



Document Administration

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY
Procedure for Dealing with Complaints by Students

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1. Bishop Grosseteste University seeks to maintain high standards both in the quality of the education which it offers to students and in the administrative and other services which support its academic provision. These procedures set out the steps that should be followed should a student consider that there has been a failure to maintain those standards of a kind which would make it appropriate to make a complaint. They also set out the steps that will be followed in order to investigate complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to identify the action that should be taken.
- 1.2. The Complaints Procedure may be followed by students enrolled on any part-time or full-time programme of study offered by the University, those accepted to study with the University or registered for its awards and those who have recently left the University. Complaints by former students at the University will not be considered if submitted more than six months following the completion of their studies. Complaints received from people who are not registered students, including applicants to University programmes, are outside the scope of this procedure.
- 1.3. It should be noted that this procedure is available to students in relation to complaints against the University and members of its staff. A complaint relating to an employment matter by a student who is also an employee would be dealt with under our Human Resources' Grievance Policy and Procedure. Complaints against students will be considered under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.4. Complaints about the role of representatives of the Students' Union should be managed through the Students' Union's own complaints procedure.
- 1.5. Concerns about a member of staff or student relating to bullying or harassment should be considered under the University's Dignity Policy.

2. Definition of a complaint

- 2.1. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the university.

3. Relationship to other procedures and codes of practice

- 3.1. A complaint is to be distinguished from an appeal against a decision by the University. In particular, it should be noted that the Complaints Procedure does not cover appeals against decisions made by a Board of Examiners on student progress, assessment and awards or by a Panel investigating Academic Misconduct, Extenuating Circumstances,

Support to Study or a Disciplinary Offence. The procedures to be followed in such cases fall under the scope of the following Codes of Practice:

- Code of Practice on Academic Appeals
 - Code of Practice for Academic Misconduct
 - Code of Practice for Extenuating Circumstances
 - Code of Practice for Support to Study
 - Student Disciplinary Procedure
 - Professional Suitability Policy
- 3.2. A complaint made by an applicant to the University falls under the Admissions Complaints Procedure.
- 3.3. Where a student raises a number of issues which do not fall within the scope of just one procedure, e.g., a complaint and an academic appeal, the University will inform the student of which specific issues will be considered under which procedure and will direct the student to all appropriate procedures. The University will also explain to the student the possible implications, if any, of following more than one procedure, particularly where one procedure may be suspended pending the completion of the other. In such circumstances, it may be possible, upon written agreement of the parties, to consider all matters together.

4. Principles and Protocols

- 4.1. In dealing with complaints, the following principles and protocols will be followed:
- i. The University will seek to ensure that the investigation of complaints under the terms of these procedures is conducted transparently and promptly and in a way which is fair to all parties concerned.
 - ii. Every effort should be made to seek a resolution of matters which might potentially give rise to a complaint with those most directly involved before the more formal processes are invoked and it should be noted that such an informal resolution may be sought at any stage of the process after a formal complaint has been made.
 - iii. Conciliation meetings are available to all students and staff within the University as a method of alternative dispute resolution. Further information on Conciliation is located under paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5 of this procedure.
 - iv. Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained insofar as that is compatible with the effective investigation of a complaint. The complainant will normally be informed in advance if any disclosure to a third party outside the relevant sections of the University is required in order to progress the investigation of a complaint. Complainants should be aware however that any person named as the subject of a complaint will be informed of the substance of the complaint and will be offered the right to reply.
 - v. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless the University decides that there are compelling reasons to do so.
 - vi. Complaints made on behalf of a student by a third party (for example, Students' Union representative) will not be investigated without the student's express written

consent, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). This includes complaints by a parent, spouse or partner of the student.

