BSBI
School of Business and Innovation

BSBI Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students

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BSBI Policy

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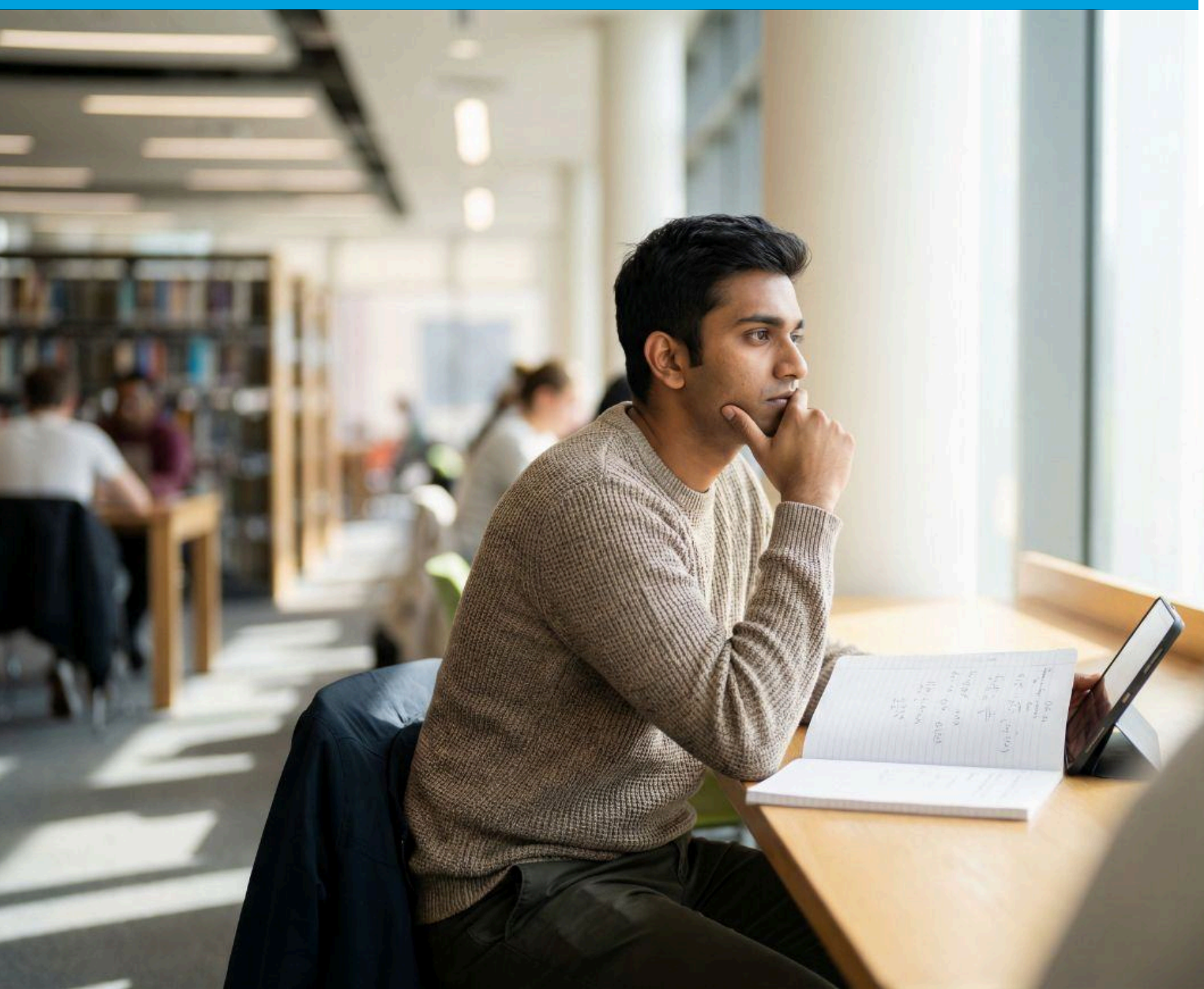

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1. Policy statement

1.1 The BSBI School of Business and Innovation (BSBI) is committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning and we therefore encourage our students to give us feedback. We believe that it is important for our students to be able to express their concerns and ideas for improvement, complaints and compliments and voice their opinions as this enables us to improve the quality of our services and academics. Students may do this via a variety of means, including via our Complaints Procedure.

