

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE		
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Summary/Description:		
<p>This document defines the procedure for complaining to All Nations Christian College about the services they offer or fail to offer and/or the information and/or resources they provide. It also details the grounds and procedure for appealing against the outcome of any complaint.</p>		
<p>2024-25 v1 <u>December 24</u> Review resulting in: Amendments to typos/formatting and changes in nomenclature or links. Removal of all reference to a review by All Nations Christian College. Aligning Contents with section titles. Reduction in timeframe from 90 calendar days to 34 calendar days in line with the OIA framework and OU requirement. Alterations to timeline as a result of timeframe reduction. Updating references to personnel dealing with a case. Updated OU contact information. Addition of OIA Good Practice Framework- Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals to Related Documents section.</p>		

ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

To cultivate biblically rooted, hope-filled and culturally relevant engagement with God's mission, by training and equipping disciples of Jesus Christ in partnership with the global church.

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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2 AIM

All Nations Christian College would like you to have a positive experience in your dealings with us. However, we understand that we do not always get everything right. Should you be unsatisfied with the way you have been treated, you may wish to make a complaint. The majority of such concerns can usually be dealt with informally through discussion, but if your concerns cannot be addressed informally, this policy and procedure will enable you to make a formal complaint or appeal.

3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The College will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR when dealing with complaints and appeals in addition to its own and The Open University's rules and regulations, where applicable. Complaints also comply with the Consumer Protection Act 2015. This document has also been written in compliance with The Good Practice Framework: Handling Student Complaints and Academic Appeals by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

4 DEFINITION

For the purposes of this document, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more people about the action or lack of action by All Nations Christian College, or about the service provided by or on our behalf, about which an individual is unhappy and seeks action by the College. Examples of complaints include:

- Failure by the College to meet obligations including those outlined in any of the College Handbooks or Policies and Procedures or a Bookings agreement.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the College.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration or other service.
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the College.
- Complaints involving others providing a service on behalf of the College.

5 SCOPE

- 5.1** Complaints can be made by anyone who is dissatisfied with a service or lack of a service they could reasonably expect to have received from the College.
- 5.2** Staff members should follow the Grievance Policy and Procedure in the Staff Handbook if their complaint relates to their employment.
- 5.3** The term 'student' refers to students who have registered on a course. It also includes those who have recently left, although former students will only usually be able to raise issues of complaint within 30 calendar days of being informed of their final award.
- 5.4** Students will usually submit a complaint themselves. However, should they wish, provision has been made for students to be accompanied by or represented at any investigation interview by a supportive friend (see below).
- 5.5** Group complaints are permissible where the issue raised affects a number of people. In such circumstances, in order to manage the progression of the complaint, we ask the group to nominate one person to act as a group representative; this person may also be supported by one other person.
- 5.6** Only in very exceptional circumstances, and only when compelling evidence has been produced to back up the complaint, will the College investigate an anonymous complaint. However, this would not be the normal practice. Anonymous complainants must be aware that raising a concern anonymously could, in most cases, impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.