- vii. Where the issues raised affect a number of students, those students can submit a complaint as a 'group complaint' and in such circumstances, the University can ask the group to nominate one student to act as the group representative. For further information on group complaints please see Appendix 4: Guidance on group complaints.
- viii. The University will pay due regard to the interests of those against whom complaints are made. If, on investigation, a complaint is judged to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious, the complainant will be liable to penalties under the Student Disciplinary Procedure and the University may terminate consideration of the complaint. A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which patently cannot be substantiated or which has been made to defame the name and character of another person. Examples of a frivolous and vexatious complaints include:
 - complaints or academic appeals which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive;
 - insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints or academic appeals and/or unreasonable outcomes;
 - insistence on pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
 - complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance; and / or
 - demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.
- ix. No student bringing a complaint under this procedure, regardless of the outcome, will be treated less favourably than if they had not brought the complaint. If any evidence is found to the contrary, the member of staff concerned will be liable to disciplinary procedures.
- x. Complaints must be pursued in a timely way. The University may refuse to investigate a complaint if the Informal Stage has not been initiated within two calendar months of the incident which is the subject of the complaint.
- xi. All complaints will be considered on their merits and in accordance with the University's values, ethos and relevant policies, e.g., the Diversity and Equality Policy.

5. Complaints Procedure for Students

- 5.1. The procedure for dealing with complaints is divided into three stages. The first is the Informal Resolution in which an attempt is made to resolve the matter with the member of staff or academic programme or service department of the University in which the grounds for complaint arose. The second is the Formal Resolution which involves an investigation by an authorised senior member of staff. The third is the Review Stage.
- 5.2. Impartial advice on the Complaints Procedure may be obtained from the Students' Union who can provide representation for students, or from Student Advice.

6. Representation and attendance at meetings and hearings

- 6.1. Though this is not an expectation, the student is entitled to be accompanied by one other person, such as a peer, family member, friend or member of the Students' Union – but not a

legal representative – at a meeting or hearing from the Formal Stage onwards (see paragraph 7.5 regarding the Informal Stage). If a student does decide to be accompanied then they must make the Case Officer or Servicing Officer, depending on the stage of the procedure, aware as soon as possible in advance of the meeting, as per paragraphs 8.4, 8.7 and 9.8 of the procedure.

- 6.2. The person accompanying may advise the student but is not permitted to speak on their behalf. It is important to hear one voice in order to maintain clarity. The student may however declare in writing that they wish for a third party to represent them throughout their complaint. This representative must agree to act in this capacity. In such circumstances the Case Officer/Servicing Officer will liaise with the third party throughout the investigation.
- 6.3. If for a good reason a student is unable to attend a meeting or hearing under the procedure, then the student may make a request to the University that their representative attends on their behalf. In such cases, the hearing will only be required to consider representations submitted by the representative and not any written or oral representations made by the student before, during or after the meeting.
- 6.4. The student must provide the name of any person accompanying them to the University within the timescales outlined in paragraphs 8.4, 8.7 and 9.8 of the procedure and must always inform the University immediately of a request to be represented in lieu of their own attendance. Failure to inform the University may lead to the meeting being postponed.
- 6.5. Unless the student has provided written permission for a representative to act on their behalf, resulting in the direction of communications by the University to the representative and not the student, it is the student's responsibility to relay relevant information and communications from the University under this Procedure to any other third party.

7. Informal Resolution

- 7.1. The Informal Resolution Stage seeks to resolve straightforward concerns swiftly and effectively at the point at which a complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible, at Faculty Portfolio Area or Departmental level. It is expected that the majority of complaints can be resolved through informal means.
- 7.2. Where it is clear that a concern will need to be considered at the Formal Stage, rather than the Informal Stage, the student should be directed promptly to the Formal Stage of the Complaints Procedure using the form provided.
- 7.3. A student who is dissatisfied on an academic matter or with another service provided by the University should initially raise the matter with the member of staff most directly concerned. If this is inappropriate or undesirable, or if their concerns still remain, then the complaint should be raised with a senior member of staff from the Faculty or Department. In the case of an academic programme this would typically be the Programme Leader or nominee. Students are reminded that many matters relating to academic provision can be raised and resolved through student representatives on the relevant committee. Students can receive further advice and information regarding advocacy from the Students' Union.

