

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre Complaints Policy



Our Complaints Policy

Have you got a complaint against the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (QMLAC)?

We hope that you will never have reason to complain about our service. We strive to have the highest standards possible for a student law clinic and hope that you are satisfied with the service. However, if something does go wrong, please bring it to our attention as soon as you can. We will try to resolve the matter fairly and quickly.

How do I Complain?

We much prefer that substantial or complicated complaints are dealt with in writing – we do not have any set forms that we use for this purpose. However, we realise that not all clients may be able to formulate a detailed letter. In such cases, a telephone call will do, during which we will make a note of the issues and then send that to you for comment. This document will then form the basis of the complaint.

Who do I Complain to?

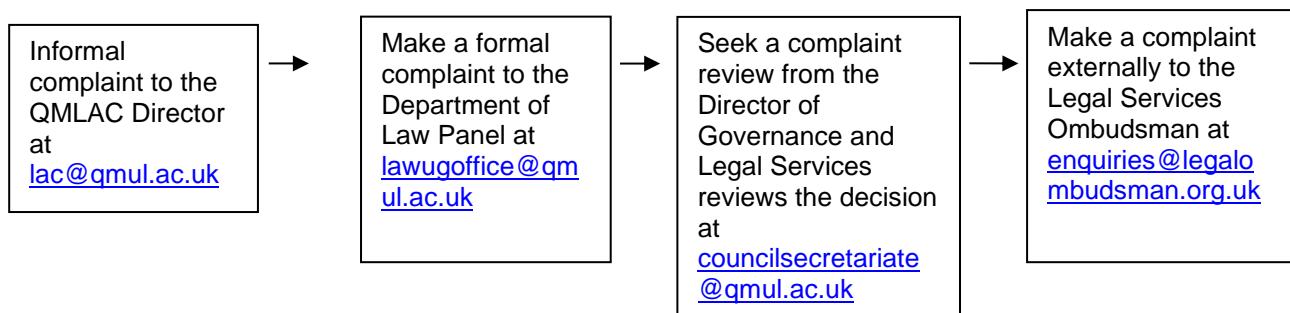
Our system is that, wherever possible, complaints are resolved within the QMLAC.

There are three separate routes of complaint depending on the nature of your complaint.

- Route 1: If you are a client complaining about an operational issue within the QMLAC.
- Route 2: If you are a client complaining about the nature or quality of the legal advice you have received from the QMLAC.
- Route 3: If you are a student volunteer complaining about the QMLAC.

Please see the end of this document for a diagram summarising these routes.

Route 1: An Operational Management Issue



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Stage 1: Internally within the QMLAC

If you wish to raise an issue, it should be made in writing (unless there is a reason why this cannot happen). All complaints should be addressed to:

The Director of the Legal Advice Centre
The Department of Law
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road
E1 4NS.

A complaint should be emailed to the Director of the QMLAC at lac@qmul.ac.uk.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You can then expect a response in writing, within 15 working days. If the Director is out of the office for any reason, you will be notified of a date when a response can be expected.

Stage 2: Internally within the Department of Law

If you are dissatisfied with the Director's response, you can request that the matter be investigated by a panel from the Department of Law at Queen Mary University of London who do not work directly in the QMLAC. This panel will be comprised of the School Manager for the Department of Law and a member of academic staff who sits on the QMLAC Management Committee.

A request for the matter to be considered by a panel should be made in writing within 10 working days of you receiving the written response from the Director of the QMLAC. This request should be addressed to:

The School Manager
The Department of Law
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS

You should make your request by email to the following email address lawugoffice@qmul.ac.uk.

If you are dissatisfied with the response given by the panel you can ask for your matter to be considered at University level.

Stage 3: Internally at University Level

If you are not satisfied with the resolution of the panel you can escalate the matter to university level by asking the Director of Governance and Legal

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Services to review the decision and decide whether it was reasonable in light of the facts of the case.

During the previous stages a full investigation of the matter is undertaken, at this stage the Director of Governance and Legal Services will only consider whether the final decision was reasonable and in accordance with the facts of the case.

You may request a review by the Director of Governance and Legal Services in writing by email to councilsecretariat@qmul.ac.uk.

