

Complaint Letter Guidelines

In almost all cases, complaints need to be communicated in written form to be considered by the University administration. In formal complaint cases, written documentation is mandatory. To ensure that you write a strong letter of complaint, follow the guidelines below – but keep in mind that these are only guidelines and that the content of each letter will vary depending on your case.

Once you have drafted your letter, send it to the Student Rights Centre (cde-src@seuo-uosu.com) to get some feedback.

The Essentials

Make sure the following appears at the beginning of your letter:

- Your name * Are you hoping for your identity to remain confidential from the person against whom you are complaining? If so, make a mention to this effect. Note this may not be possible in some cases. *
- Your student number
- The date
- The recipient's contact information

**Don't know who you're writing to?
The Student Rights Centre will direct you to the right recipient
when your letter is sent for feedback.**

The Content

Here is how we recommend constructing your letter:

- Paragraph 1: Reason for your letter
The very first sentence should answer the following questions: *Why are you writing and what are you asking for?*
Make sure to include all pertinent information: course code, professor's name, semester in question, etc.
 - Paragraph 2: Facts and facts only
Explain what happened. *Be clear and write chronologically!*
Keep in mind that a stranger will read your letter. Therefore, do not assume that they know you and your situation.
State which supporting documentation you are providing, if any (syllabus, email correspondence, etc.)
 - Paragraph 3: Complaint
Explain the nature of your complaint. What was the wrongdoing in the behavior or events complained of? What was impact of the situation on you?
- Optional Paragraph 4: Special requests
If you are seeking a specific outcome, mention it here.

Closing

Make sure the following appears at the end of your letter:

- End with a formality (i.e.: Sincerely)
- Your name must be written at the bottom
- State the number of documents enclosed

*See Back for a Complaint Example
(facts are completely fictional)*

Complaint Letter Example

Susan Susanna
Student # 1234567
45 Abbey Road
Ottawa, Ontario M2P 9K5
Ssusa069@uottawa.ca

September 30, 2019

Mrs. Janice Power, Dean
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

Re: Complaint regarding ENG 2101

Dear Dean Power,

(Reasons for Letter) I am writing this letter to express my concerns regarding a course taught this semester by Professor Wrong, ENG2101, and to request your intervention in resolving these issues.

(Facts) On September 9, 2019, our first class was held in SMD124. Professor Wrong arrived 25 minutes late. Upon arrival, Professor Wrong began lecturing right away. Toward the end of the class, one of my fellow students asked if a syllabus would be handed out for this course and if we could be informed of the evaluation methods and due dates. Professor Wrong took out a stack of papers and said we could pick one up at the end of class. To my dismay, the syllabus was only a reading list and did not include any further information (Appendix A). I emailed Professor Wrong that night to reiterate my request, to which he replied "all will be known in due time." (Appendix B)

On September 23, 2019 Professor Wrong announced that we would have our first mini test that day. Students expressed discontent as we were completely unaware that mini tests would be a part of the evaluation which made it impossible for us to prepare. To this, Professor Wrong simply told us not to worry.

(Complaint) Not only is Professor Wrong's lack of proper syllabus a breach of academic regulation I-8.5, his casual disregard for our concerns is most worrying. As a result of his lack of information regarding evaluation, the grades on the first test do not reflect my academic ability.

I respectfully ask for you to intervene to ensure both that a proper syllabus is distributed to the class and that our test marks not be held against us in the calculation of our final grade.

(Closing) I will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you for taking time to review my request.

Sincerely,

Susan Susanna (*Sign above*)

Encl:

- Appendix A – Syllabus for ENG2101
- Appendix B – Email exchanges with Professor Wrong