BSBI is committed to managing complaints in a way that:

- Is timely and efficient, to facilitate a speedy resolution;
- Is fair and transparent to all parties;
- Promotes informal conciliation such as mediation, where appropriate.
- Promotes feedback and best practice to inform academic and administrative teams, and enhance the student experience.

1.2 This procedure covers all aspects of a student's experience at BSBI except for the following, for which separate procedures exist:

- All academic matters relating to examination and assessment performance and outcomes are managed via an Academic Appeals process (the exact procedure students must follow may vary depending on the programme's official awarding body, students should therefore consult their programme handbooks or administration teams for further information).
- Disciplinary issues are covered by the Disciplinary Procedures for Students.
- Racial, sexual and other forms of harassment are covered by the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- The approval and payment of refunds, which is handled by a different procedure; any persons seeking a refund should email refunds@berlinsbi.com

1.3 The Formal Complaints Procedure may however be used to investigate any of the processes in 1.2 as an internal quality measure to ensure they have been carried out correctly and fairly.

1.4 We aim to resolve all formal complaints within 10 working days whenever possible and without prejudice to the complainant. Where this is not possible, the complainant will receive an acknowledgement and will be kept up to date.

2. Definition

2.1 For the purposes of these procedures, a complaint is defined as a written expression of concern about the provision of a course or programme of study or a related aspect of service or a facility, which is provided to students enrolled on, or recently graduated from, programmes studied at BSBI.

2.2 Grounds for a complaint might include the following:

- Dissatisfaction with standards of academic provision, for example, insufficient or ill-maintained resources and facilities, arrangements for assessment, academic feedback, or information provided or not provided, about a course;
- Dissatisfaction with the quality or frequency of supervision or tuition, compared with previously advertised levels;
- Deficiencies in standards of service, for example, support facilities such as administrative services;
- Misinformation about an academic programme;
- Dissatisfaction with the level and availability of pastoral support;
- Other deficiencies in the quality of your learning experience;
- The inappropriate behaviour of a member of staff

2.3 The procedure does not allow for a complaint to be raised about an academic assessment decision, for example an examination or assessment result. All academic appeals are subject to the appropriate appeals procedure, as specified by the award's validating partner institution.

2.4 The procedure does not allow for complaints by one student against another. Such complaints are the subject of separate disciplinary regulations published in the Code of Conduct with Disciplinary Procedure.

2.5 Students who require assistance submitting a formal complaint may seek help from their Administration Office or from the Student Service Manager (who can be contacted at complaints@ berlinsbi.com).

3. General principles

3.1 It is important that students, prior to engaging with the Complaints Procedure, have a clear understanding of what the procedure is, what it entails and possible (as well as impossible) outcomes.

3.2 All complaints are taken seriously and students will not be penalised for making a genuine complaint. BSBI expects that students will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints. However, where clear evidence exists that students do submit complaints which are clearly baseless, frivolous or vexatious, action may be taken under the Code of Conduct with Disciplinary Procedure.

3.3 It is aimed for the procedure to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved, with mediation and informal resolution an option at any point. Complaints will be handled sensitively, courteously and confidentially. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible to avoid issues becoming protracted. However, patience and understanding is urged from all parties when complex issues or complaints involving multiple parties may require longer investigating and resolving.

3.4 The complaints procedure operates on the principles of natural justice:

- There are (at least) two sides to every dispute;
- All parties are given the opportunity to provide evidence to substantiate their version of the
- issue / incident;
- Full disclosure of any allegations or evidence will be made to those parties involved in
- the complaint;
- All parties involved in a complaint have the right to be accompanied by a friend or non-legal
- representative at each stage of the procedure;
- It is assumed that all parties operate in good faith and provide information which is true, complete and not misleading; this includes a duty to disclose all information which is relevant to the issue at stake, including information which may not support their position.

3.5 Students are expected to have met their obligations and responsibilities as a member of the BSBI community with regard to:

- Meeting their academic commitments;
- Acting in accordance with awarding body regulations (if applicable);
- Behaving with reasonable consideration for other students and staff.

3.6 All information provided regarding a complaint will remain confidential for use within the complaints process and is subject to the requirements of the Federal Data Protection Act of 30 June 2017. Only staff directly involved with the complaint will be given access to confidential information.

3.7 Anonymous or third party complaints will not be accepted. No investigation of a complaint made on behalf of a student will be undertaken without the student's written agreement to the concerns raised and their written consent for an investigation to be carried out. This includes complaints made by the parent or spouse of the student concerned.