6 COMPLAINT POLICY PRINCIPLES

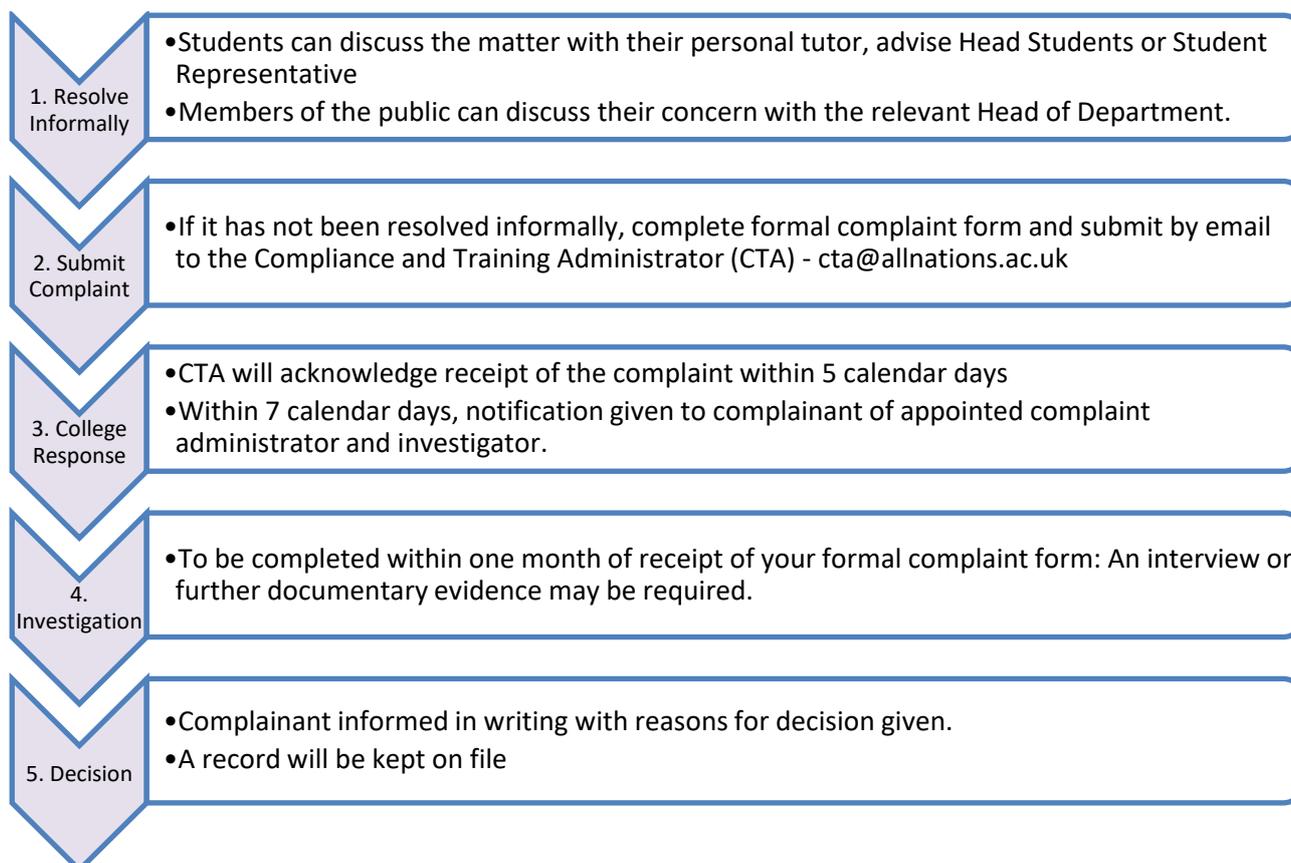
The guiding principles of all the College complaints appeals and review procedures are as follows:

- 6.1** Any person dissatisfied with College services should be encouraged to make this known at the place and time of their dissatisfaction to the person directly involved.
- 6.2** The first person to be advised of the complaint should, if appropriate, aim to resolve the difficulty, ensuring that the relevant College policies and procedures are followed. If it is not appropriate for this member of staff to deal with the complaint, it should be referred as soon as possible to the Compliance and Training Administrator who will direct the complaint to the most appropriate person, this could be the Head of Operations, a Programme Leader, Department Manager etc.
- 6.3** We aim to respond to any enquiry or complaint confidentially, fairly and promptly and in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. Staff aim to be courteous to the complainant, responding positively and, wherever possible, offering constructive solutions.
- 6.4** All complaints will be managed in a sensitive way and with due regard to the College's Data Protection Policy. Whilst it is understood that complainants may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, therefore, the person assigned to the case will discuss with the complainant the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.
- 6.5** The CTA will ensure that parties to an investigation are supported pastorally. Parties may also choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a supportive friend. This must be someone independent of the circumstances that gave rise to the meeting and therefore needs to be a different person than the one offering them pastoral support through the process.

