



**Brunel**  
University  
London

# Student Complaints Procedure

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This document sets out the standard procedure which will be followed in the consideration of your student complaint. However, you should note that the Student Complaints Officer or nominee retains the right to vary this procedure in some cases, where it is considered appropriate and/or necessary to do so.

### **Stage 1 – Early Resolution**

If you have experienced an issue about which you would like to complain, you should first engage with Stage 1. Stage 1 is designed to give your College or Department/Service Area Manager (or nominee) an opportunity to meet with you and address your complaint locally and as swiftly as possible.

You should first raise your complaint with your College/Service Area for early resolution at Stage 1.

You should send an email summarising the issue about which you are complaining, including what action you would like the University to take in response, to the Designated Officer for your College/Service Area at one of the following email addresses:

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

Once you have submitted your Stage 1 Complaint, a member of staff from the College/Service Area will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint and seek to provide a resolution that you are satisfied with.

*You may be accompanied at this meeting by another student or a member of staff from the Union Advice Service.*

Following this meeting, you will be sent a record of your conversation, this may be in the form of Stage 1 Complaint form, including details of any action to be taken, by the Designated Officer of your College/Service Area.

You do not have to submit evidence to support your complaint at this stage, as the purpose of Stage 1 is to reach an informal resolution, but you are welcome to do so should you wish to. However, if you are requesting a remedy which includes a claim for Actual Financial Loss, this will need to be evidenced.

A Stage 1 complaint should be raised **within 3 months of the incident** about which you are complaining, and should normally take no longer than **14 calendar days** from the date you submit it to be resolved.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome provided at Stage 1, you will have the opportunity to submit a complaint for investigation at Stage 2 of the Student Complaints Procedure.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Investigation**

If you choose to submit a Stage 2 Complaint, you should complete a [Student Complaint Form](#) and submit it to [student-complaints@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:student-complaints@brunel.ac.uk) **within 21 calendar days** of the conclusion of your Stage 1 Complaint, and (where possible) **within 3 months** of the incident about which you are complaining.

If you do not submit your complaint within these timeframes, you will need to provide a valid reason with supporting evidence to explain why you were unable to submit it earlier.

You should also submit all the evidence you want to be considered during the investigation, which could include, but is not limited to email correspondence;

- Receipts or invoices;
- Letters from a medical professional;
- Witness statements;
  - If you are unable to provide a statement but would like the University to contact your witnesses to request them to provide a statement directly, you will need to provide us their full name and contact details. Failure to do so may mean we are unable to obtain this evidence.
- Procedure Documents.

At Stage 2, the eligibility of your complaint will be considered by the Student Complaints Officer. The Student Complaints Officer will consider:

- If your complaint has been submitted within the relevant timeframes;
- If not, whether you have provided an acceptable reason for this;
- If the issues you are raising should be considered under a different procedure;
- If the issues you are raising can be considered under the Student Complaints Procedure.

If your complaint is found to be *ineligible*, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter. A COP Letter is a letter which will confirm that you have completed the University's internal procedures and that there is no further avenue for you to pursue the complaint internally. You cannot usually pursue a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator without a COP Letter.

If your complaint is found to be eligible, the Student Complaints Officer will then investigate your complaint. This will include consideration of:

- The substance of your complaint;
- The evidence you have provided;
- Evidence from the University;
- Procedure documents and guidance;
- Other relevant information.

They will assess whether your complaint is justified and, if required, will recommend a remedy.

You should normally receive the outcome of your Stage 2 Complaint **within 50 calendar days** of it being submitted, although sometimes the investigation may take longer than this. If this is the case, you will be notified as early as possible and will be advised of a new deadline.

*If you would also like a copy of the information and evidence considered by the Student*

Complaints Officer when making their decision, you can request this by writing to [student-complaints@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:student-complaints@brunel.ac.uk) within 14 days of receiving your outcome.

### **Stage 3 – Formal Review**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 Complaint, you are entitled to submit a request for a review by the Chief Student & Staff Services Officer or their nominee at Stage 3 of the Student Complaints Procedure.

A Stage 3 Complaint can only be submitted on one of the following three grounds:

- a) That there has been a material procedural irregularity during the course of the investigation which had a material effect on the outcome of your Stage 2 Complaint;
- b) That the Stage 2 outcome is unreasonable given the facts of the case;
- c) That there is new material evidence which would have a material effect on the outcome of the Stage 2 Complaint if known, but was not, for valid reasons, available previously.

To submit a Stage 3 Complaint, you should email [COOcomplaints@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:COOcomplaints@brunel.ac.uk) setting out:

- The grounds on which you are complaining
- The reasons why you consider these to be relevant
- Any new evidence you have provided.

It should be noted that a Stage 3 Complaint is **not** an opportunity for further investigation but a review of whether the Stage 2 Complaint has been properly considered and the outcome was reasonable.

A Stage 3 Complaint should be submitted **within 14 calendar days** of the outcome of your Stage 2 Complaint, and you should normally receive a response **within 21 calendar days** of submission. In some cases, the review may take longer than this. If this is the case, you will be notified as early as possible and will be advised of a new deadline.

Once your complaint has completed Stage 3 of the Student Complaints Procedure, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter. This will indicate that the internal procedures of the University with regards to your complaint have been completed, and will enable you to pursue your complaint further with the OIA should you be dissatisfied with the University's decision.

### **External Review**

Under the Higher Education Act 2004 the University subscribes to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA) to provide an independent scheme for the review of student complaints.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome to your complaint offered by the University, you may be welcome to apply for a review of your complaint with the OIA, provided your complaint is eligible under its Rules. Information on how you can complain to the OIA, including eligibility criteria, can be found [here](#). A student will normally need to have been issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter, notifying them that the internal procedures of the University have been completed, before they can submit a complaint to the OIA.

Should a student decide to make a complaint to the OIA, it must be submitted within 12 months of the date of their Completion of Procedures Letter.

If an apprentice remains dissatisfied following completion of the University's procedures they have the right to raise their concern with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Complaints to the ESFA should be submitted within 12 months of the Stage 3 outcome letter issued by the University. For further details please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>