



# Student Complaints Procedure

202 -2

Issued by Standards and Enhancement

Approved by Senate January 2022

This document relates to the current year. If you become aware of any previous versions that are available on line please notify [SEO@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:SEO@bolton.ac.uk) so that action can be taken to remove the document(s).

## Contents





Students are advised that where a complaint has been raised against a member of staff or another student it may not be appropriate to share details of action taken, especially where disciplinary action is taken against a member of staff or a student.

Research Students are referred to the [Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors](#) in the first instance regarding raising a concern related to their supervisor. A formal complaint may be submitted following the completion of that procedure.

The University expects students and staff to act reasonably and fairly towards each other at all stages of the Student Complaints Procedure.

- 3 What is a complaint?  
A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about



- ii. when a case is escalated to a Stage 2 Formal Complaint, provide any evidence to support the complaint and further evidence that is requested within notified timelines in order that your complaint can be investigated in a timely manner;
- iii. when submitting a complaint provide full details in a concise manner and provide documentary support for the points made. If evidence and information is not provided within notified deadlines the complaint will be considered on the basis of the evidence available;
- iv. engage positively with those who are involved in investigating and/or resolving the issue that you have brought to their attention;
- v. make considered and reasonable suggestions for remedy should the complaint be upheld and include this in the Stage 2 - Formal Complaint submission;
- vi. be aware of sensitivities where issues involve other students or staff;
- vii. observe the Students' Dignity at Study Policy and Procedure (Bullying and Harassment) with regards to the concern/complaint;
- viii. raise a complaint only where a genuine issue has arisen, since repeated unfounded complaints may cause distress and could amount to harassment.

7 Who can help you to raise a concern or submit a complaint  
Students should refer to the following as sources of impartial help, advice, guidance and support in raising a concern or making a complaint:

Programme Leader and Personal Tutors

Student Liaison Officers

Student Advisors within the Student Centing and/or resolving the

The member of staff to whom the complaint has been referred shall normally advise the student in writing of the outcome of the assessment of the concern raised as soon as possible after the assessment has been concluded and this will usually be within 5 working days of the completion of the assessment of the concern at Stage 1. The written or verbal outcome which is provided to the student should be notified to the relevant Head of School/Division/Director of Professional Service and [SEO@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:SEO@bolton.ac.uk) for monitoring purposes.

In the written or verbal outcome of the Stage 1 assessment, the student will be informed of how they can take their complaint to the next stage of the process, Stage 2 The Formal Stage, should they wish to do so.

Schools/Divisions/Professional Services shall normally keep a record of Stage 1 concerns raised to enable themes and trends to be monitored. Heads of School/Division/Professional Services should be briefed on a regular basis. A Stage 1 Raising a Concern/Complaint template is available for staff to use to assist with record keeping but is not a mandatory requirement of the process.

Where the subject of the concern raised lies outside of the remit of the staff member with whom it has been raised, they may seek the advice of their relevant Heads of School/Division/Professional Services who may determine that a different, more appropriate, member of staff should investigate the concern raised and the student will be directed to the relevant Heads of School/Division/Professional Services for the issue to be considered. For example, if a student raises an issue with a Programme Leader which refers to service within the Library, the student may be directed to raise their concern with the Library Manager.

## 8.2 Stage 2 The Formal Stage

If, having pursued the matter informally through Stage 1 of the Procedure, the student feels there are reasonable grounds for continued dissatisfaction, they may wish to progress to Stage 2 the Formal Stage of the Procedure.

### Submission of Formal Complaint Stage 2

A Stage 2 Formal Complaint must be submitted in writing using the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form (available on the University web pages at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/studentinformation-policyzone/Home.aspx> ) and should be sent via email to [SEO@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:SEO@bolton.ac.uk) or in writing to the Standards and Enhancement Office.

The form requires the student to:

- Outline the nature of the complaint;
- Outline the informal steps taken to resolve the complaint at Stage 1;
- Explain why the student is dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1;
- Explain the outcome that the student is seeking in order to resolve their complaint.

In addition, relevant evidence to support the complaint is required, e.g. copies of letters, emails, signed witness statements or any other relevant documentation, to support the issue that the complaint relates to.

### Time Limit Stage 2

A Stage 2 Formal Complaint must be submitted no later than 10 days from the date on which the Stage 1 response was provided.