- 7.4. Concerns raised at this stage may be handled by a face-to-face discussion with the student or by asking an appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter. Students and staff are encouraged to consider whether a Conciliatory meeting with an independent member of the University, not related to the Faculty Programme Area or Department concerned would be an appropriate method of resolution. Such meetings can be requested by contacting the Governance Manager. Further information on Conciliation can be found under paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5 of this procedure.
- 7.5. The main aim of the Informal Stage is to resolve complaints in a friendly and informal manner. Therefore, it is generally not expected that a student will be accompanied in any meetings with staff. The student will have the opportunity to be accompanied in discussions should the complaint progress to the next stage. If the student feels that they cannot meet with a member of staff without being accompanied by a third party then they should communicate this to the staff member. At this point, the complaint will either be progressed to the Formal Stage; a meeting will take place with one third party present selected by the student (member of the Students' Union, family member or friend) who may advise the student but is not permitted to speak on their behalf, as outlined in Section 6 of these procedures; or the Informal Stage will be conducted without a meeting.
- 7.6. If a complaint addresses several areas of the institution, this can be passed on to the Governance Office for initial investigation.
- 7.7. The Informal Stage will normally be concluded in writing to the student. The student will be informed of their right to appeal and time limit for doing so under the Formal Stage if they remain dissatisfied.
- 7.8. The Informal Stage will normally be completed within one calendar month. If, because of the nature of the investigations required, this timescale needs to be extended then consideration should be given to progressing the complaint to the Formal Stage for a more thorough consideration. In such circumstances, the staff member will assist the student in doing so. If the delay occurs because of staff not being available then consideration should be given to another member of staff handling the issue. If this is not an option then the staff member conducting the Informal Stage should advise the student of the reason for the delay and the revised timescales.

8. Formal Stage

- 8.1. Where this initial attempt at resolution fails or where the matter is judged to be sufficiently serious and complex, the student should write to the Governance Manager within 21 days, using the form provided on the University website (see Appendix 1) to outline the grounds for their complaint and refer to any supporting evidence. It should give an account of attempts at resolution made under the informal procedures and explain why the outcome has been judged unsatisfactory. Complainants are invited to indicate what form of redress they are seeking, without prejudice to any final remedy which may be determined. The complaint will usually be acknowledged within five working days of receipt of the form and the student will be informed that their complaint has been assigned to a trained investigator from the Senior Management Group or from amongst managers of similar levels (Case Officer) who will look into the matters raised and report directly back to the student.
- 8.2. Complaints against a member of the University Executive Group will be considered by the Vice Chancellor and complaints against the Vice Chancellor by a member of the University

Council.

8.3. The Case Officer will consider the most appropriate way of dealing with the complaint. Normally, one of the following approaches may be adopted, depending on the nature of the complaint:

- Directing the student to attempt a resolution informally where that has not already taken place. The complaint may be dismissed if the student refuses to do so without providing good reason.
- Dismissing the case out of hand if it appears vexatious or malicious.
- Directing the matter to be pursued under another set of procedures (e.g. Code of Practice on Academic Appeals, Student Disciplinary Procedure or Professional Suitability Procedure) where that is appropriate.
- Attempting to resolve the issue by correspondence between the parties or negotiation between the student and Head of Programme Area or service Department manager.
- Offering a Conciliation meeting between the student and Faculty Programme Area or Departmental representative.
- Further investigating the grounds of the complaint.

8.4. If both parties agree to attempt Conciliation, the student and the member of staff from the Faculty Programme Area or Department concerned will be invited to attend a meeting with the Conciliator. Due to the informal and private nature of these meetings, neither party should be accompanied at the meeting. This form of resolution should be agreed by both parties and is conducted by an impartial trained Conciliator provided by the University, completely separate from the section concerned. Should the student wish to attempt conciliation then the timescales for handling the complaint at the Formal Stage would be put on hold and would be agreed in writing prior to the conciliation meeting.

