



UK COLLEGE  
OF BUSINESS AND COMPUTING

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

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## Introduction

UKCBC is committed to monitoring and evaluating all its services to enhance quality. Feedback and comments on these services are always welcome. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to college staff and management via the Student Experience and Campus Committee. For concerns or issues that require particular resolution the Complaints Procedure is the mechanism by which students enrolled with the College and other stakeholders can raise an issue for investigation.

In all cases, complaints received will be considered with the highest level of consideration and with full confidentiality of the complainant and college officers wherever possible.

## Links to QAA Quality Code

This document is designed to ensure confidence in the College's dealings with concerns and complaints and to actively improve all areas of its operation in support of the prime function of this college that is to enable student to progress through their learning and development in a timely fashion. In doing so it takes reference from the Quality Code expectation **B9**

*Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement*

Additionally, this policy resonates with the "Good Practice Framework" published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Following the guidance of the Good Practice Framework, UKCBC is committed to concluding all formal complaints (stage A and B) within **three months** (90 calendar days) of receipt of a complaint

## Links to other policies

The remainder of this policy will relate to both general and academic complaints. UKCBC recommends that this policy is understood in the context of the wider maintenance of quality and standards, and particularly in relation to the following policies:

- Student Appeals Policy;
- Admissions Appeals Policy;
- Academic Misconduct Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy.

## Scope and Definition of Complaints

A complaint is defined as an expression of concern or dissatisfaction that requires a response or resolution. This may regard the experience through all the services of the college whether accessed by a member of public, employers, prospective students, current student or alumni. A

complaint can be presented to the college verbally or in writing. There are 3 stages of the complaints procedure:

- Informal: Early resolution with particular college staff,
- Formal – stage A: written submission to be reviewed by **Director of Studies/Head of Administration** (Reviewer is independent of the operational area of the complaint subject)
- Review/Formal – stage B: written submission to be reviewed by **Director of HE/Director of Quality, Enhancement & Development** (Reviewer is independent of the operational area of the complaint subject)

Complaints by members of the public will be considered utilising the 3 stages outlined above, however there is no final recourse of review for these cases by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Complaints received anonymously will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances under the guidance of the Director of HE and the Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development. Complaints concerning assessment decisions will be dealt with the Student Appeals Policy. Complaints concerning admissions decisions will be dealt with the Admissions appeals policy.

In all cases complaints will be considered in a fair, consistent and timely manner. No student or stakeholder will be disadvantaged by raising a complaint in good faith, in line with the Student Charter and Student Code of Conduct.

All complaints will be dealt with by staff members not involved in the daily operation of the subject of complaint to mitigate against perceived bias and any potential conflicts of interest. Where this is not possible due to operational constraints, and with the student's agreement, other staff members will be co-opted for the purpose of the investigation.

Current students may submit a complaint within 3 months of the incident to which the complaint relates. Complaints raised by a graduate student may be received upto 6 months following cessation of student enrolment, subject to the related incident occurring when the student was enrolled at UKCBC.

### **Process of Complaints Investigation**

All students are encouraged to raise concerns through the informal early resolution route in the first instance if at all possible. This can be directly with a member of staff or using the college uSupport system. This can be accessed through the eLearning platform and is monitored by members of staff to ensure comments, concerns or complaints are responded within the relevant department.

However, if this is not possible students must utilise the formal process commencing at stage A. If the outcome of a lower level resolution or investigation remains unsatisfactory to the complainant, they may raise the concern to the next level within the process.

A student may not raise a complaint directly to stage B unless the complaint subject relates to the Director of Studies or Head of Administration.

#### **Informal: Early Resolution**

- Concern/complaint is shared with staff directly involved as early as possible (“**Day Zero**”)
- The member of staff reviews concern **within 5 working days** of **Day Zero**. This review may include an Academic Manager or Campus Manager for clarification. Further discussion with the complainant may be held within this period.
- A decision relating to actions to address the complaint is agreed between the complainant and the college officer **within 10 working days** of Day Zero.
- Outline of complaint and resolution provided to the Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development (or Nominee) for annual monitoring (without complainant details) **within 20 working days** of Day Zero.