- 6.6** Formal written complaints should be recorded, acknowledged within 5 calendar days and the investigation concluded within 24 calendar days of receiving the formal complaint form, and the Principal/CEO notified. The complainant will be informed in the event of any unavoidable delay and its reason given, for example staff unavailability.
- 6.7** The processing of the formal complaint should take no longer than 34 calendar days. This requires the student to meet any College deadlines for the submission of material. If there are good reasons for extending the timeframe, the complainant will be notified of any delays and regularly informed of progress and the complainant shall similarly notify the College of any unavoidable delays.
- 6.8** Complaints involving more than one issue may, in some cases, require the resolution of one complaint before dealing with another. This may necessitate having a discussion with the complainant regarding the best way to resolve the whole situation satisfactorily.
- 6.9** The complainant will always be informed of the outcome of an investigation in writing and with reasons given for the decision that has been reached. The complainant will be informed at the same time of any further review processes which may still be available to them. This also applies to the nominated representative for a group complaint (see 5.5 and 7.10 for group complaints).
- 6.10** A formal detailed record will be kept of all formal investigations and reviews.
- 6.11** No-one will be disadvantaged by making a complaint.
- 6.12** The complaint may be withdrawn without prejudice at any time during the process. (The College must be informed in writing. Any decision made by the College at the previous stage in the procedure will then be upheld and become the final outcome.)
- 6.13** The College will not investigate any formal complaint or review which it considers to be frivolous or vexatious. The Principal/CEO, in consultation with other members of the SLT, have the responsibility for making this determination.
- 6.14** All Complaints policy and procedures should be available to all, monitored regularly, and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

7 STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT



a. Resolve the Issue Informally

- 7.1 Whatever your complaint, we would urge you first to always stop and pray about the situation and your response. The next step, where appropriate, is to speak informally with the person(s) most concerned. In this way misunderstandings can be clarified and errors hopefully resolved to everyone's mutual satisfaction, with no further action being necessary.
- 7.2 Students may wish to consult their personal tutor or the Head Students about a grievance. The Head Students meet weekly with the Principal/CEO and Head of Operations specifically for information exchange and to air student issues. Each level of study also has a student representative who meets termly with various College Boards/Committees to represent student's views about the programmes and/or programme delivery.
- 7.3 Members of the public should discuss their dissatisfaction with the department head of the service they have been using or trying to use (e.g. Librarian, Conference Manager, Head of Operations).

b. Check This is the Correct Procedure to Use

- 7.4 This is the policy and procedure you should follow if you wish to express your dissatisfaction with either the service or lack of service we have provided, and seek action by the College. It must relate to services that you were led to believe would be provided or the delivery of services you received.
- 7.5 The College Academic Appeals Policy should be followed if you wish to a request a review of a decision taken by an academic body (i.e. tutor, moderator or Examination Board) charged

with making decisions about student admissions, progression, assessment and awards. However, such a review may not question the academic judgement of academic staff.

- 7.6** A complaint concerning unreasonable delay in returning work would be dealt with by the Complaints Procedure and not the Appeals Procedure since the complaint concerns dissatisfaction with the administration service rather than any academic decision.
- 7.7** If you wish to express a concern about someone's behaviour, you may need to follow one of the following policies, depending on the circumstances:
- Student Disciplinary Policy or Staff Disciplinary Policy
 - Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
 - Fitness to Study Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
- 7.8** All policies contain a section containing information about how to request a review of the decision reached regarding your complaint/concern and the permissible grounds for doing so.

c. Submit Your Formal Complaint

- 7.9** To make a formal complaint you must complete the **formal complaints form**, which can be found in the appendices to this document.
- 7.10** If it is a group complaint, nominate one member of the group to make the complaint on the group's behalf.
- 7.11** Please express your concerns clearly and succinctly and provide evidence to substantiate the issues raised wherever possible. Such evidence may include independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements.
- 7.12** The completed and **signed** form, together with all your supporting evidence (paper or electronic copies are acceptable), should be sent to the College Compliance and Training Administrator, by email to cta@allnations.ac.uk.
- 7.13** All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Whilst it is understood that you may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, therefore, the CTA will discuss with you the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.
- 7.14** If a complaint involves more than one issue, which do not fall neatly into one category of complaint, the investigator assigned to your case will discuss with you the best way to proceed in order to resolve all the issues as quickly and fairly as possible. This may, in some cases, involve resolving one complaint before dealing with another.