8.5. Certain remedies such as financial redress do not fall within the scope of remedies which may be offered through Conciliation. If conciliation is agreed by both parties, the Conciliator will ask both parties to sign a very brief report/agreement which includes a confidentiality statement. The report is confidential, and if an agreement is signed and then breached by either party then this may be considered under the Formal Stage of the complaints procedure by the Case Officer, subject to the express agreement of both parties. Ordinarily, detailed notes of Conciliated meetings will not be produced or signed and discussions are private. The Conciliator may make their own brief notes, if the issues are particularly complicated, to support the process. The Conciliator may also suggest the use of a co-Conciliator to assist them; this would be agreed by both parties. Following the Conciliated meeting(s), the Conciliator will contact the Case Officer and the Governance Manager within 5 working days to report whether or not Conciliation has been successful. The Case Officer will then write to the student within five working days of notification to confirm the next steps. If Conciliation was successful, the student will be informed that if they change their mind and wish to continue with the formal complaint, they should write to the Case Officer within 21 working days of receipt of the letter to request the reopening of the investigation. The student may request formal investigation at any point; however, if the agreement is breached, they should contact the Conciliator but should do so within 10 working days of realising the breach. If Conciliation was unsuccessful, the Case Officer should continue with the investigation at the Formal Stage from the point at which Conciliation was initially agreed.

- 8.6. If the Case Officer chooses to investigate the complaint further, the Director of Human Resources must be advised where it appears to the Case Officer that the complaint is of a kind which, if substantiated, might lead to disciplinary action against a member of staff. The Case Officer will gather evidence, but it is expected that the student will provide all evidence that it is reasonable for them to have gathered and provide. This may include medical evidence, such as letters confirming attendance or treatment at a GP or hospital or counselling service, reports by professionals such as psychologists or disability advisers, police crime numbers in the case of reported incidents, financial information such as evidence of loss of income (where relevant to the complaint) including bank statements, or receipts or statements of witnesses to incidents where it is safe and helpful to provide these. Such evidence will be managed in a confidential and sensitive manner. Should there be a requirement for such information to be shared with another member of staff elsewhere within the institution, the student will be informed of this requirement and invited to give their consent.
- 8.7. The Case Officer may wish to meet with the student in order to gain a deeper understanding of the case. Though this is not expected, the student is entitled to be accompanied by one other person, under the provisions within Section 6. If a student wishes to be accompanied then they must make the Case Officer aware as soon as possible in advance of the meeting – this should be no less than two days in advance.
- 8.8. Minutes of the meeting will be taken either by the Case Officer or a third party. If the Case Officer has arranged for a third party to take notes, the student will be informed ahead of the meeting of the minute taker's presence. A third party minute taker will not be permitted to speak at the meeting unless this is to gain clarity for the purpose of the notes. Following the meeting, the record of discussions will be sent to the student to agree them as an accurate record or suggest amendments.
- 8.9. If the Case Officer is able to resolve the issue with the student, then they will write confirming the resolution and informing the student that the complaint is now closed. The student will be informed that they will have one calendar month to change their mind and progress to the Review Stage and of the process for doing so under the Review Stage of the Complaints Procedure.
- 8.10. If on further investigation, the Case Officer decides that the complaint is without substance, the Case Officer will write to the student informing them that the complaint has been dismissed. The student will be informed of their right to appeal under the Review Stage of the Complaints Procedure and the time limit for doing so. If it is concluded that the complaint is trivial, vexatious or malicious, they may recommend that disciplinary action should be taken against the complainant.
- 8.11. In other cases, the Case Officer will write a report to the student notifying them that the complaint has been upheld in whole or in part. The Case Officer will inform the student of the remedy and timescales for this which have been agreed by the Faculty Programme Area or service Department and where appropriate, member of the University Executive Group, and also indicates whether this includes an apology. The student will be informed of their right to request a review and time limit for doing so under the Review Stage if they remain dissatisfied. If the student does not take the complaint to the Review Stage within the given time scale then the University will close the case.
- 8.12. The Formal Stage will normally be completed within one calendar month. If, because of the nature of the investigations required, this timescale needs to be extended; the Case

Officer will inform Governance Manager and advise the student of the reason for the delay and the revised timescales.

