

St Mellitus College Ordinand and Independent Student Non-Academic Complaints Policy and Procedures

A. Background

1. St Mellitus College (SMC) aims to provide ministerial training provision that is of high standard and quality. Recognising that occasionally things do go wrong in the challenging process of ministerial formation, this procedure has been established to deal with ordinand complaints which are not connected to their academic work. For all students, these are to be addressed through the SMC academic complaints policy and procedure. Areas in scope for this policy include:
 - a. Formational provision, for example formation groups
 - b. Pastoral and non-academic support
 - c. Placements
2. Where resolution through Student Feedback mechanisms or Formation Group Tutors is not possible, the ordinand may choose to follow the procedure below.
3. Except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of St Mellitus College, St Mellitus College will not consider complaints under this Procedure if:
 - a. Complaints are made more than 28 Days after the actions and services to which the complaints refer or more than 28 Days following unsatisfactory outcome of an informal attempt at resolution.
 - b. The Complainant does not personally raise the complaint.
 - c. The complaint is anonymous.
 - d. The complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or motivated by malice.

B. Procedure for ordinands

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- i. Ordinands should raise a complaint in writing to the relevant Centre Director, no more than 28 days after the event that the complaint concerns. Informal complaints about a Centre Director should be directed to the Dean of Ministry. Ordinands must clearly note in the email that they are intending to submit an informal complaint by sending the email. Where the complaint is *not* about a Centre Director, the Centre Director will liaise with the relevant DDO to ensure that there is good communication, a shared approach to addressing the complaint, and that pastoral support of the ordinand is agreed and prioritised.
- ii. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Interim Dean will be informed, and the relevant Centre Director or, where necessary, the Dean of Ministry will take responsibility for the investigation of the complaint, including liaising with the ordinand to ensure the complaint is handled in a timely manner. The Centre Director or, where necessary, the Dean of Ministry dealing with the complaint should, if possible, have a face-to-face discussion with the ordinand concerned to come to an understanding of the exact nature of their complaint and explore what outcome the ordinand seeks. The ordinand will receive a written acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days, unless extenuating circumstances cause a delay.
- iii. Every reasonable effort will be made by SMC to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, investigate them thoroughly, and seek to resolve them satisfactorily. If a complaint is upheld, SMC will seek to provide an appropriate response and correct any

mistakes or misunderstandings, taking any other action as appropriate. If a complaint is not upheld, reasons for that decision will be given in a timely manner. The procedure will take no longer than 8 weeks. Any exception to this time frame due to extenuating circumstances will be clearly communicated.

iv. As matters that are dealt with informally at an early stage have the best chance of being resolved effectively, the formal stage of this complaints policy should only be applied if informal resolution has been exhausted and the ordinand remains dissatisfied.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

i. If the Stage 1 procedures have been exhausted and the ordinand is not satisfied with the response, he or she may initiate a formal complaint in writing to the Interim Dean, within 28 days of receipt of the College's response.

ii. If a complaint is received at Stage 2, without prior consideration at Stage 1, SMC will use the informal procedure outlined in this policy in the first instance, unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

iii. The information to be included in the complaint by the ordinand is as follows:

- a. details of the complaint.
- b. a statement of the action already taken to try and resolve the complaint informally if appropriate and why any response given is considered unsatisfactory.
- c. any supporting information or evidence.
- d. the form of resolution or redress sought.

iv. The Interim Dean will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 working days (unless there are extenuating circumstances that cause a delay) and take responsibility for the formal investigation following this. The Interim Dean will seek resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstance. (If the complaint is regarding the Interim Dean, the Chair of Trustees will decide who should conduct the investigation).

Means of resolution may include:

- a. correspondence between the parties.
- b. negotiation with the ordinand or with appropriate members of staff or with both.
- c. facilitation of a meeting/mediation between the ordinand and student/staff concerned, and the DDO and placement supervisor if needed

If the person dealing with the formal complaint decides to investigate the complaint via correspondence, the ordinand bringing forward the complaint will be sent a copy of any comments obtained during this process and will be invited to submit a response. This will be done prior to a decision being reached in relation to the complaint.

v. The possible outcomes of Stage 2 include:

- a. a resolution, reached in co-operation with the ordinand.
- b. if the complaint is upheld, a recommendation will be made outlining how the issue(s) identified in the complaint will be addressed.
- c. dismissal of the complaint with reasons given to the ordinand in writing.