d. The College's Response

- 7.15** The CTA or their nominee will within 5 calendar days acknowledge receipt of the complaint and the Principal/CEO or his nominee notified.
- 7.16** You will be notified, no later than 7 calendar days after submission of the complaint, of the names of the persons who have been appointed as complaint administrator (if appropriate) and investigator. They will also confirm which complaints procedure is going to be followed.
- 7.17** The investigator will usually be someone who is independent of the circumstances which gave rise to the complaint e.g. a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 7.18** In rare circumstances, e.g. when there are no independent staff in the College who were not involved in the original circumstances which gave rise to the complaint, the CTA will seek to find someone else to carry out the investigation, for example an external member of one of the College Boards.

e. The Investigation

- 7.19** If a complaint involves more than one issue which does not fall neatly into one category of complaint, the College will discuss with you the best way to proceed in order to resolve all the issues as quickly and fairly as possible. This may, in some cases, involve resolving one complaint before dealing with another.
- 7.20** The investigation should last no longer than 24 calendar days. You will be kept informed at all stages of the progress of the investigation by the complaint administrator, CTA or person leading the investigation. NB If you are late in responding to a request for further information this may cause a delay, which could affect your ability to request a review.
- 7.21** All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Whilst it is understood that you may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, therefore, the CTA will discuss with the student the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.
- 7.22** If the investigator feels it would be helpful, an interview may be arranged with you or other parties involved in the complaint to, for example, clarify facts or share information before reaching a conclusion. You may be accompanied by or represented at this meeting by a supportive friend. Minutes will be taken at such a meeting.
- 7.23** This meeting may result in further documentary evidence needing to be accessed or reviewed before a final decision can be reached.

f. The Decision

- 7.24** You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation in writing, and with reasons given. You will also be informed at the same time the options open to you.
- 7.25** A record of any complaint and the resolution will be maintained in the complainant's file if they are a member of the College community or by the Head of Operations if they are a visitor to the College.
- 7.26** The outcome could include a member of the community being required to attend a disciplinary hearing.

8 STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO REQUESTING A REVIEW

a. Check you have Valid Grounds

- 8.1** You cannot request a review simply because you disagree with the decision reached. The only grounds for requesting a review of the decision are:
- if you were treated unfairly.
 - the College did not follow its procedures properly, or
 - if you have material information you were unable or, with valid reason, unwilling to divulge to the original investigator when they made their decision.

b. Escalating your Concern

- 8.2** The resolution of your review will include any options you may have of escalating your concern.
- 8.3** Once the College's processes have been exhausted, the College can issue you with a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact The Open University for the next step of the process (see 8.5 below).
- 8.4** Following investigation, The OU will issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the student. Only when The OU has issued a CoP letter can you (if still dissatisfied) go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (see 8.6 below).

c. Appealing to External Bodies

8.5 Appealing to The Open University:

The Open University validates All Nations Christian College's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Please see the current [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#); Appendix 1: Student Complaints and Appeal Procedure to find out the timescales, admissible grounds and procedures for appealing to them after the conclusion of the College disciplinary hearing and review procedures.

Or contact them:

- By writing to: The Director, Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA U.K.
- By email to: studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk
- By phone: 01908 332840

8.6 Appealing to The Office of The Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education:

- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIAHE) was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide 'an independent student complaints scheme'. All Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales are required to comply with the scheme, which is free to students.
- The OIAHE can only consider unresolved complaints from students **after** the College's and the OU's own complaints and appeals procedures have been concluded and you have been given a Completion of Procedures letter by The Open University (see 8.5).
- Full details on the OIA scheme can be found at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

8.7 Appealing to other External Bodies:

We advise members of the public to contact Citizen's Advice (see [here](#)) who should be able to recommend the most suitable course of action open to you after you have exhausted the College complaints procedures. As the college is a registered charity you may also have recourse to the Charity Commission (see [here](#)).

