

Consumer Protection Law: Quick Guide for Students

How does consumer protection apply to students?

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [Higher Education Guide to Consumer Rights for Students](#) sets out your consumer rights as a student. It covers three important consumer law issues for students:

- **Information provision** – universities need to provide up front, clear, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information.
- **Terms and conditions** – universities' terms and conditions that apply to students need to be fair and balanced.
- **Complaint handling processes and practices** – universities need to ensure their complaint handling processes and practices are accessible, clear and fair to students.

What does this mean for me?

Universities must give you clear and accurate information about what you're applying for

When you're choosing a university and a course, universities must give you the information you need to make your decision. This includes:

- The course's content, structure and length.
- The location of study.
- The award given on successfully completing the course.
- The total cost of the course. This should include tuition fees and any necessary additional costs such as field trips, laboratory equipment or studio/bench fees.
- The university's terms and conditions, including rules and regulations and policies relating to student conduct. These must be accessible and clear.

Before, or at the latest when you get an offer, universities must tell you about any changes to the information since you applied. They should give you 'pre-contract information', covering:

- Course information and costs.
- Arrangements for making payments to the university.
- Their complaints-handling process.
- Also, any right you have to cancel, should you change your mind.

University rules and regulations must be fair and balanced

Once you start, the School's terms and conditions apply. These mean you must adhere to School's rules and regulations. They should:

- Strike a fair balance between the rights and obligations of the School and the student.
- Not give the School wide discretion to change a course's cost or content.

You can complain if things go wrong

If things go wrong or are not as you expected, you can complain to the School. Our complaints process must:

- Be fair, transparent and easily accessible to students.
- Set out the process to make a complaint, how it will be dealt with, and how you can escalate your concerns.
- Be clear about who deals with complaints, especially if courses are provided jointly with another institution.

If you are not happy with how we handle your complaint, you may be able to refer your complaint to an independent complaint scheme. In England and Wales, this is the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).

Where can I get more information?

[Which?](#) and the CMA offer useful information on your consumer rights as a student. The CMA have provided [60-second summary](#) of your consumer rights, or you can review the [full guidance here](#).

Name of policy/procedure:	Consumer Protection Law: Quick Guide for Students
Document owner:	Hannah Kohler, Director of Admissions and Student Support
Date Originally Created:	02/2019
Last reviewed:	12/2019
Reviewed by:	
Audited by:	[name and job title]
Date of Audit:	MM/YYYY
Date of next review: (annually unless otherwise agreed)	MM/YYYY
Related documents: (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	Terms and Conditions Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure Student Complaints Procedure Academic Appeals Procedure CMA Compliance Policy

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	10/02/2019	Original draft
2	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	10/08/2019	Split out student guide into separate document from Consumer Protection Law Compliance Doc
3	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	11/12/2019	Minor wording changes