

## **APPENDIX N - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

This document lays out the procedures for students who wish the College to consider and, if necessary, respond to serious dissatisfaction with their tuition, or other aspects of college life, in cases that do not involve harassment as defined in the College's Statement of Policy and Code of Practice on Harassment (see Appendix H). The College's complaints procedure has an informal stage and a formal stage and there is an appeals mechanism. Students may begin at the informal stage and then decide whether to move to the formal stage, or they may proceed directly to the formal stage. Students may at all stages be accompanied by another student or member of the College. At the formal stage, students may be accompanied by a representative of the Oxford University Students' Union (OUSU).

Any initial approach to a College Officer or member of staff will be in confidence. If the student does not wish to be identified, the initial approach may be made through another student (eg an officer of the JCR or MCR) or through a Fellow, College Officer or Chaplain. However, it must be understood that certain types of complaint will not be easy to make or sustain anonymously. Any initial approach to a College Officer will be in confidence, and the complainant will be advised of how far further action will involve others knowing his or her identity. Complaints may be withdrawn, but in some circumstances investigation will need to continue to afford the person who has been complained the opportunity to clear his or her name, or so that the College can be satisfied that nothing improper has occurred.

### **Informal stage**

Informal complaints may be raised with any Fellow or College Officer or with the Chaplain. The College Officer or member of staff with whom the complaint has been raised will seek to resolve the complaint as soon as possible by informal means. He or she may seek information from the complainant or from any others involved, subject to the consent of the complainant. He or she may also refer the complaint to another appropriate College Officer or member of staff, subject to the consent of the complainant.

### **Formal Stage**

Formal Complaints should be made in writing to a College Officer. The relevant College Officers are as follows:

- For academic matters: the Senior Tutor
- For matters involving college staff, accommodation or meals: the Bursar
- For financial matters: the Bursar
- For behavioural or disciplinary matters: the Dean
- For complaints about a College Officer: the Vice-Principal

The College Officer receiving notification of a formal complaint shall a) seek to offer sympathetic and confidential advice; and/or b) seek to find a remedy that is satisfactory to the complainant, or effect a reconciliation (in cases where relations have broken down between individuals, and where the complainant does not object to this course of action).

If the College Officer approached is unable to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the

complainant, the complainant may write to the Principal. The Principal will consider what action is desirable and will, if necessary, convene a panel of up to three Fellows (none of whom should be named in the complaint and none of whom should be a College Officer) to investigate. The panel will report to the Principal who shall decide what action is to be taken. When this stage is completed the Principal will issue a 'Completion of Procedures' letter to the complainant stating that all internal procedures have been completed.

(Note: in the event of a complaint that involves the Principal, the Vice-Principal shall take the place of the Principal in the formal stage of the process).

## **Appeals**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the College's procedures, he or she may appeal to the Conference of Colleges Appeal Tribunal (CCAT). Information on CCAT may be obtained from the Principal's and Bursar's Secretary. The 'Completion of Procedures' letter sent to the complainant shall make clear that the complainant may, if dissatisfied with the outcome, complain further to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within three months of the date of the 'Completion of Procedures' letter. This same process will apply to complaints raised in relation to procedures under the College's Statement of Policy and Code of Practice on Harassment, and under the College's academic and non-academic disciplinary procedures. The right to take a complaint to the OIA only arises when all college procedures have been completed. The OIA will not entertain appeals in certain areas, most notably those of academic judgement or admissions matters. Material on the OIA may be obtained from the Principal's and Bursar's Secretary.

## **Recording**

Each College Officer will keep a register of formal complaints made during the academic year. A summary of numbers and outcomes for each will be collated by the Secretary to the Governing Body and presented to the Governing Body at the start of the following academic year.