



Student Complaints Procedure Guidance for Staff

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Stage 1

Students should email a summary of their complaints to their College Complaints email address, listed below:

- College of Business, Arts, & Social Sciences - complaints-cbass@brunel.ac.uk
- College of Engineering, Design, & Physical Sciences - complaints-cedps@brunel.ac.uk
- College of Health and Life Sciences – acsm-chmls@brunel.ac.uk
- Library - library@brunel.ac.uk
- Records – records@brunel.ac.uk
- Residences – res@brunel.ac.uk
- Sport Centre – mark.burgess@brunel.ac.uk

The process should work as follows:

- Student emails College/Service Area Manager (or nominee), email address detailing their issue.
- ACSM/Service Area Manager refers the complaint to an appropriate member of staff who will arrange a meeting with the student
- Member of staff will record what was discussed at the meeting [form/notes) and note any action to be taken. A copy of this will be sent to the student and the ACSM/Service Area Manager.
 - No investigation or formal evidence gathering needs to be done at this stage, but the student may bring evidence along to the meeting if they wish.
 - Information about what should be included in the record of this conversation can be found below.
- The ACSM/Service Area Manager will inform the student that their Stage 1 complaint is complete and what to do if they wish to pursue it further.
- Stage 1 should take no more than 14 days to complete.

At Stage 1, there are a range of remedies available for the Department to attempt to resolve the student's complaint, including:

- Practical remedy e.g. changing the student's supervisor/personal tutor, providing additional sessions in a particular module, ensuring that office hours are properly published by staff, putting reasonable adjustments in place for students with a disability or resolving accommodation facilities queries, service access etc.
- Apology e.g. if an error is identified, the member of staff can issue a verbal apology in the meeting with the student, or a written apology could be provided by the staff member responsible for an issue (such as a module leader, if the issue is related to a specific module).
- Financial remedy – This does **not** include the option to provide financial compensation for distress and inconvenience, but does include reimbursement for actual financial loss if the student can provide appropriate evidence e.g. receipts. It may also include tuition fee refunds if approved by the College/Service Area but these must also be confirmed by the Office of Student Complaints, Conduct, and

Appeals.

- Refer for Stage 2 Investigation – If a complaint appears to be too complex to respond to initially, or requires a full investigation, or you feel that there may be a conflict of interest between you, you may wish to refer it to Stage 2. This does not however mean that you cannot also take practical action to support the student in the interim period.

Some example situations have been provided below:

Example 1

Student A is a student with caring responsibilities for a child. Student A submits a complaint expressing their dissatisfaction with short notice changes to timetable resulting in them having to pay additional costs for emergency childcare on several dates. The student provides email correspondence demonstrating the changes to these lectures, and an invoice from the childcare provider demonstrating the additional costs required for the same dates.

As the student has provided evidence of the financial loss, the Department should offer to refund these costs in resolution of the student's complaint.

Example 2

Student B submits a complaint indicating that there has been a breakdown in communication between them and their final year project supervisor. They say they are dissatisfied with the support provided to them by the member of staff in question as they refuse to meet with Student B, and have sent several rude or dismissive emails. The student does not provide any evidence.

The Department should consider whether there are any other members of staff who can act as the supervisor for this student. If there is, they should make arrangements for this student to change supervisor. There is no need to acknowledge whether or not there was any wrongdoing on the supervisor's part as this can be done at Stage 2 if the student chooses to progress their complaint, but the action of changing supervisor should hopefully be sufficient to resolve their complaint.

Example 3

A student is complaining that the lecturer for a particular module has not arranged office hours, despite being asked by several people on different occasions. The student shows you emails on their phone demonstrating that they and other students have asked this lecturer about Office Hours on several different dates and don't appear to have received any response.

You could then meet with the Module Leader or Programme Lead and ask them to ensure that Office Hours are published for the module in question, and all other modules as well. This should hopefully resolve the student's complaint.

If you have any questions when dealing with a Stage 1 Complaint, you should contact Student-Complaints@brunel.ac.uk or the Appeals, Complaints, and Student Misconduct Manager for your College.

Reporting Stage 1 Conversations

When providing a response to a Stage 1 complaint, you should ensure that you include the following:

- Full names of anyone present at this meeting
- A brief summary of the details of the student's complaint;
- What, if any, evidence the student showed you;
- What, if any, action will be/has been taken as a result;
- A brief summary of anything else discussed at this meeting.

It is important for us to have a record of the conversation held at Stage 1 in order to support the investigation of a complaint should it be pursued at Stage 2. However, this record does not need to be made on a particular form (although one is available [here](#) if preferred) and can simply be an email sent to the ACSM. A copy of any record made **must** also be sent to the student and any other attendees of the meeting.

It may be that before you can make a decision on action to be taken, **you need to consult with another party**, for example, if you need to discuss with a Head of Department/ Programme Lead whether additional sessions can be arranged for a module or, for example, alternative accommodation arrangements. If this is the case, you should explain this to the student in the meeting, arrange to have this conversation as soon as possible, and complete the record of the meeting afterwards, clearly explaining in this record what arrangements have been made.