3.8 No student bringing a complaint under this procedure, whether successfully or otherwise will be treated less favourably by any member of staff than if the complaint had not been brought.

3.9 BSBI will endeavour to address and resolve all complaints within 10 working days. Certain complex cases may however take a longer time to resolve than other cases. In such instances students will be kept informed of the progression of their case and BSBI will attempt to give an indication of when the matter will be resolved.

4. BSBI's three-stage complaints procedure

4.1 Any complaints that are escalated before the earlier stages of the complaints procedure will be reverted back to the appropriate stage unless there is a strong reason for the escalation.

Stage 1 – informal / local resolution

4.2 When first making a complaint, students should raise the issue informally with a member of BSBI staff; this may initially be with an academic member such as the Tutor, Module or Head of School. In most cases this will be a member of the School's Administration or Student Service Manager. Students can raise issues by calling into the office and/or, if necessary, by arranging a meeting to discuss the matter. In most cases a face to face discussion is the quickest and most effective way of resolving issues. However, students may also submit complaints via email if they find this more convenient. We would request at this stage that students do not copy in long lists of staff.

4.3 All complaints should normally be made within 21 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern.

4.4 When a student raises an informal complaint with an Administrator/Student Service Manager, the Administrator/Student Service Manager may need to refer the complaint to a more senior member of the team or to an Academic. The student will be informed that the staff member is raising the issue with Management and made aware that the staff member will get back to them within a given time frame.

4.5 Students should keep a record of their action taken to resolve the complaint and keep copies of any relevant correspondence.

4.6 A student should normally expect to receive a written or email acknowledgement from the School/Department within 2 working days and a full response, via email or in writing, within 10 working days. This timescale may need to be extended during vacations or when the complaint is complex or involves multiple parties.

4.7 If it is not possible to resolve your complaint locally then you can submit your complaint under Stage 2 of the Student Complaints procedure.

Stage 2 – formal procedure:

4.8 Where the complaint has not been resolved or satisfactorily dealt with locally, then a student can submit a formal complaint. Students will be expected to provide details of their attempt to resolve the matter locally, or a suitable reason as to why local resolution is not possible.

Submitting a formal complaint:

4.9 Formal complaints should be sent via email to complaints@berlinsbi.com

4.10 When a student raises an informal complaint with an Administrator/Student Service Manager, the Administrator/Student Service Manager may need to refer the complaint to a more senior member of the team or to an Academic. The student will be informed that the staff member is raising the issue with Management and made aware that the staff member will get back to them within a given time frame.

4.11 If a formal complaint is submitted outside the advertised deadlines, without good cause or reason, then the complaint will be deemed out of time and BSBI reserves the right not to progress the complaint, unless it would be inequitable to do so.

4.12 A student should normally expect to receive a written or email acknowledgement from the School/Department within 2 working days and a full response, via email or in writing, within 10 working days. This timescale may need to be extended during vacations or when the complaint is complex or involves multiple parties.

Resolution of formal complaints

4.13 In addition to informing continuous quality enhancement, the aim of this policy is to provide resolutions. Accordingly, while general expressions of concern are welcome, students are encouraged to specify the remedy they seek and/or the desired outcome to their complaint.

4.14 There are a number of ways in which the complaint may be progressed at this stage,depending upon the nature of the complaint. Students will be notified of this in writing.

Such action may include:

- A meeting with a designated senior officer to clarify matters of procedure;
- Forwarding the complaint to a named person in the relevant school or department who will investigate the matter locally and provide a written response to the complaint;
- Mediation facilitated by the Complaints Manager

4.15 Notwithstanding the above, the student may formally request that the case be taken to mediation at any point in the proceedings up to the convening of a Student Complaints Committee (Stage 3, below).

4.16 Wherever possible BSBI will seek to facilitate an early resolution of the complaint. BSBI aims to provide a resolution within 10 working days of submission of the formal complaint. Should this not be possible (due to complexity or requests for information from other parties), then students will be kept informed of any likely delay and the reasons for the delay, at the earliest opportunity.

4.17 Students will receive written notification of the outcome of their complaint from the Student Service Manager or other designated member of staff. This will include whether the complaint is upheld or not and any further action to be taken.

4.18 A report of the nature and outcomes of the complaints received will be prepared by the Complaints Manager (with input from the other designated senior officers) to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure. The report will identify relevant quality assurance issues and, were necessary, ensure that the procedures are revised and impact assessed as appropriate. The Reports will be submitted for consideration to the Academic Board on an annual basis.