9. Review Stage

9.1. Where the complaint has been dismissed and the student is dissatisfied with this outcome or where the student considers that the action taken in response to a complaint which has been upheld to be insufficient, then they may be entitled to appeal to the Registrar and University Secretary in writing, by requesting a review of the decision, within one calendar month of the notification of the outcome of the Formal Stage. The student must explain the grounds for their appeal and where necessary, provide evidence. A template (Appendix 3) is provided to assist the student in structuring their request for review and is available on the University website. A request submitted outside the appeal deadline may be considered at the discretion of the Registrar and University Secretary. If the Registrar and University Secretary is unable to take on the case for any reason, they may appoint a nominee, who is a senior member of staff at the University and usually a member of the University Executive Group.

9.2. The grounds for which a student may appeal against a decision at the Formal Stage are:

- There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the complaint procedures.
- Clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the Formal Stage have not been effectively communicated to the student.
- New evidence is now available which was not available upon reasonable enquiry or application at the time of the investigation during the Formal Stage.
- The decision reached was of such nature that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

The Review Stage will not normally consider issues afresh or involve further investigation. A complaint must have been considered at the Formal Stage before it can be escalated to the Review Stage.

9.3. The Registrar and University Secretary may dismiss an appeal in writing to the student within 5 working days if they consider the appeal to be outside the scope outlined in paragraph 9.2. In such cases, a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued by the Governance Office.

9.4. If the Registrar and University Secretary considers the appeal to be well founded, they will allocate a request for review to a senior member of the University, normally a member of the University Executive Group (UEG) or nominee who has had no previous involvement with the case. The Registrar and University Secretary will normally respond to the student within 5 working days, detailing the process for the Review Stage and confirming the identity and contact details of the member of the University Executive Group or nominee who will be conducting the Review.

9.5. The UEG member will review the information provided by both the student and the Case Officer from the Formal Stage and if they find that there may be a case for Review, will conduct any necessary further investigation. If needed and where this is proportionate, the UEG member or nominee may overturn a decision at the Formal Stage or suggest alternate remedies.

Though it is highly unusual to consider the case afresh, the UEG member may convene a Review

Panel in the rare circumstances that a case is so complex or the issues are so contentious that further investigation is necessary to reach a fair and transparent conclusion.

- 9.6. In such circumstances, the UEG member will appoint a Servicing Officer, usually from the Governance Office, and communicate this decision to the student in writing. The Panel will be chaired by the member of the University Executive Group (UEG) conducting the review and will include two other senior members of staff from the Faculty Programme Areas or service Departments unrelated to the complaint.
- 9.7. The Servicing Officer will notify the student in writing of the identities of the members of the Review Panel and the date and venue of the meeting. The student will also be asked to provide a brief synopsis of their case and any further evidence/witness statements (including names and contact details for verification) if necessary. If the student wishes to attend and be accompanied as provided for within Section 6 of this procedure, they should inform the Servicing Officer of the person accompanying and provide all other information requested 10 working days in advance of the Panel hearing. The attendance of the student and requirement for a synopsis and for any further evidence are at the discretion of the investigating UEG member.
- 9.8. The Faculty Programme Area or Department involved in the investigation may be represented by up to two members at the discretion of the investigating UEG member. If the original complaint related to the actions of an individual member of staff, rather than the Faculty Programme Area or service Department, that individual has the right to be informed of the substance of the complaint and of their right to attend and be represented (at the discretion of the investigating UEG member).
- 9.9. The Panel will have access to all previous documentation in connection with the complaint. In addition, both parties' A4 synopsis of their case and any additional witness statements using the agreed forms will be made available to all parties at least 5 working days before the hearing. The Panel may wish to question witnesses in person at the meeting.
- 9.10. The order of proceedings shall normally be as follows:
 - i. Introduction of those present
 - ii. Outline of the purpose of the review hearing
 - iii. Reference to information provided by complainant and section (Faculty Programme Area/Department)
 - iv. Reference to synopsis summarising the main points of their case by complainant and Faculty Programme or Department
 - v. Presentation of not more than 15 minutes by complainant or representative
 - vi. Opportunity to question complainant and witnesses by Panel and Faculty Programme Area or Department
 - vii. Faculty Programme Area or Department presentation of not more than 15 minutes