9 RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

9.1 The **Board of Trustees** have legal oversight and responsibility for all College policies, providing leadership and active support for them and are responsible for:

- Ensuring a legally compliant and fit for purpose complaints policy is in place and approved by them.
- Ensuring satisfactory arrangements are made for its effective implementation, including the provision of resources.
- Ensuring the Senior Leadership Team monitors, evaluates and periodically reviews this policy and recommends any changes firstly to the Governance Committee and then the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Ensuring complaints brought under the terms of this policy are managed satisfactorily by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Hearing appeals, when necessary.
- Ensuring decision making complies with all relevant legislation and regulatory bodies.
- Ensuring they receive details from the Senior Leadership Team of formal complaints and outcomes of cases where a significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned; also, of a serious incident or of one which could be of reputational risk to the College which should be reported to either the Office for Students and/or the Charity Commission.

9.2 The **Principal/CEO and Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for:

- The implementation and management of this policy, ensuring that procedures are implemented consistently and with clear lines of authority and actively and visibly leading the College's complaints policy and practice.
- Ensuring this policy is continually improved in consultation with students and staff.
- Monitoring, evaluating and periodically reviewing this policy and for obtaining approval from the Governance Committee and the Board of Trustees for any changes made.
- The management of complaints.
- Ensuring decision making complies with all relevant regulatory bodies.
- Reporting details to the Board of Trustees of reported incidents and of the outcomes of cases (particularly where significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned), or of a serious incident or of one which could be of reputational risk to the College.

9.3 Principal/CEO and Senior Leadership Team, and all department heads are responsible for ensuring that the principles of this policy are implemented through:

- encouraging good communications between students, staff and students and staff;
- exploring what can be learned from complaints when they occur;
- ensuring that an investigator is allocated when a complaint has been received, who will manage the complaint and ensure it is dealt with according to the procedures in this policy.

9.4 Through their ongoing regular meetings, the **Head Students** and the **Principal/CEO** are responsible for using this meeting to raise and resolve issues of concern.

9.5 Any person covered by the scope of this policy, if involved in a formal complaint, whether those making a complaint or receiving one must:

- where applicable, ensure they present their case with integrity and in a timely fashion and/or
- ensure they comply with any investigation and the procedures in this policy.

They are also responsible for:

- familiarising themselves with this policy on appointment/at induction/orientation or if they feel they have grounds for making a complaint;
- demonstrating active commitment to this policy by:
 - treating others with dignity and respect;
 - providing accurate information, as far as possible at all times;
 - rectifying errors, should they occur;
 - supporting anyone who feels they are disappointed by the College's treatment of them, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate.

9.6 The College encourages all individuals across the institution to take a pro-active role in improving the College's complaints policy and practice.

9.7 The Compliance and Training Administrator or their nominee have a responsibility for managing the administration of the complaints process.

10 POLICY COMMUNICATION

10.1 This policy and any other policies referred to in this document can be found [here](#).

10.2 The Staff Disciplinary Procedure can be found in the Additional Staff Policies & Procedures on the P Drive and is also obtainable from the HR Lead.

10.3 The College Administrator will make every effort to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format. Such requests should be sent to info@allnations.ac.uk

10.4 This policy will be included in staff and student induction.

11 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- All Nations Christian College [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

- All Nations Christian College [Admissions Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Data Protection Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Fitness to Study Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Student Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [OIA Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals Framework](#)
- [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#)

12 APPENDICES:

1. Formal Complaint Form
2. Concern Form
3. Completion of Internal Procedures Letter Template

APPENDIX 1:

ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM	
This form is to be used for making a formal complaint about a service you did or did not (but reasonably expected to) receive from the College. If you wish to lodge a concern about someone's behaviour, please see the relevant Staff or Student Disciplinary Policy and complete a Concern form (see Appendix 2).	
If this is a group complaint, explain here, who is making the complaint but give the name and contact details of <u>one</u> nominated point of contact in the 'Your Details' section:	
Your Details:	
Name:	
Status with College (e.g. Student, Staff, Visitor):	
Phone:	Email
Do you have a disability or specific learning difficulty you would like us to be aware of when considering your complaint? Give details of an adjustment that could assist you.	
STUDENTS ONLY:	
Student Number:	Level:
Course:	
Details of the Complaint:	
Have you submitted any other complaint at the same time as this complaint? <i>If yes, please say with whom and when:</i>	
Please outline the circumstances of the complaint. <i>Be specific, regarding Who? What? When? And Where?</i>	
List any documents you are attaching to support your complaint <i>e.g. medical or financial evidence, witness statement, etc.</i>	
Actions already taken (<i>give details</i>):	
Action sought: <i>Describe what actions you want the College to take. While the College cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are seeking.</i>	
Do you have anyone to support you with this complaint? <i>If you are a member of the College community, please speak with your personal tutor or a friend/other staff member about this so that they can support you.</i>	
Date and time concern submitted:	
Signed (typed name is acceptable):	
You should send this completed and signed form to the Compliance Training Administrator: CTA@allnations.ac.uk <i>You should usually expect to receive an acknowledgement of receipt of this form within 5 working days of submission</i>	
Admin only: Concern received by:	Time and Date received:

APPENDIX 2

ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CONCERN FORM	
Disclosures of minor concerns about students (other than for safeguarding concerns) should be raised verbally with your personal tutor or the personal tutor of the individual who is the subject of your concern and will be treated informally. NB This form is to be used to report a more serious concern or to initiate a formal investigation that an individual has behaved in a way that is contrary to the College Student Disciplinary Policy, Staff Disciplinary Policy, Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy or Fitness to Study Policy, for a member of the public to register a concern about a member of the College community's behaviour or to inform the Safeguarding Lead of ANY Safeguarding concern.	
Your Details:	
Name:	
Phone:	Email:
Details of the concern:	
Date(s) and Time(s):	
Person(s) concerned about:	
Concern Type: 1. Click 'Choose an item' box <input type="text" value="Choose an item."/> 2. Click on arrow head for options to appear 3. Click on suitable option	
Location of incident:	
Details of your concern:	
Actions already taken:	
Action sought: <i>Describe what actions you want the College to take. While the College cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are seeking.</i>	
Date and time concern submitted: Signed (typed name is acceptable):	
The College will treat your data carefully and in accordance with the College's data protection policy (available here). The College cannot guarantee to keep the facts and details of your concern confidential if it is necessary and proportionate to share your data in order to review and resolve your concern or refer safeguarding concerns to statutory authorities.	
Submit your concern to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Lead: safeguarding@allnations.ac.uk [Concern type = 'Safeguarding' or 'Prevent'] OR• HR Lead: HR@allnations.ac.uk [Concern type = 'Staff/MIR/Volunteer conduct'] OR• Compliance Training Administrator: CTA@allnations.ac.uk [for all other concern types] IMPORTANT: Do NOT delay in submitting safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Lead. <i>You should usually expect to receive an acknowledgement of receipt of this form within 7 working days of submission (1 working day for safeguarding concerns), but please note that if you submit the form outside of College term times, it may take a little longer for you to receive an acknowledgement.</i>	
Admin only: Concern received by:	Time and Date received:

APPENDIX 3:

Completion of Internal Procedures Letter Template

Dear [*Name of complainant*],

Complaint Outcome

This letter confirms that All Nations Christian College has completed its internal investigation into your complaint regarding: [*please describe*]

The issue(s) that you raised in your *complaint was/were* [*details*]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint was/were* [*brief summary of the complaint etc*].

The procedures/regulations applied were [*name of policy and procedure documents*].

The final decision of the College is [*detail*] because [*reasons*].

Review Options:

The Open University accredits our institution and validates our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint*, by contacting The OU within 28 days of this letter, for the next step of the process, using any of the following methods:

- By writing to The Director, Open University Validation Partnerships, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA U.K.
- By email to: studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk
- By phone: 01908 332840

Following investigation, The OU will issue you with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter.

Only when The OU has issued a CoP letter can you (if still dissatisfied) go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide 'an independent student complaints scheme'. This scheme is free to students.

Any complaint made to the OIA can only be made:

- If your complaint is eligible under its rules
- Usually, only when the complaint has first been dealt with through the College and The OU's internal procedures and not until after their completion.
- If it is received by the OIA within 12 months of the date of your CoP letter from The Open University.

Yours sincerely,

[Authorised signatory]