Stage 3 – review:

4.19 If the response to the complaint following completion of the Stage 2 procedure is not considered by the student to be acceptable, they may invoke Stage 3 which involves a review of the case by the Student Complaints Committee. Requests for review must be submitted by the complainant within 21 days of the date of the outcome notification of the formal complaint.

4.20 The Complaints Committee convenes on a fortnightly basis or as required. This is to ensure that where a review of a formal complaint outcome is required, this can be provided by the Committee within the 10 working day target.

4.21 The grounds for requesting a review of a formal complaint outcome should be clearly stated in writing and sent with full supporting evidence to the Complaints Manager (emails should be sent to complaints@berlinsbi.com), who will refer the case to the next Complaints Committee meeting if:

- There remains, at the time, a complaint which comes within the scope of this procedure;
- The request for review has been lodged within the set time limit;
- The complaint is not of a petty or harassing nature.

4.22 The review will not consider new evidence unless there are good reasons as to why such evidence was not produced at Stage 1 or 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

4.23 In the event of a decision not to uphold a complaint, the Student Complaints Committee will advise the student of the range of support services that are available.

4.24 The student will be formally notified in writing of the decision normally within 2 working days of the Student Complaints Committee meeting. If a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for its rejection. The letter will be copied to the Chief Academic Officer or other designated senior academic, and/or the Head of Department as appropriate.

4.25 The decision of the Complaints Committee is final and concludes the BSBI Complaints Procedure.

5. External review by validating partner

5.1 A student should take their complaint to the programme's award validating partner only after the previous internal stages have been completed. The means of raising a complaint with a partner institution may vary in accordance with the partner's specific requirements.

5.2 In such circumstances BSBI will comply fully with the requests and requirements of the validating partner institution to facilitate the student's right to external review.

5.3 Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, the programme's award validating partner will communicate its findings to BSBI and the student. These will be reviewed by the programme's academic management and/or the Complaints Committee, and any outstanding actions will be implemented with the timeframe specified by the award validating partner.

5.4 Where the outcome of a complaint indicates that other students' learning experience may potentially be compromised by the same issue, BSBI will take appropriate action to protect the interests of other students and the integrity of its services. In such circumstances an action plan and general communique will be coordinated by the programme's academic management.

6. Completion of procedures

6.1 Complaints procedures are considered to be 'exhausted' only when all internal review stages AND external review by the award's validating partner (if applicable) have taken place, and any required actions have been implemented.

6.2 Once procedures have been exhausted, BSBI will inform the student that a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter can be requested. The COP letter will be provided within 2 working days of a request. Such requests should be directed by the student to the Complaints Manager within 1 month of the notification of outcome.

6.3 If the complaint is not upheld or there are found to be insufficient grounds to investigate a complaint or conduct a review, a COP letter will be issued to the student automatically by the Complaints Manager.

7. Training and awareness

The Student Services Team will organise activities to raise awareness of the Complaints Procedure, and how it is to be used, amongst the student body. The Student Services Team will also provide support and guidance for BSBI in handling complaints and resolving them as closely as possible to their point of origin.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and review

8.1 The Chief Academic Officer supported by the Complaints Manager will oversee the tracking of complaints submitted at stages 1, 2 & 3 of the process and progressed through the Procedure, and will ensure that records show the nature of the complaint, the process employed to deal with the complaint, the time taken for each part of the process to be completed and the outcome. All data held will be monitored in accordance with the BSBI's Equality and Diversity and Data Protection Policies and will be impact assessed on an annual basis in line with BSBI procedures.

8.2 The Complaints Policy and Procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Complaints Committee to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, compliant with the requirements of external regulatory bodies, and reflective of best practice within the industry.

Student complaint form

Please note before filling out this form students are requested to read the Student Complaints Procedure.

Formal complaints will be reviewed by the Complaints Manager.

Student Name	
Student id number	
Course	
Year	
Request addressed to (name/position)	

Please conduct a formal review of my complaint described below. I have read the BSBI Complaints Procedure and I confirm that I have already tried to resolve the matter informally.

Please sign:

In an attempt to resolve my complaint informally I have already spoken to the following people:

This is what happened, and why it did not resolve my complaint:

This is the evidence supporting my complaint, and I have attached copies of any relevant documents:

To resolve my complaint I would like the following to happen:

Student signature	
Date	
Receiving officer signature	
Date	

If you are asking for some financial redress, you must say what the figure is, and explain in detail, with supporting evidence, what financial loss you have incurred

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