- viii. Opportunity to question Faculty Programme Area or Department representative and witnesses by Panel and complainant
- ix. Complainant's or representative's summing up (maximum 5 minutes)
- x. Faculty Programme Area or Department's summing up (maximum 5 minutes).

No new evidence may be introduced in the summing up. The Panel may refuse to hear evidence that it deems irrelevant. It has the power to adjourn the hearing to another date and to summon additional witnesses if it thinks it would be appropriate to do so in order to pursue its investigation. If the student who has been invited to attend the meeting chooses not to attend, a decision will be made on the evidence available to the Panel.

- 9.11. The Panel will reach a decision in private. If the Panel decides that the appeal should be upheld, it may make any recommendations which it sees fit to the Faculty Programme Area or service Department. It may reject the appeal if it finds that it was unfounded or that the Faculty Programme Area or Department had responded appropriately at an earlier stage. If the members of the Panel cannot agree, the verdict will be that of a simple majority of its members. The brief conclusion and verdict from the panel will be communicated in writing by the Chair to the complainant and to the Faculty Programme Area or Department within 2 working days. Following the hearing, the Servicing Officer will write a short report of the hearing, which will be approved by members of the Panel. The report will set out the grounds for the complaint, provide a brief summary of the evidence received, and record the decision of the Panel with any recommendations. The report will be prepared within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 9.12. Following the Review Panel, the Chair/member of UEG conducting the review will consider the feasibility and proportionality of any recommendations of the Panel and where necessary, seek approval from the Registrar and University Secretary or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) or, if the DVC is unavailable or already involved in the investigation of the case, the Vice-Chancellor.
- 9.13. The student will be sent a copy of the report of the Review Panel, along with a letter from the member of the University Executive Group (UEG) detailing the final decision and any remedy which will be taken if appropriate; this normally takes place within 10 working days.
- 9.14. A copy of this correspondence will also be sent to the member of the University Executive Group responsible for the section (Faculty Programme Area or Department) concerned.
- 9.15. In normal circumstances, where the UEG member considers the Appeal without forming a Review Panel, the student will be issued with a letter/report from the UEG member detailing the final decision. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, information will be provided on how and when the University will implement any remedies where appropriate and whether this includes an apology.
- 9.16. The Review Stage should normally be completed within 21 working days, though in the rare circumstance that a Review Panel is convened, it is expected that this will exceed the normal timings. Where there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescales at the Review Stage then the student should be notified in writing of the

reason for the delay and the revised timescale for bringing the review to a conclusion.

- 9.17. The outcome of the Review stage represents the Final Stage of the University's internal procedures. The student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter by the Governance Office within 28 days of the conclusion of the Review. If the student remains dissatisfied, they will be directed to pursue the matter through the procedures of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Details may be found on the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk> or from:

OIA
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

10. Supplementary Provisions

10.1. Audio Recording

- 10.1.1. The audio recording of meetings or hearings under this procedure is normally prohibited, although this clause may be revisited in an individual case subject to such a reasonable adjustment as may be agreed by the University under the Equality Act 2010.

10.2. Remedy

- 10.2.1. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld following a formal investigation, the Case Officer will take steps to ensure that their recommendations are implemented.
- 10.2.2. Where an appeal is upheld or partially upheld, the member of UEG conducting the review will take steps to ensure that the recommendations of the Review Panel are implemented.
- 10.2.3. Upon receipt of evidence of expenditure, the University will meet reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses necessarily incurred by a student in bringing a successful complaint.