#### **Formal – Stage A**

- Concern/complaint is submitted to the Director of Studies (academic issues)/ Head of Administration (non-academic issues) using UKCBC Complaints Form A – “**Day Zero -A**”
- Complainant receives a written acknowledgement of receipt **within 3 working days** of **Day Zero -A**
- Complaint is reviewed by the Director of Studies/ Head of Administration (Stage A Chair), (or Nominee), **within 10 working days** of **Day Zero-A**
- The Stage A Chair will convene a panel of at least 3 members – Chair plus 2 additional colleagues to assist in the investigation
- The investigation panel will invite the complainant and other parties to make representation as part of the investigation process.
- Complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation **every 10 working days**.
- Where possible the investigation will be concluded **within 20 working days** of **Day Zero A**
- At the conclusion of the investigation the Stage A Chair will inform the complainant of the outcome and any action in writing. Additionally, the complainant will be informed that if not completely satisfied, they may raise the issue the utilising Review/Formal Stage B process.

- The complainant may request a **Completion of Procedures** letter where eligible, if they wish to progress the complaint directly with Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The letter will note that the internal procedures have been fully exhausted and to what stage.
- Details of the complaint, investigation and action will be recorded in the Complaints Log for annual monitoring.

### **Review/Formal – Stage B**

- A review of a concern/complaint request is submitted to the Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development (academic issues) / Director of HE (non-academic issues) using UKCBC Complaints Form B – “**Day Zero-B**”.
- Complainant receives a written acknowledgement of receipt **within 3 working days of Day Zero-B**
- Review of Complaint request is reviewed by Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development/ Director of HE (Review/Formal Stage B Chair), (or Nominee), **within 10 working days of Day Zero-B**
- The Review/Formal Stage B Chair will convene a panel of at least 3 members – Chair plus 2 additional members to assist in the investigation. All members of the panel must have no previous involvement in the concern/complaint to ensure impartiality.
- The Investigation panel will invite the complainant and other parties to make representation as part of the investigation process.
- Complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation **every 10 working days**.
- Where possible the investigation will be concluded within **40 working days of Day Zero-B**
- At the conclusion of the investigation, the Review/Formal Stage B Chair will inform the complainant of the outcome and any action in writing. This letter will be known as the **Completion of Procedures (CoP)** Letter. Additionally, the complainant will be informed that if not completely satisfied, they may raise the issue with the OIA.
- Details of the complaint, investigation and action will be recorded in the Complaints Log for annual monitoring.

## **General Points regarding the Complaints Process**

Where a group of students are making a formal complaint, UKCBC will discuss how best to resolve the concern and also proceed with the process. At times it may be more convenient to liaise with a single student on behalf of the group.

If a student is unsure about the complaints process, it may help to discuss the issue with someone confidentially and independently. The Student Representatives may be familiar with the individual experience and suggest ways to deal with the concern or support an individual through the process. Furthermore, a student may receive support and assistance by being represented by a (Lead) Student Rep during the process and at investigation meetings.

Where a complaint is presented which is found to be malicious or vexatious, the college reserves the right to take action against the individual under the Student Disciplinary procedure. Vexatious activity may include continuous or regular false or inaccurate communications to damage the reputation of an individual or institution, or complaints without evidence of support.

## **Complaints against the College to (i) Pearson (ii) New City College or (iii) Bath Spa University (As applicable in the context of the student).**

Students enrolled under NCC/BSU Partnerships are advised that they can make a complaint to NCC/BSU, if they are not satisfied with the outcomes of both Informal Stage and Formal Stage A of UKCBC Complaints Policy. Such complaints are received and processed as per the Complaints Procedures of NCC / Pearson/BSU as the case may be.

- i. Students studying HND with UKCBC (registered directly with UKCBC): may write to Pearson at <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/students.html> at the conclusion of the process, if they remain unsatisfied with the outcome.
- ii. Students studying HND through the NCC Partnership may write to [complaints@ncclondon.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@ncclondon.ac.uk) following the outcome of the Formal Stage A. New City College will make a final decision on the outcomes of the complaint made to UKCBC.
- iii. Students registered on degree programmes of Bath Spa University may write to [complaintsofficer@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:complaintsofficer@bathspa.ac.uk) following the outcome of the Formal Stage A where complaints relate to academic or assessment concerns. Bath Spa University will make a final decision on the outcomes of the academic or assessment complaint made to UKCBC. For the avoidance of doubt, Bath Spa University registered students raising a complaint about college infrastructure or non-academic student experience will have Review/Formal Stage B considerations investigated solely at UKCBC.

