

SGSAH Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose of this Complaints Procedure

1.1 Context

The Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) is committed to providing an excellent and fair experience for funded PhD researchers, the wider SGSAH PhD community and all stakeholders. We have a duty to maintain and enhance the quality of our provision and to provide an effective system for handling complaints.

This complaints guidance provides information to ensure that complainants can raise matters of concern without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected. We value complaints and use information from them to support our stakeholders and help us improve our services.

This document provides guidance for applicants, current award-holders and other SGSAH stakeholders on how to raise a complaint if an issue relates to:

- How applications for funding have been handled by SGSAH
- Any service provision offered by SGSAH
- Actions or behaviour of any members of SGSAH staff
- Experiencing or witnessing harassment or bullying through any aspect of SGSAH interaction and/or provision.

1.2 Our commitment

All complaints will be recorded, along with any action taken, as part of the [protocols](#) at SGSAH's host institution, the University of Glasgow.

If the complaint relates to issues around supervision, institutional resources, any consideration of interruptions to study or any individual at your HEI (staff or student), it should be directed via your HEI's complaints policy. If you are uncertain where to find this, please contact your [HEI admin or the SGSAH Executive](#) member from your HEI. If you are dissatisfied with the response your HEI, you can escalate your complaint to the next stage of your HEI's Complaints Handling Procedure.

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

1. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction around the standard of service, behaviours, action or lack of action by or on behalf of SGSAH.
2. The complainant is the person making the complaint.
3. An appeal is a formal process for reconsidering an official decision on funding applications or the wording/ terms/ conditions of an offer.

2. Raising a complaint with SGSAH

2.1 SGSAH Process

Stage 1: Frontline response

We aim to respond to complaints within 5 working days. This timeline could mean immediate action for straightforward issues requiring little or no investigation, or acknowledgement for more complicated complaints. If you are not satisfied with the response provided at this stage, we will explain next steps.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those where the complainant remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days, with resolution or a definitive response provided within 20 working days

2.2 What you can complain about

<i>Type of Complaint</i>	<i>Where to direct complaint</i>
Experiencing or witnessing issues of bullying, harassment or unfit conduct.	<p>If it pertains to any individual at your HEI (staff or student), it should be directed via your HEI's complaints policy, as detailed in 1.2 above.</p> <p>If it relates to any SGSAH business, we will receive the complaint through any route, such as individual HEI supervisors or staff members, SGSAH Team, SGSAH Executive Committee, SGSAH Board, etc. Reference to the University of Glasgow Dignity at Work & Study Policy & Procedure can be made.</p>
Issues relating to any aspects of SGSAH operations	Head of Operations and Strategy: HOS@sgsah.ac.uk or SGSAH Director: Director@sgsah.ac.uk
Disagreement with a decision on funding applications or the wording/ terms/ conditions of an offer ¹ . An appeal on a funding decision will only be considered on grounds of:	Head of Operations and Strategy: HOS@sgsah.ac.uk or

¹ This document provides guidance on how to raise a complaint if you believe your application for a studentship award has been mishandled by SGSAH. This only applies to applications submitted to SGSAH for consortium level review by one of the 17 SGSAH HEI member institutions. If applicants were not nominated to the SGSAH competition review process, any complaint relating to the handling of their application should be directed to the institution they directly applied to.

<p>a. Procedural irregularity, where SGSAH has not adhered to its published guidance for awarding AHRC DTP and/or ARCS funding or other funding, and an applicant believes that the irregularity has caused substantial injustice.</p> <p>b. Bias or perception of bias in the decision-making process. Applicants are required to provide evidence of specific examples with supporting documentation.</p>	<p>SGSAH Director: Director@sgsah.ac.uk</p>
<p>Issue relating to the SGSAH leadership or management</p>	<p>SGSAH Executive Committee</p>
<p>Handling of personal data or any aspect of GDPR</p>	<p>University of Glasgow Data Protection Office: dp@gla.ac.uk</p>
<p>Public Interest Disclosure relating to SGSAH (Whistleblowing)</p>	<p>Follow University of Glasgow Code on Public Interest Disclosure</p>

2.3 What you can't complain about

- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process)
- Request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts, or the Environmental Information Regulations
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- Concerns about actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

3. General Principles

1. If the complaint related to SGSAH is unresolved, it will be escalated to the [SGSAH Executive](#) and, if it remains unresolved, the [SGSAH Board](#). If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from SGSAH they can escalate their complaint to the next stage of [University of Glasgow's complaints procedure](#).
2. Complaints can be made verbally, in writing, face to face, by phone, email or letter.
3. Confidentiality will be respected. Information on a complaint will only be shared with other parties where disclosure is required to ensure a fair investigation (e.g., an applicant's identity may be disclosed to a person or body who is the subject of the complaint or whose decision is being appealed).
4. All parties involved in the complaint are required to respect SGSAH [values](#), and act fairly and courteously towards each other.
5. Those involved in the complaint may act through representation, e.g., staff from one of the SGSAH member HEIs, a family member (for applicants), or a trade union representative (for members of staff).
6. Time limits will normally be met by all parties, although may be extended if necessary, in order to ensure a fair outcome.

7. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that anonymous tips or complaints or those made by third parties will be considered where there are compelling reasons to do so.
8. SGSAH may decline to consider a complaint where the matters in dispute are being considered or have been decided by an external body, such as a court or tribunal.
9. If SGSAH is conflicted, or otherwise unable to determine the matter, it will defer to the [University of Glasgow complaints procedures](#). Those determining the complaint or appeal should not have any conflict of interest in the matter.
10. Anyone who has followed the SGSAH and/or the University's Complaints Procedure and remains dissatisfied with the final response may seek Independent External Review of their complaint by contacting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.