Stage 3: Referral to sponsoring Bishop

i. If the complainant remains dissatisfied once SMC's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, the Interim Dean and Centre Director, in consultation with the DDO will signpost

the ordinand to escalate the complaint to the sponsoring Bishop who has responsibility for their training.

ii. During this stage of the process, careful consideration of whether the continuation of the ordinand in training at SMC is appropriate whilst the complaint is ongoing.

C. Procedure for independent students

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

i. Independent students should raise a complaint in writing to the relevant Centre Director, no more than 28 days after the event that the complaint concerns. Informal complaints about a Centre Director should be directed to the Dean of Ministry. Independent students must clearly note in the email that they are intending to submit an informal complaint by sending the email.

ii. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Interim Dean will be informed, and the relevant Centre Director or, where necessary, the Dean of Ministry will take responsibility for the investigation of the complaint, including liaising with the independent student to ensure the complaint is handled in a timely manner. The Centre Director or, where necessary, the Dean of Ministry dealing with the complaint should, if possible, have a face-to-face discussion with the student concerned to come to an understanding of the exact nature of their complaint and explore what outcome the student seeks. The student will receive a written acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days, unless extenuating circumstances cause a delay.

iii. Every reasonable effort will be made by SMC to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, investigate them thoroughly, and seek to resolve them satisfactorily. If a complaint is upheld, SMC will seek to provide an appropriate response and correct any mistakes or misunderstandings, taking any other action as appropriate. If a complaint is not upheld, reasons for that decision will be given in a timely manner. The procedure will take no longer than 8 weeks. Any exception to this time frame due to extenuating circumstances will be clearly communicated.

iv. As matters that are dealt with informally at an early stage have the best chance of being resolved effectively, the formal stage of this complaints policy should only be applied if informal resolution has been exhausted and the ordinand remains dissatisfied.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

i. If the Stage 1 procedures have been exhausted and the independent student is not satisfied with the response, he or she may initiate a formal complaint in writing to the Interim Dean, within 28 days of receipt of the College's response.

ii. If a complaint is received at Stage 2, without prior consideration at Stage 1, SMC will use the informal procedure outlined in this policy in the first instance, unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

iii. The information to be included in the complaint by the independent student is as follows:

- a. details of the complaint.
- b. a statement of the action already taken to try and resolve the complaint informally if appropriate and why any response given is considered unsatisfactory.
- c. any supporting information or evidence.
- d. the form of resolution or redress sought.

iv. The Interim Dean will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 working days (unless there are extenuating circumstances that cause a delay) and take responsibility for the formal investigation following this. The Interim Dean will seek resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstance. (If the complaint is regarding the Interim Dean, the Chair of Trustees will decide who should conduct the investigation).

Means of resolution may include:

- a. correspondence between the parties.
- b. negotiation with the student or with appropriate members of staff or with both.
- c. facilitation of a meeting/mediation between the complainant and student/staff concerned.
- d. If the person dealing with the formal complaint decides to investigate the complaint via correspondence, the student bringing forward the complaint will be sent a copy of any comments obtained during this process and will be invited to submit a response. This will be done prior to a decision being reached in relation to the complaint.

v. The possible outcomes of Stage 2 include:

- a. a resolution, reached in co-operation with the ordinand.
- b. if the complaint is upheld, a recommendation will be made outlining how the issue(s) identified in the complaint will be addressed.
- c. dismissal of the complaint with reasons given to the ordinand in writing.

Stage 3: Referral to the chair of the SMC board (or a designated Board member)

i. If the complainant remains dissatisfied once SMC's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, the Interim Dean and Centre Director, will signpost the ordinand to escalate the complaint to the board who will decide the appropriate course of action.

Document Information

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