10.3. Collaborative Provision

- 10.3.1. Partner organisations will be expected to have complaints procedures which reflect that of the University. The procedures will be scrutinised for comparability at the time of the approval/re-approval event, and also upon request, e.g. when such procedures are proposed to be amended.

10.4. Monitoring of procedures

- 10.4.1. The effectiveness of these procedures will be kept under regular review by the Senate.
- 10.4.2. The Governance Office will prepare reports to the Senate and Audit Committee on

the number and nature of complaints which have been considered under the formal procedures and the proportion which have been upheld. The Senate will normally also receive anonymised information on the gender and ethnicity of complainants and the number of complaints which have been upheld or dismissed in each group.

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Request for Formal Investigation

Guidance

If you are a student at Bishop Grosseteste University and you wish to make a complaint to the University under Stage 2 of the University Complaints Procedure then you should have discussed this with a member of staff under Stage 1: Informal Resolution as per paragraphs 12-17.

There are two ways in which you may be referred to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure:

1. You have attempted a resolution under the Informal Stage but are dissatisfied with the outcome
2. You have attempted a resolution under the Informal Stage but a staff member has referred you directly to the Formal Stage of the procedure due to the nature or complexity of the case

Any Stage 2 request submitted without discussion with staff at the University will likely be referred back to Stage 1 in the first instance to attempt an informal resolution.

Once you have been referred to Stage 2 of the procedures by a staff member at the University, you will have 21 days in which to submit your form in order for your complaint to be considered. Should you submit a request for investigation after 21 days then the Case Officer will exercise their own discretion on whether or not to conduct an investigation.

You should address your request for investigation to the Governance Manager either by post (Governance Manager, Bishop Grosseteste University, Longdales Road, Lincoln, LN1 3DY), or by email (governance@bishopg.ac.uk).

Please use the template on the following page to help structure your request. Please also attach any additional evidence you would like to be considered during the investigation.



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Request for Formal Investigation

Student's name: _____

Student Number: _____

Term time address: _____

Home address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

Preferred method of contact: email post

Have you attempted to resolve your complaint under Stage 1 of the University's Complaint Procedure?

Yes

No

Were you referred to Stage 2 without an attempt at informal resolution?

Yes

No

Member of staff previously involved during Stage 1: the Informal Stage:

Initial concern raised with: _____

Senior member of staff from department: _____



Outline of complaint:

Attempt at resolution under Stage 1 of the University Complaint Procedure:



If a resolution was offered under Stage 1, why was this unsatisfactory?

Desired outcome of formal investigation:



Additional Information:

Please list any evidence which you have submitted along with this form in order to support your complaint:

As part of the investigation of your complaint, any members of staff mentioned as well as the relevant team, such as the course team, will be made aware of the complaint, as will the Head of Programme Area/Director/Programme Leader (or equivalent) whose section is involved.

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this form is true, and that I am willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Witness statement

Name:

Date:

Present:

Statement:

(Please include details such as the date, time and location where possible and try to keep the statement succinct. Where the events cover more than one period of time, please try to report in order of occurrence – use bullet points to structure your statement if this helps. Please provide names of other persons present at the time of any specified events)

Signature.....

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

University Complaint Procedure – Request for Review

If you are a student at Bishop Grosseteste University and you wish to request a review of a decision taken by the University at Stage 2 of the University Complaint Procedure then you should do so within one calendar month of receiving the decision. Any appeal which is received by the University after this point will be for the discretion of the Registrar and University Secretary whether or not to consider the appeal.

You should address your request to the Registrar and Secretary either by post (Registrar and University Secretary, Bishop Grosseteste University, Longdales Road, Lincoln, LN1 3DY), or by email (registrar@bishoppg.ac.uk).

You should use the Request for Review template on the following page to help structure your appeal. Please attach any additional evidence with your review form if this has not been considered at Stage 2.