Your request for a review will be dealt with, within a month.

This stage represents the end of Queen Mary's internal procedures.

Stage 4: Externally to the Legal Ombudsman

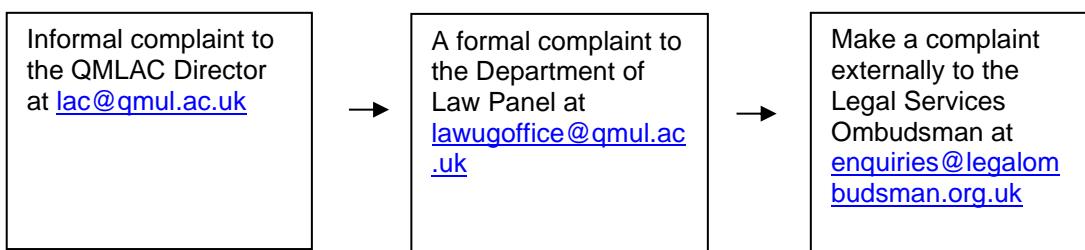
If you are not satisfied of the handling of your complaint within the process above at Queen Mary University of London you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted as follows;

- By post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ
- By telephone: 0300 555 0333
- By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

For the time limits to bring a complaint please see the Ombudsman's website <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/>.

Any complaint to the Ombudsman must usually be made within six months of the date of our final written response on your complaint or within a year of the matter giving rise to the complaint or a year from when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint, whichever is later. The Legal Ombudsman can increase any time limit in exceptional circumstances e.g. if there is serious illness.

Route 2: An Issue with the Quality of your Legal Advice



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Stage 1: Internally within the QMLAC

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The Director of the Legal Advice Centre,
The Department of Law
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road
E1 4NS.

A complaint should be emailed to the Director of the QMLAC at lac@qmul.ac.uk.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You can then expect a response in writing, within 15 working days. If the Director is out of the office for any reason, the client will be notified of a date when a response can be expected.

Stage 2: Internally within the Department of Law

If you are dissatisfied with the Director's response, you can request that the matter be investigated by a panel from the Department of Law at Queen Mary University of London who do not work directly in the QMLAC. This panel will be comprised of the School Manager for the Department of Law and a member of academic staff who sits on the QMLAC Management Committee.

A request for the matter to be considered by a panel should be made in writing within 10 working days of you receiving the written response from the Director of the QMLAC. This request should be addressed to:

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The Department of Law
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road,
London
E1 4NS

You should make your request by email to the following email address lawugoffice@qmul.ac.uk.

If you are dissatisfied with the response given by the panel you can ask for your matter to be considered at University level.

Stage 3: Externally to the Legal Ombudsman

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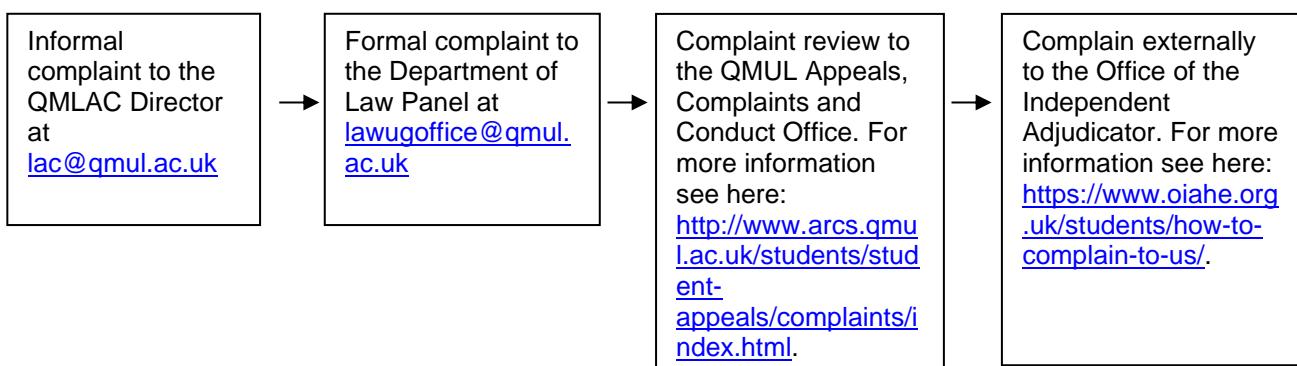


If you are not satisfied of the handling of your complaint within the process above at Queen Mary University of London you can ask the Legal Ombudsman to consider the complaint as set out above. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted as follows;

- By post at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton, WV1 9WJ
- By telephone: 0300 555 0333
- By email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

Normally you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within six months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint, or within six years of the act or omission about which you are complaining having occurred.