### **Issue of COP Letter**

If at the conclusion of the UKCBC (and its partners) Student Complaints process, the student remains unsatisfied with the outcomes or the process, they have the right to direct the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Details can be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-acomplaint-to-the-oia/guidance-for-students.aspx>

A Completion of Procedures (COP) letter will be issued to the complainant by final institution only on completion of all the eligible stages and processes as explained in this document. Details regarding making contact with OIA will be presented to the complainant with the COP letter

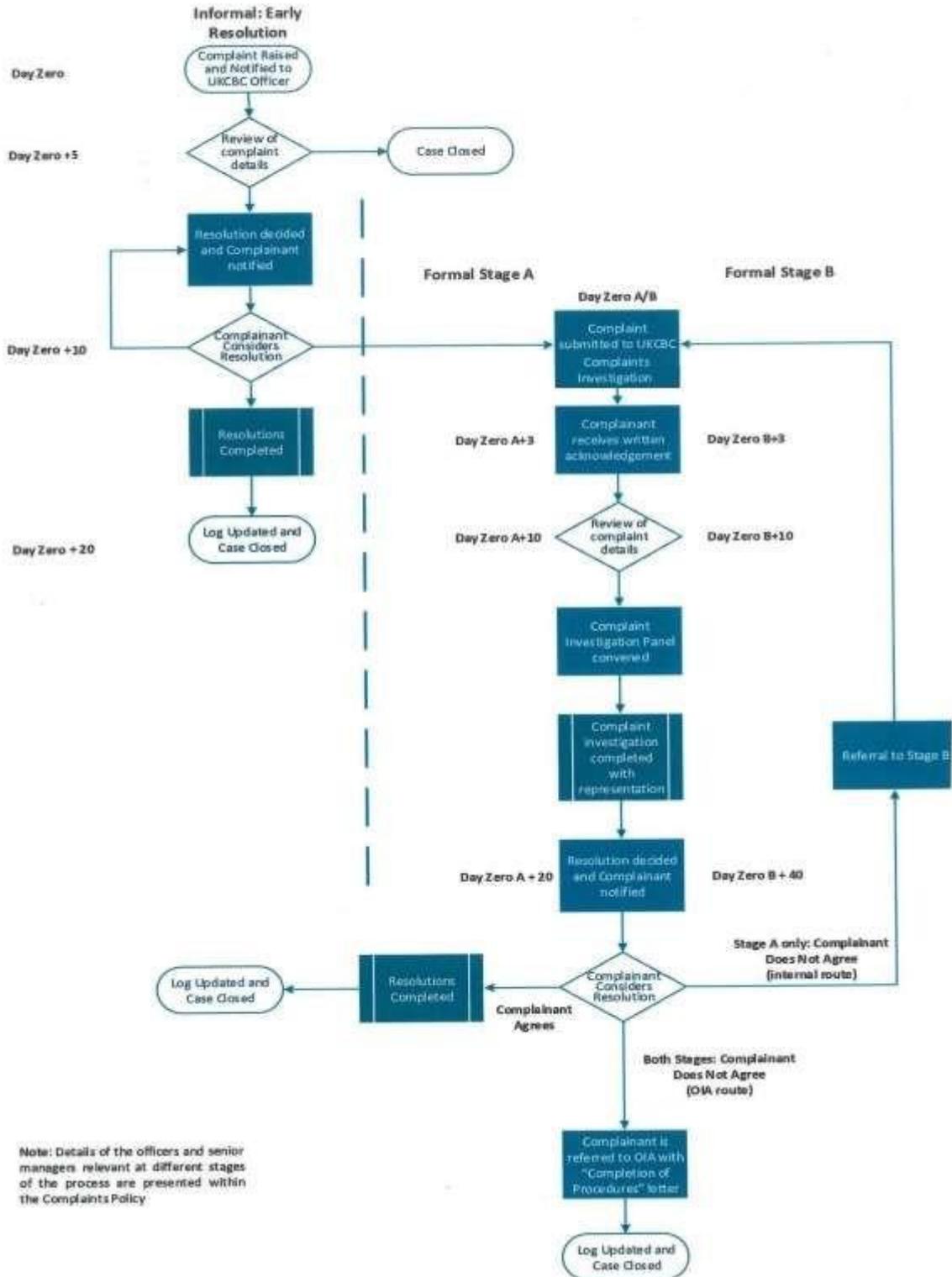
### **Complaints Annual Review**

All comments, concerns and complaints are reviewed, considered and investigated to inform improvements for the student experience. This is formally reviewed each semester resulting in a report by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee for academic related complaints and the Operations Management Committee for college infrastructure or non-academic student experience complaints. These reports are annually collated and evaluated by the College Management Committee leading to the ratification of enhancements that mitigate against activity or situations that have triggered complaints.

