



# Complaints Policy

## Travel and Transport 2025

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# Introduction

The University of Essex Travel and Transport service is committed to delivering a high standard of parking services for our community. We recognise that, from time to time, students, staff, or visitors may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of our operations. When this happens, we view it as an important opportunity to listen, learn, and improve.

Our Car Parking Complaints Policy sets out a clear, fair, and accessible process for raising concerns when expectations have not been met, and for suggesting how we can put things right.

In line with the standards of our accredited parking association, the International Parking Community (IPC), we treat all complaints objectively, without discrimination, and with the aim of ensuring consistency, quality, and fairness in our services.

## 1. Purpose and scope

### Purpose

This policy outlines how the university manages complaints relating to car parking facilities and services. It ensures complaints are handled in line with the International Parking Community (IPC) Code of Practice, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### Scope

This policy ensures fair, transparent, and efficient handling of complaints regarding university-managed car parking operations.

It applies to concerns about service delivery, facilities, signage, equipment, or staff conduct, and issues where the university may not have complied with its own policies or the IPC Code of Practice.

### Out of Scope

Appeals against Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) or other enforcement decisions are not covered by this complaints policy. Those matters must be addressed through the university's formal appeals process or the independent appeals service specified in the PCN.

If a complaint is received that is essentially an appeal, it will be redirected to the correct appeals route and the complainant will be informed accordingly.

Decisions made by the Independent Appeals Service (IAS).

## 2. Definition of complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service or behaviour of staff involved in parking enforcement or administration, or the general operation of parking facilities.

It is not:

- a formal challenge against the validity of a Parking Charge Notice (PCN) this is handled separately through the University's car parking appeals process
- request to overturn an enforcement decision

## 3. How to submit a complaint

You can submit a complaint using one of the following methods:

- via the Parksmart app
- via email to the Estates and Facilities Helpdesk [ems-helpdesk@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ems-helpdesk@essex.ac.uk)
- by post:

Travel and Transport Officer

Facilities Support Services

Facilities Section

University of Essex

Wivenhoe Park

Essex

CO4 3SQ

The information that we would need in order to address your complaint would be:

- full name and contact details
- vehicle registration if applicable
- time, date and location of incident
- details of the complaint

- any supporting evidence

## **4. Complaints time frame**

The Travel and Transport Service will provide an initial response to the customer within 14 days of receipt either via the Parksmart portal or via whichever mode the complaint was initially received.

The University will conclude and respond and provide a full response to car parking complaints within 28 calendar days of receipt. In certain circumstances, this timeframe may be extended where the nature of the complaint or the complexity of the investigation requires additional time. In such instances, the complainant will be provided with written notification outlining the reason for the delay and an update on the progress of the matter.

## **5. How complaints will be investigated**

Investigations shall be completed by trained complaints handlers. The complaints handlers shall:

- review the complaint
- gather evidence to uphold or dismiss the complaint. Which may include:
  - speak to member of staff involved (where applicable)
  - speak to team leader (where applicable)
  - review parking charge issued (where applicable)
- • review against the Code of Practice to see if there has been a breach

## **6. How complaints will be recorded**

All complaints will be registered on the University's car parking complaints register log and updated accordingly. In line with the IPC Code of Practice complaints will be submitted to the IPC with associated supporting documentation.

In line with our records retention policy we shall keep complaints for up to three years before disposing of them.

## **7. Concluding complaints**

Complaints must be investigated and concluded within 28 days of receipt.

### **Stage 1**

We will review your complaint and provide a full response within 28 days, unless exceptional circumstances arise. If additional time is required, we will contact you with an update.

## **Stage 2**

If the customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may escalate it to the Head of Facilities Support Services.

## **Stage 3**

If the customer is still dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may escalate it to the Director of Facilities Services.

## **Stage 4**

If the customer remains dissatisfied with our response to their complaint, we will provide the necessary information to enable escalation to our Accredited Trade Association, the IPC. To proceed, the customer or motorist must submit a copy of the University's final complaint response. Please note that the IPC will not consider any escalation without this documentation.

All evidence and outcome shall all be recorded in the complaints log stored in the Box shared drive.

## **8. Corrective action**

If the complaint is upheld, any corrective action shall be recorded in the complaints log. Corrective action may include:

- staff training
- staff disciplinary
- amending processes
- suspending enforcement on a site

## **9. Exceptional circumstances**

Where there are exceptional circumstances for not concluding the complaint within 28 days, communication will be had with the complainant to explain why the matter will not be concluded within the timeframe and when it will be. Communication will be sent to the complainant when the complaint is concluded.

## **10. Where a complaint also purports to be an appeal**

Where a complaint also includes information that purports to be an appeal, the appeals process should be enacted, and the complainant should be informed that the complaint is being treated as an appeal and therefore the car parking appeals process is being followed.

If after further investigation it is clear that the complaint is not relevant to an appeal or the complainant informs the parking operator that they do not wish it to be handled as an appeal, then the process shall revert back to the complaints process.

## **11. Data protection and confidentiality**

All complaints will be managed in accordance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), IPC Code of Practice and the [University Data Protection Policy \(.pdf\)](#).

When a complaint relates to a Parking Charge Notice (PCN) issued by us, The University of Essex is the data controller. Any information provided in connection with the complaint will be used by The University of Essex to enable us to investigate and respond. Where relevant, data may also be shared with our parking permit service provider to assist with the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

For more information on how the university use your data visit the [Working with information and data](#) webpage

## **12. Reporting breaches of the Code of Practice**

Where the investigate has identified issues that constitute a breach of the code of practice this shall be reported to the IPC to investigate.

The IPC shall be provided with all of the information gathered from the original complaint and subsequent investigation.

All material breaches of the code of practice shall be reported to the IPC within three working days of becoming aware of the breach.

Serious breaches should be notified within 1 working day of becoming aware of it. A material breach is a breach which is likely to result in risk to an individual, the organisation, the industry, or the IPC.

A serious breach is a breach which is likely to result in sanction points under the sanction scheme.



## Document Control Panel

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