Route 3: Bringing a Complaint as a Student



Stage 1: Internally within the QMLAC

If you wish to raise an issue, it should be made in writing (unless there is a reason why this cannot happen). All complaints should be addressed to:

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Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road
E1 4NS.

A complaint should be emailed to the Director of the QMLAC at lac@qmul.ac.uk.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You can then expect a response in writing, within 15 working days. If the Director is out of the office for any reason, the client will be notified of a date when a response can be expected.

Stage 2: Internally within the Department of Law

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If you are dissatisfied with the Director's response, you can request that the matter be investigated by a panel from the Department of Law at Queen Mary University of London who do not work directly in the QMLAC. This panel will be comprised of the School Manager for the Department of Law and a member of academic staff who sits on the QMLAC Management Committee.

A request for the matter to be considered by a panel should be made in writing within 10 working days of you receiving the written response from the Director of the QMLAC. This request should be addressed to:

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The Department of Law
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road,
London
E1 4NS

You should make your request by email to the following email address lawugoffice@qmul.ac.uk.

If you are dissatisfied with the response given by the panel you can ask for your matter to be considered at University level.

Stage 3: Internally at University Level

If you are dissatisfied with the response from within the Department of Law you can refer your complaint to the university level student complaints team. Your complaint should be submitted as a second level complaint known as a Complaint Review. For more information on this process please visit; <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/students/student-appeals/complaints/index.html>.

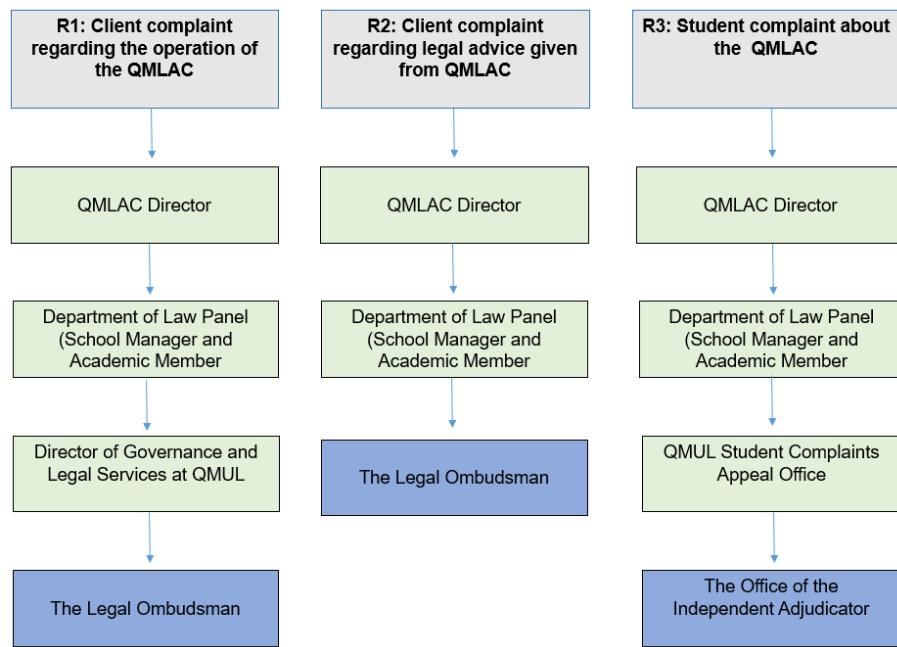
Stage 4: Externally at the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

If you are not happy with the outcome of the internal route within QMUL, you may take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. For further details please see their website here: <https://www.oliahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>.

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Appendix 1: Diagram of Avenues Available for Review



Key