You may only request a review of a decision by the University in relation to the complaint procedures on the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity.
- Clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the Formal Stage have not been effectively communicated.
- New evidence is now available which was not available upon reasonable enquiry or application at the time of investigation during the Formal Stage.
- The decision reached was of such nature that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

It will be for the Registrar and University Secretary to decide whether or not, on the face of it, there is a case for review. If the Registrar and University Secretary feels that there is a need to review the decision, they will instruct a senior staff member, normally a member of the Senior Executive Group (SEGSEG) of the University, who has had no previous involvement in the case to conduct a review of the investigation.

Once the Review has been completed and you have been informed of the final outcome, you will have exhausted all of the University's procedures for handling complaints. At this stage, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter by the Governance Manager, directing you towards the OIA (the University's external ombudsmen) should you remain dissatisfied.

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

University Complaint Procedure - Request for Review

Student's name: _____

Student Number: _____

Term time address: _____

Home address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

Preferred method of contact: email post

Grounds for appeal:

- Procedural Irregularity
- Bias or Prejudice
- New Evidence
- Unreasonable Decision

Case Officer: _____

Date decision communicated to student: _____



Brief outline of Complaint:

Outcome of investigation:



Why the outcome is unsatisfactory:

Detail of grounds to request a review:



Desired outcome:

Additional Evidence:

Please list any additional evidence attached to this form which was not considered during the investigation and outline the reason why this was not considered:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Guidance for group complaints

We can accept complaints from groups of students who share (broadly) the same concerns. One Student Complaint form can be completed and the names of each of the students who are making the group complaint should be listed in the section of the form “Outline your complaint”, along with their contact email addresses.

You must follow all other aspects of the procedure and available guidance about making your complaint.

The complaint form should be sent to the Governance Manager (regulatorycompliance@bishopg.ac.uk) who will review the complaint and confirm the next steps. How we organise this will depend on a number of factors.

If your concerns go forward as a group complaint, you will be asked to nominate one point of contact (this is invited on the complaint form) and in most cases, it will be this person that we will correspond with as your complaint is taken forward.

However, we also need to make sure that each individual student does wish to be part of the group complaint. Each student named on the form should contact regulatorycompliance@bishopg.ac.uk individually from their University email address and do a number of things:

- i) State “Linked to the complaint submitted by XXXXX” in the subject line so we can collate everything and make sure it is taken into consideration.
- ii) Confirm you do wish to be part of the group complaint and agree to the nominated point of contact. If you do not confirm this by email, we will discount you from the group complaint and you will not receive an outcome.
- iii) State whether you share the same concerns or have something to add or remove. Sometimes, an individual student does not wish to complain about a particular aspect or has an additional concern that is individual to them alone. This can be accommodated in the group complaint and you should provide evidence/supporting information if you wish to add a different concern.
- iv) Confirm the impact of the complaint on you individually. Sometimes the issues have the same impact on each person – but you have the opportunity to explain anything that has affected you differently. You may even want different remedy to be considered.
- v) Tell us if you have a disability/specific learning difficulty and would like reasonable adjustments to be put in place to assist you during the process; please do suggest what those adjustments might be. This often relates to any appointments there may be so you will not necessarily be asked to meet or speak with the staff member considering the complaint. We will note any reasonable adjustments though and ensure they are in place as needed as the complaint progresses.

In some cases, adding or removing from the original complaint makes the complaint very different, in which case, we will advise it is taken forward on its own.

Although we will normally liaise with the nominated point of contact, we may contact any of you individually to discuss your concerns or how you believe they have impacted on you.

Please note that depending on the number of you and the complexity of the complaint, especially if any of you have different concerns, this may affect the timeframe for considering your complaint and we may decide to take the concerns forward as individual rather than group complaints. We will keep you updated if we need a little longer than anticipated or if an individual approach will be taken.

Each of you will receive the outcome either by email or as a completed Complaint Investigation Report along with information about how to request a Review of the decision, in case you are not content with the outcomes and you have grounds to request a Review.

A group Complaint Review request cannot be accepted. However, as an individual student you can make your own request using the Complaint Review Request form (Appendix 3).

