as follows:

- a) Incidents of a minor nature AO brings students in for an informal chat and explains the consequences of any future behaviour of this nature.
- b) incidents of a more serious nature or for repeat offenders the AO invites students to attend disciplinary interview to discuss the incident;
- c) Depending on the nature of the offence, the AO may decide to impose a caution, reprimand or fine. (AO can issue fines to student resident in university accommodation up to a maximum amount of £150).
- d) The AO will then advise the student advising them of sanction e.g. fine, warning etc, if fined a 'decision of authorised officer form is issued to the student (copy to OUS) and the student is advised fines are to be paid to Residential Services.
- e) Incidents of a more serious nature can be referred by the AO to the Director of Campus Life (for removal of student from Residences) or the student may be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee.

Off-campus incidents – Coleraine & Magee Campuses

All incidents received by the Provost's Office, University reception, Student Support, faculty staff or Residential Services that potentially involve Ulster students are forwarded directly to AO for investigation.

AO identifies if those responsible are Ulster University students;

- f) If the AO establishes that Ulster University students are occupants of the property the AO advises the students of the reported incident;
- g) For minor incidents or first offences not disputed; the students are warned and advised that further incidents of this nature may result in them appearing before a Disciplinary meeting with the Provost.
- h) For incidents of a more serious nature or repeat offenders, the AO will involve the Provost with whom students are requested to attend a Disciplinary interview. The AO, the Course Director and/or Head of School may also be invited to attend. The letter inviting students to a disciplinary interview is issued by the Provost's office.
- i) The outcome from this Disciplinary interview is notified to the student by the Provost's office (copied to Mrs Gillen) and if a fine is imposed, an invoice request form is completed by the Provost's office and sent to finance to process."

Off-campus incidents – Jordanstown/Belfast

The Community Relations Coordinator (CRC) receives complaint. These may be notified via Belfast City Council, PSNI, Residents and other complaints. The Community Support Assistant searches Cognos/Banner systems for property address or name match. If none are found the CRC will either authorise a designated officer to visit the property or visit themselves.

- j) If officers fail to engage with tenants a University letter is left informing tenants to contact CRC.
- k) If no contact is made the CRC will request the BCC or PSNI to call to collect names.
- l) Once the identity of the Ulster student is known and confirmed an email is sent to the student requesting they attend an investigatory meeting with the CRC.
- m) Details of the complaint, ordinance reference XLI-(1.2b), time, date and venue are all included in the email. The student is also informed that they must give prior notice if they cannot attend the meeting. If they fail to do so they are in breach of the University's Ordinance XLI-1.2a.
- n) After full investigation if there is insufficient evidence for Disciplinary action the case will be closed and filed with no further action.
- o) Where there is sufficient evidence and the case is not contested the CRC will recommend/and action disciplinary sanctions on behalf of Authorised Officer:
 - a) issue of a caution.
 - b) issue a formal warning.
 - a) Issue a fine.
 - b) Alert the student's HOS to the outcome of the caseA combination of a,b,c,d.

Students at investigatory meetings are given full explanation of sanctions and consequences.

- q) Authorised Officer (Provost) office is made aware of actions
- r) Community Relations Office prepares paperwork i.e. Investigating Officer Report, fine letter and issues to Provost PA to inform Finance of fine.
- s) For more serious cases the CRC will refer to Provost for their consideration e.g. repeat offenders, PSNI reports.
- t) The Provost under Ordinance XLI - 4.1 can invite student in for a further investigatory interview and where appropriate impose sanctions
- u) If the Provost deems the case serious enough and outside their empowered remit, they can refer the case to the Student Disciplinary Committee for consideration. All relevant paperwork including completed SRF must be included with referrals.

Appeals against sanctions imposed by Accommodation Officer, Provosts and Student Discipline Committee

If a student is not prepared to accept the decision of the Accommodation Officers who have dealt with the alleged offence, the student has the right to appeal, in writing through the University Secretary within ten days of the decision. The appeal may be either against the decision or against the penalty, or both, and must state briefly the grounds on which it is made. This shall not apply where an Accommodation Officer has referred the matter to the Disciplinary committee in accordance with paragraph 4.4 of the Student Ordinance. The University Secretary will forward the details of the appeal to the Provost of the Campus on which the alleged offence took place. The Provost may set aside, vary or confirm the decision of the Accommodation Officer who dealt with the offence or may set aside or confirm the penalty imposed.

There shall be no appeal from a decision taken by the Provost unless a greater penalty is imposed. Should a greater penalty be imposed the student has the right to appeal to the University Secretary the decision of the Provost. This appeal will be dealt with by the Student Disciplinary Committee at its next available meeting. The Student Disciplinary Committee may set aside, vary or confirm the decision taken by the person who dealt with the offence or may set aside or vary the penalty imposed. there shall be no appeal from a decision taken by the Student Disciplinary Committee unless the Committee has imposed a greater penalty.

If a student is not prepared to accept the decision of the Student Disciplinary Committee the student has the right to appeal in writing through the University Secretary, within ten days of the notification of the decision - in which case the appeal will be considered by the Student Appeal Board.

The Student Appeal Board may set aside, vary or confirm the decision of the Student Disciplinary Committee or may set aside or vary the penalty imposed. There shall be no appeal from a decision of the Student Appeal Board.

Breach of Examination regulations

When a breach of examination regulations incident occurs the senior invigilator reports the incident to the Examination Office on the campus where examination is taking place.

The Examination Office reports the incident to the Provost of relevant campus providing details of the incident and this is copied to Mrs Gillen, Office of the University Secretary, the relevant Executive Dean and Course Director;

The relevant Provost interviews the student and decides on the course of action to take and the outcome letter setting out the decision (following the interview) is sent to the student and copied to the Examination Office and Mrs Gillen (Office of the University Secretary).

If a student is not prepared to accept the decision of the Provost the student has the right to appeal in writing through the University Secretary, within ten days of the notification of the decision - in which case the appeal will be considered by the Student Disciplinary Committee.

Incidents whilst student is on Placement

Incidents are usually notified in writing by the Placement Company to the Head of School or Course Director;

An initial investigatory meeting takes place between the HoS, Course Director and Student to establish the facts of the alleged incident and provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the complaint;

Taking account of the Company's report and response from the student the HoS may discuss the matter with the Executive Dean and agree, for incidents of a serious nature, to refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee for consideration.

Contact Details

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the student discipline ordinance rests with the Office of the University Secretary. Please consult with the Department, as appropriate, if you need guidance, the staff member with responsibility is Pat Gillen at pj.gillen@ulster.ac.uk telephone number 028 70 123669.