

Complaints and Academic Appeals within the Department of Statistics

1. The University, the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division and the Department of Statistics all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their programme of study will make the need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment) infrequent.
2. However, all those concerned believe that it is important for students to be clear about how to raise a concern or make a complaint, and how to appeal against the outcome of assessment. The following guidance attempts to provide such information.
3. Nothing in this guidance precludes an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below). This is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.
4. Many sources of advice are available within colleges, within departments and from bodies like Oxford University Students' Union or the Counselling Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of these sources before pursuing your complaint.
5. General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should, of course, continue to be raised through the Graduate Liaison Committee, the Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee or via student representation on the department's committees.

Complaints

- 6.1 If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made **by the Department**, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies (Dr Peter Clifford) for graduate students, or the Chair of the Academic Committee (Dr Matthias Winkel) for undergraduate students. Within the department the officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.
- 6.2 If you are dissatisfied after your complaint has been dealt with locally, then you may take your concern further by making a written complaint to the University Proctors (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/complaints.shtml>). You can take confidential advice from the Clerk to the Proctors before submitting your written complaint.

A complaint may cover aspects of teaching and learning (eg teaching facilities or supervision arrangements), or non-academic issues (eg support services, library services, university accommodation or university clubs and societies). A complaint to the Proctors should be made only if attempts at informal resolution have been unsuccessful. The procedures adopted by the Proctors for the consideration of complaints and appeals are described in the Proctors and Assessor's Memorandum (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/info/pam/section13.shtml>) and the relevant Council regulations (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/247-062.shtml>).

7. If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision **made by your college**, then you should raise it either with your tutor or with the Senior Tutor or Tutor for Graduates as appropriate. Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration. Proctors cannot intervene in internal college matters.

Academic appeals

8. An appeal is defined as a formal questioning of a decision on an academic matter made by the responsible academic body.
9. For undergraduate or taught graduate courses, a query or concern which might lead to an appeal should be raised with your college authorities and the individual responsible for overseeing your work. **It must not be raised directly with examiners or assessors.**
If it is not possible to clear up your concern in this way, you may put your concern in writing and submit it to the Proctors via the Senior Tutor of your college. As noted above, the procedures adopted by the Proctors in relation to complaints and appeals are on the web (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/complaints.shtml>). Appeals must be submitted to the Proctors as soon as possible and not later than three months after the notification of the results of the examination concerned. (The time-limit is necessary because after three months relevant records may cease to be available.)
10. For the examination of research degrees, or in relation to transfer or confirmation of status, your concern should be raised initially with the Director of Graduate Studies. Where a concern is not satisfactorily settled by that means, then you, your supervisor, or your college authority may put your appeal directly to the Proctors at the Proctors' Office, University Offices, Wellington Square, OX1 2JD.
11. Please remember in connection with all the cases in paragraphs 8-10 that:
 - (a) The Proctors are not empowered to challenge the academic judgement of examiners or academic bodies.
 - (b) The Proctors can consider whether the procedures for reaching an academic decision were properly followed; i.e. whether there was a significant procedural administrative error; whether there is evidence of bias or inadequate assessment; whether the examiners failed to take into account special factors affecting a candidate's performance.
 - (c) On no account should you contact your examiners or assessors directly.
12. The Proctors will indicate what further action you can take if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or appeal considered by them.
13. A taught-course student who is dissatisfied with the Proctors' decision about a request for a special examination arrangement has a right of appeal to the Council's Educational Policy and Standards Committee (details are available from Senior Tutors).