



Brooksby Melton College

Higher Education Complaints Policy and Procedure



Higher Education - Complaints Process

The College take Higher Education (HE) students' concerns seriously and the complaint handling procedure is designed to enable effective consideration of any concern raised by a student or students and the enacting of timely remedies as appropriate.

1. Definition and Scope

The College defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction that warrants a response.

- I. The Student complaints procedure can be used for complaints within the following areas, the consequences of which have an alleged adverse effect on the student wishing to make the complaint.
 - a) Provision or delivery of programmes or parts of programmes.
 - b) Inadequate planning, teaching or supervision of a degree programme.
 - c) Inadequate services or facilities of the programme or College.
 - d) Decisions, actions or perceived lack of action taken by a member of College staff.
 - e) Decisions, actions or perceived lack of action taken by a central College service; or a member of staff acting on its behalf.
 - f) Complaints relating to discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- II. Complaints not in scope of this policy and procedure:
 - a) Academic Appeals – covered by Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

2. Terms

- a) Complaints are to be raised by students and not third parties.
- b) Group complaints are permitted, however in such cases one member of the group will be required to step forward as the group representative, through whom, communication will be made.
- c) The College does not accept anonymous complaints.
- d) The College undertakes that any student seeking to use this procedure will not be treated less favorably in her/his subsequent academic career, or College life, because of action taken to pursue an alleged complaint.
- e) Any complaints which are deemed to be frivolous or vexatious may be terminated by the College and, where appropriate, the matter may be referred under the College Disciplinary Process (further details are provide in point 4).

3. Process

Details of how to make a complaint are included in the student PDF handbook, which also provides links to relevant policy and process documents hosted on the college intranet.

I. Stage 1a – Informal

If a student or students raise a concern or complaint:

- a) Students must feel they have been able to air concerns and feel they have been listened to.
- b) Resolution of the concern should be sought wherever possible by providing an on the spot explanation of why the issues occurred and/or where appropriate, an apology and explanation of what will be done to stop a similar situation happening in the future.
- c) All complaints raised must be logged on the HE Staff SharePoint

- d) All outcomes to those complaints must also be logged and a record of the actions taken to consider and resolve the complaint.
- e) All complaints must be reported to the HE Quality Manager and Programme Team Manager.

II. Stage 1b – Formal

The Complaint will be escalated to a formal basis when:

- a) The informal process hasn't created a resolution
- b) The student has declined to engage with the informal process
- c) The issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation because they involve:
 - o Serious concerns regarding staff conduct
 - o Bullying by students
 - o Serious concerns about the quality of teaching and delivery of courses
 - o Serious misconduct involving violence, threat or sexual conduct
 - o Issues that have a detrimental consequence to a student's mental health
- d) The complaint must be submitted in writing using the college complaint form.
The complaint form is attached to this document on Page 6.
- e) An initial evaluation of the complaint will take place to assess whether the complaint meets the above categories and, if so an investigation will be instigated by the HE Quality Manager. The final decision on the complaint will be made by the Director of HE.
- f) The student or students will be invited to meet with the investigating officer, so all parties are clear about what is being investigated. If students expectations go beyond what the college can deliver the investigating officer will explain this in writing to the student to manage expectations.
- g) At the conclusion of the investigation, a report will be produced outlining the process followed, the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any recommendations.
- h) The outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing to the student, students or their representative. They will receive copies of the information considered with any evidence and a copy of the report.
- i) If a student is not satisfied with the outcome and wishes to appeal the complaint, the investigation documents will be forwarded to the Assistant Principal or Principal.
- j) If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of any appeal, they may then escalate the complaint to the relevant partner University. This policy can be found on the student's VLE. Support is available via the Student Services Manager and the HE Quality Manager to assist students with this process.
- k) Although not obliged, students are expected to wait for the outcome of a Stage One Formal Complaint before escalating their case to Validating Partners.

III. University of East Anglia

University of East Anglia (UEA) Academic Appeals and Complaints Regulations comprises three parts:

- a) An informal stage and a formal Stage One managed by BMC, the partner institution, which is outlined in points above.
- b) A formal Stage Two managed by UEA, which a Student may follow if dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One Appeal or Complaint, and considers that there has been a procedural irregularity in the consideration of the complaint.

Procedural irregularities can include claims that evidence was not fully or properly considered.

Formal Stage 2 UEA

- a) If accepted, by UEA Stage Two Appeals and Complaints will be referred back to BMC for further consideration

University of East Anglia Academic Appeals and Complaints policies and the relevant localised BMC partner policies can be found at the following links:

<http://www.brooksbymelton.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/HE-Academic-Appeals-Complaints-Policy-Procedure.pdf>

IV. Stage 2 University of Bolton (UoB)

University of Bolton (UoB) Student Complaints Procedure has three stages:

- a) An informal stage and a formal Stage One managed by BMC, the partner institution, which is outlined in points above.
- b) If the student is unhappy with the response at Stage 1 of the process, they may take their complaint to the Formal Stage which is Stage 2 of this procedure. The student should submit a Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form and any available supporting evidence to the Standards and Enhancement Office at UoB. The complaint will be assessed and, if within scope, the Complaint Form will be forwarded to the relevant Head of School, Division or Professional Service for investigation who will appoint an Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer will provide a report to the Head of School or Service who will respond to the student in writing within 28 days.

Stage 3 UoB

- a) If the student remains unhappy following the response provided at Stage 2 they may request a review by the Standards and Enhancement Office, who will determine whether there are grounds for a review of the complaint and, if so, a member of the University's Senior Management Team will be appointed as a Review Officer to conduct a review of the complaint and the decision at Stage 2. The decision made at Stage 3 will be communicated to the student in writing and will include a Completion of Procedures letter. These documents conclude the University's complaints process and detail how a student may raise their complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

UOB Academic Appeals and Complaints policies can be found at the following link:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/12476694/PI+Academic+Appeals+and+Complaints+Procedure+%28ARM%29.docx/32fab24c-4268-4276-9e8d-31374790504>

4. Frivolous or vexatious complaints

Examples of frivolous or vexatious complaints include the following:

- a) Complaints that are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive
- b) Insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes
- c) Insistence on pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- d) Complaints that are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- e) Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value

The College may terminate consideration of a complaint if it considers it to be without foundation or in bad faith. In such instances the College will write to the student to explain why it is terminating consideration of the matter. Where it is found that a student has raised a complaint of this nature, or used false information, the College will consider taking disciplinary action under the College Disciplinary Process. The student will be provided with details of how to appeal against such a decision.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

This policy has been considered for impact upon age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

DATE FOR REVIEW:

Feb 2020

RESPONSIBILITY:

Head of Faculty for Higher Education

APPROVED BY BOARD:

February 2019

HE Student Complaints Form

Please use this form if you wish to raise a concern about any aspect of your Higher Education Course or any aspect of the service provided by the College.

Submit the form in hard copy to student services at either the Melton or Brooksby Campus or send it to:

HE Quality Manager, Melton Campus, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 OHJ

Name:	Telephone No.
Student Number:	Email Address:
Address:	
HE Course/College Area:	
Complaint Detail:	

For College Use Only:

Date Received and reference no:	Date Replied:	Investigating Officer:
Action Required		
Actions Taken – please detail all dates and relevant persons involved in resolving this complaint		