In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for students to progress directly to Stage 2 of the Procedure without first attempting internal resolution at Stage 1. Guidance must be sought from the Standards and Enhancement Office in such cases. Examples of



when this might be appropriate include complex complaint issues which require a detailed investigation.

In the event of immediate consideration at Stage 2, the Formal Complaint Form should be submitted within 20 working days of the event or circumstances which are its cause; only in exceptional circumstances will extensions to this time limit be considered. If the Formal Complaint relates to a series of events, the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form should normally be submitted within 20 working days of the most recent event.

#### Procedure Stage 2

Upon receipt of the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form the Standards and Enhancement Office will:

- Determine if the complaint falls within the scope of the Student Complaints Procedure;
- Determine if it is appropriate to refer the student to a different procedure;
- Determine if the complaint has been submitted within the appropriate deadline;
- Determine if resolution was attempted at the informal stage of the procedure and if not,

the Head of School/Division/Professional Service may request additional information.

A letter will be sent to the student with details of the outcome and any action the School/Division/Professional Service intends to take. The written response will state whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or rejected and the reason(s) for

necessary redactions.

10 Z R U N L Q J days of receipt of the request.

If the request is deemed invalid the letter will advise that the internal University procedures in relation to the complaint have been concluded and will include details of the scheme of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

If the request is deemed valid, a member of the University Senior Management Team will be appointed as the Review Officer and will review the complaint and the decision reached at Stage 2 of the Procedure.

In exceptional circumstances, the Review Officer may consider that a Review Meeting is required prior to a decision being made.

The Review Officer may refer to the School/Division/Professional Service for their consideration of any additional information being

The standard of proof for the Review Officer when reaching a decision will be based on the balance of probabilities.

The Review Officer will consider all relevant information and determine whether the investigation has been conducted fully and in line with these Procedures and whether the decision and outcome were reasonable in the circumstances.

The decision made at Stage 3 will be communicated to the student in writing normally within 10 working days of the receipt of the Stage 3 Complaint Form being submitted to the Review Officer or within 10 working days of the Review Meeting should that be necessary and if the Review Meeting has delayed the decision making process. On occasions when a Complaint Review Meeting will delay the response, the student will be made aware of the delay.

The Stage 3 - Complaint Review Decision Letter will include a Completion of Procedures concluded and detail how a student may raise their complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

If any aspect of the complaint is upheld or partially upheld, the Review Officer will consider possible means of redress which will be included in the Complaint Review Decision Letter. Exceptionally the Review Officer may need to undertake further consultation before a final decision can be reached which may result in a delay. In these circumstances the student will be informed of the delay.

#### 9 Office of the Independent Adjudicator

At the completion of the Complaints Procedure, the complainant will receive a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter from the University. This confirms that the University has completed consideration of the case through its procedures. In the event that the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome s/he may request an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). In such circumstances, the student should forward a completed Scheme Application Form to the OIA (together with the Completions of Procedures letter from the University). The OIA will then review the complaint independently in due course.

The following information should be included within the Completion of Procedures Letter:

The University of Bolton subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of the decision to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

look at and what it can do to put things right here:  
<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>

You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here:  
<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

Should you decide to refer to the OIA, your OIA Complaint Form must be received by the OIA within 12 months of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA on or before [Insert Date].

You can

<http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx> .

You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.

10 Remedies

The University is committed to providing the highest standards of service and maintaining good relationships between all of its students and staff.

Remedies available in response to complaints therefore reflect our desire for student satisfaction and to maintain quality.

When deciding wh18872 0 595.38 841.98 re W\* n BT /F1 10.98 Tf 1 0 0 1 485.92 739.44 Tm 0 g C

A student may be accompanied at any meeting under this Procedure by a representative who is normally a member of the University of Bo

someone who has been suspended or excluded from the University for any reason and representative. Normally, legal









## Appendix A

### The University of Bolton and our Partner Organisations

A.1 Complaints about services provided by collaborative partners (for example, those in which University awards are taught under academic franchising arrangements) or other organisations involved in

complaints procedure.

A.2 Our partners have their own complaints procedures which you will be informed about as part of your induction processes with the partner institution and issues relating to service provision will have Stage 1 The Early Resolution, Stage 2 The Formal Complaint Stage and Stage 3 The Review Stage, being conducted by the partner institution.

A.3 In the case of UK based partners which who are members of the OIA, when a complaint about services has reached Stage 3 The Review 0.000008 0 G [<00B1>] TJ E8 Tf 1 0 0 1 241.82