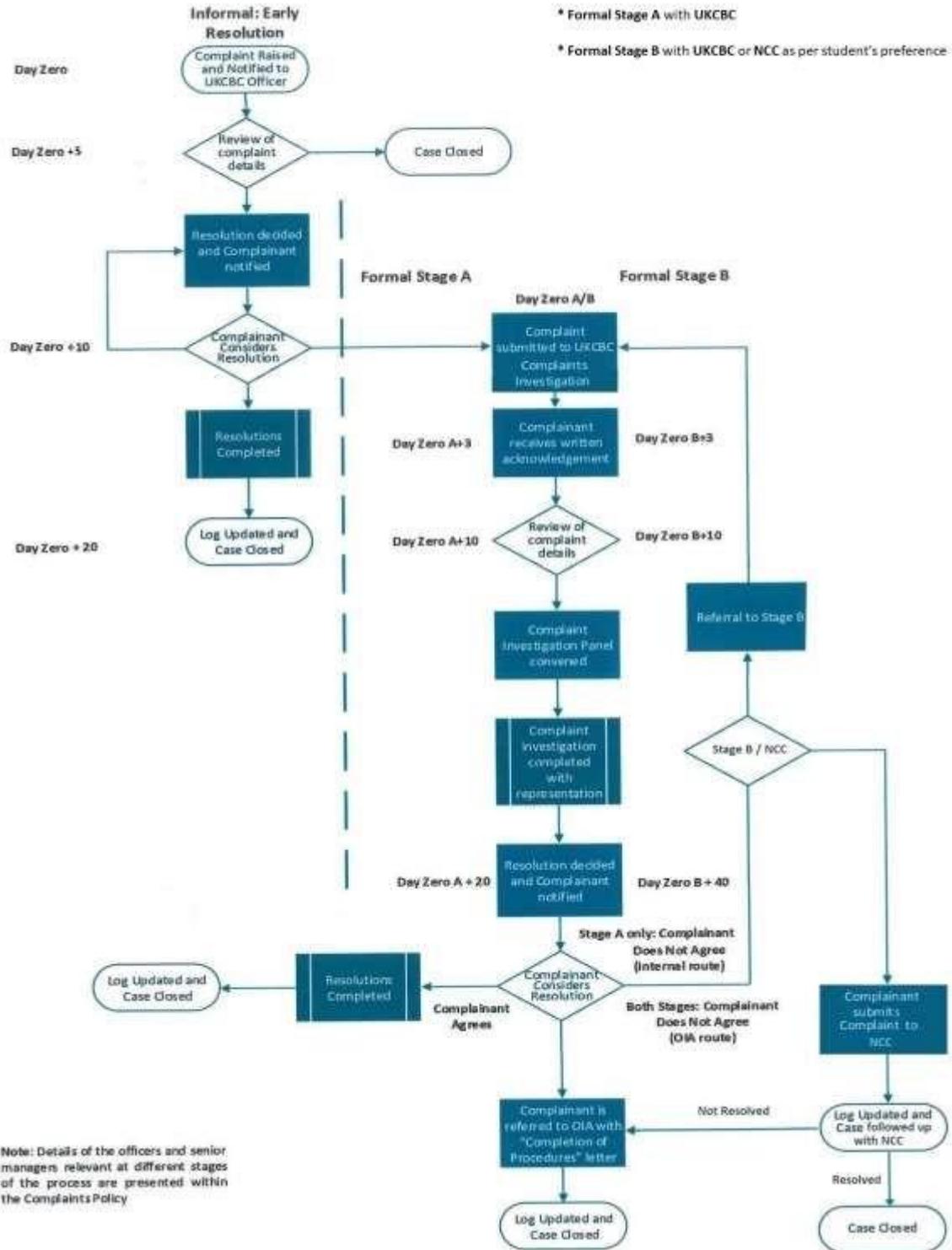
Complaints relating to Bath Spa University registered students are shared with university link tutor for internal records.

Complaints relating to New City College registered students are discussed with partner senior management team.

# PROCESS OF COMPLAINTS CHART - UKCBC



# PROCESS OF COMPLAINTS CHART - NCC



# PROCESS OF COMPLAINTS CHART - BSU

