

COMPLAINTS

Our aim

Lady Margaret Hall is committed to providing a good education for its students. It also aims to provide appropriate support services and facilities.

We endeavour to ensure that all students will experience:

- a high quality of academic tuition and guidance;
- appropriate educational resources such as library and ICT provision;
- appropriate pastoral support;
- a safe environment;
- good accommodation and catering services;
- easy access to relevant information.

Although living and working in protected historic buildings and grounds has many pleasant aspects, there are also practical difficulties and legal constraints. It is not always possible or even legal, to make apparently obvious improvements. But if you have suggestions for improving any aspect of the College's services and facilities, we would like to know. Please do not hesitate to let us know about any suggestions. For minor problems about premises email faults@lmh.ox.ac.uk

When things go wrong

Sometimes things do not go as expected or as hoped. It is often sensible to ask for advice.

Advice may always be sought from the people below (Table 1). Contact them by email, by a note in the College mail or by dropping into their office.

A member of the JCR or MCR Executive may be able to help too, or at least to direct you to an appropriate member of staff.

Making a complaint

Informal Procedure

If you consider that the advice you have received does not adequately address your problem, or if you feel that your problem warrants an immediate complaint, you should complain. Making a complaint is not a negative thing to do. It will help us keep our services under proper review and to make appropriate improvements as far as we can, both for you and for others.

The best way to resolve a problem is almost always to complain to the member of staff responsible (see Table 1). You may complain in writing, by email, or in person. If you wish to complain in person, you may bring another College member to support you.

The individual receiving the complaint will decide what to do and attempt to resolve your problem. Please be patient but do ask again if you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with adequately in a reasonable time

Table 1: Areas of responsibility in College

For:	Ask:
Academic matters	Your personal tutor or supervisor, or an advisory tutor, or the Senior Tutor or Tutor for Graduates, or (for visiting students) the Tutor for Visiting Students.
Administration relating to your course	Senior Tutor's Administrator, or (for visiting students) the Visiting Student Administrator or (for foundation year students) the Foundation year Administrator.
Matters relating to the library	One of the assistant librarians or the Librarian.
Practical financial matters	Student Finance Officer or the College Accountant.
Practical matters about accommodation	Your scout, or the Head Housekeeper, or the Estates Manager.
Catering and Meals	Catering Resource Manager or the Head Chef.
Personal post, lost or stolen possessions or security	A Lodge Porter, or the Lodge Manager.
ICT	A member of the ICT team including the ICT Manager.
Health	The College Nurse or the College Doctors.
Your welfare or the welfare of some other member of the College	The Welfare Co-ordinator.

You will find a list of many of the current holders of the above posts in the Contacts and Who's Who section of the Undergraduate or Graduate Handbook. If in doubt, ask at the Porters' Lodge.

Formal Procedure – stage one

If you consider that your complaint has not been handled adequately through the informal process, or if you feel that the complaint is serious, you may complain formally. Your complaint should outline the issue on which you are dissatisfied and, if possible, state the outcome you are looking for (e.g. refunding money, letter of apology, etc.).

A formal complaint should be made in writing, or by email, to:

- the Senior Tutor on academic, health and welfare matters;
- the Treasurer for financial and ICT matters;
- the Domestic Bursar for security, catering, and accommodation matters.

If you prefer, you may speak to one of them first before writing or sending an email. If your complaint is about one of these three individuals, you should write to the Vice-Principal. If one of those individuals dealt with the complaint at the informal stage, you should address the formal complaint to the Vice-Principal.

Complaints about another student's inappropriate behaviour should be addressed to the Dean who will deal with it under the Disciplinary procedure outlined in Bye-Law XI.5-11.

Complaints about a staff member's inappropriate behaviour should be addressed to the Domestic Bursar or the Treasurer.

The individual receiving your complaint will investigate it, and may ask to see you to discuss the matter. You may be accompanied to any discussion by another member of College. The decision will be reported to you in writing.

Every effort will be made to ensure your complaint is dealt with promptly and efficiently.

If a complaint is found to be malicious, disciplinary action may be taken under the procedure outlined in Bye-Law XI.5-11.

Formal Procedure – stage two

If you feel that the response from the formal stage is unacceptable you may refer your complaint to the Principal within seven days of receiving the response.

This must be made in writing, or by email, setting out the reasons why you are not satisfied with the response, the remedy you are seeking, and the actions you would like the College to take.

The Principal will consider the case, and will decide what action to take, if any, and may, if necessary, convene a Complaints Review Panel. The Principal and/or the Complaints Review Panel may ask to see you to discuss the matter.

The Panel will consist of two members of Governing Body who have not been involved in the case, and one student from the common room to which the complainant belongs, and who is independent of the case. The Senior Fellow present will chair the Panel. The Panel will report to the Principal, who will decide what action to take.

The decision will be reported to you in writing. This letter will clearly state that all internal procedures are now exhausted.

If you feel that the College has not dealt adequately with your complaint, you may be able to take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Information about the OIA is available at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk> You will see that you cannot take a complaint to the OIA until you have exhausted the available complaints procedures. So, whether your complaint is about a relatively minor matter or a very important one, the starting point is always here in College.

Recording

The Principal's PA will keep a record of all complaints, and will collate a summary of numbers, type of complaint, and the decisions taken for reporting to Equality Committee and Governing Body.

Approved by Governing Body Michaelmas Term 2017