



Higher Education & Non-Prescribed HE Student Complaints – Guidance Notes for Students 2020-21

These notes offer guidance as to what to do if you wish to complain about courses or services provided by the College or about certain other College-related matters. They tell you who to contact and how to seek further advice. Information is available separately about other specific procedures (e.g. on harassment, academic appeals).

To access the detailed description of the *Student Complaints Policy and Procedures* and the formal *Student Complaint Application Form* please use the following links:

<http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/about-us/customer-services/making-a-complaint/>

<http://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/about-us/corporation/he-strategies/>

It is really important that you read the HE Student Complaints Policy and Procedure as it will give you a more detailed description of what you need to do and what to expect.

Before you decide to make a formal complaint you should bear in mind:

(1) Informal resolution of the complaint should always be the preferred option.

- Matters can frequently be sorted out quickly and informally by talking directly to the person providing the service. If this is not possible or if you fail to receive a satisfactory response, then discuss the issue(s) with the person with overall responsibility for the service concerned (usually a Head of Area or Head of Service or Office.)

(2) If you decide to submit a **formal** complaint it must be submitted in writing and signed either by the person making the complaint or on their behalf by a person recognised as having a legitimate interest.

- A frivolous, malicious, libellous or vexatious complaint can jeopardise the effective use of the procedure and may not be considered. Nor may a complaint be considered if it is in, or accompanied by, an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- If after reading these notes you are still unsure about how to make your views known, please consult staff in Student Services, or the HE Academic Quality Leader for further advice.

Who can submit a complaint under these Procedures?

This applies to all Higher Education (HE) students who are studying a **Higher National** course at the College;

If the course is delivered by the College and students are registered with the University of Bolton, then student **complaints need to be directed to the College in the first instance**, if the complaint is directly related to the College;

If the complaint is directly related to the University of Bolton then please inform your course leader that you have a complaint against the university, as they may be able to help or advise. **In the first instance, speak with the Course Leader to try and resolve the matter informally;**

For the **University of Bolton students**, please refer to their Policy and Procedures: <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/student-policies/>

Also refer to the Office of Independent Adjudicators for Higher Education (OIAHE): enquiries@oiahe.org.uk for further information.

If your complaint is about services provided by the College, you should complain to the College using its procedures. If your complaint is about services provided by the University, you should complain using the university's procedures.

Why should I want to make my views known?

As part of its quality assurance processes, the College is keen to ensure that the courses, information, services and facilities which it provides meet the needs of students and other interested parties, e.g. employers and members of the general public. We welcome comments and suggestions about how things can be improved.

How can I make my views known?

If you wish to comment about any general aspect of the College's activities, please make contact with the appropriate part of the College:

- By telephone (01204 482000)
- In person, with the Student Centre
- By letter (Student Services, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5BG)
- E-mail: info@boltoncc.ac.uk
- If you do not know the relevant part of the College please ask for Student Services, which is located in the Atrium, Deane Road.

How may I make a complaint?

Whilst we always welcome comments and suggestions about how things might be improved, we also recognise that students and others with a legitimate interest have a right to complain if they feel that something is wrong.

Please remember that circumstances are sometimes determined outside the College by the Government, legal provisions or other regulations – you should receive an explanation if this is the case. Similarly, there can sometimes be a problem because the resources available to the College are restricted – you should be told how these constraints relate to your comment or complaint.

Student Services or/and the HE Academic Quality Leader can help advise you on the procedure for making a formal complaint, including whether other procedures are more appropriate. You can also contact the National Union of Students for help and advice: <https://www.nus.org.uk/>

The HE Academic Quality Leader and the Director of Adult and HE will maintain a confidential record of all formal complaints on the College's behalf to monitor their handling and to record the outcomes.

What happens if I formally complain?

When you make a formal complaint this is recorded and you should receive an acknowledgement within five working days and a response or report on progress every ten working days. The HE Academic Quality Leader will monitor its progress and can advise you on the position.

You may be asked to provide further information in person or in writing. You may also request to attend a Complaints Panel meeting if you feel that there has been something omitted for the written complaint or you would like to clarify some issues with the panel. Unless you agree to an informal resolution of your complaint, whatever the outcome you can expect a written explanation and if your complaint is upheld a statement of what will be done to prevent a recurrence and any redress that is available to you.

Suppose that I am dissatisfied with the result?

If you feel that the complaint has not been handled properly or the decision is unreasonable or unfair, or you have further evidence to support your complaint you will have the opportunity to attend a Complaints Panel meeting where you can clarify the further evidence or issue.

You can obtain guidance and advice from Student Services and/or the HE Academic Quality Leader, or HE Student Rep, or the NUS.

- For a student completing a **University of Bolton** award, a written outcome of the meeting will be sent to the student within 5 working days. All written documentation related to the complaint will be sent to the **University of Bolton** immediately after the meeting outcome has been recorded. The **University of Bolton** will then respond to the student. There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the College.
- For a student completing an award from an awarding body **other** than the University of Bolton, a written outcome of the meeting will be sent to the student within 5 working days of meeting. All written documentation related to the complaint will be sent to the awarding body immediately after the meeting outcome has been recorded. The letter will include a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter from the College. The Completion of Procedures letter exhausts the College's internal procedures. There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the College.

The OIA provides examples of student complaints and outcomes at:

www.oiahe.org.uk/decisions/recent.aspx

If you wish to refer your complaint to the OIA you should complete the OIA Scheme application form and send it to the OIA as soon as possible after receiving your *Completion of Procedures* letter.

If your complaint is wholly or partially justified, the OIA Reviewer may recommend that the College does something or refrains from doing something. The College may accept any recommendation or, if it does not, it will inform the OIA Reviewer, giving reasons.

For further guidance go to: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/guidance-for-students.aspx>

OIA, Third Floor, Kings Reach, 38-50 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AA

Telephone No. 0118 959 9813

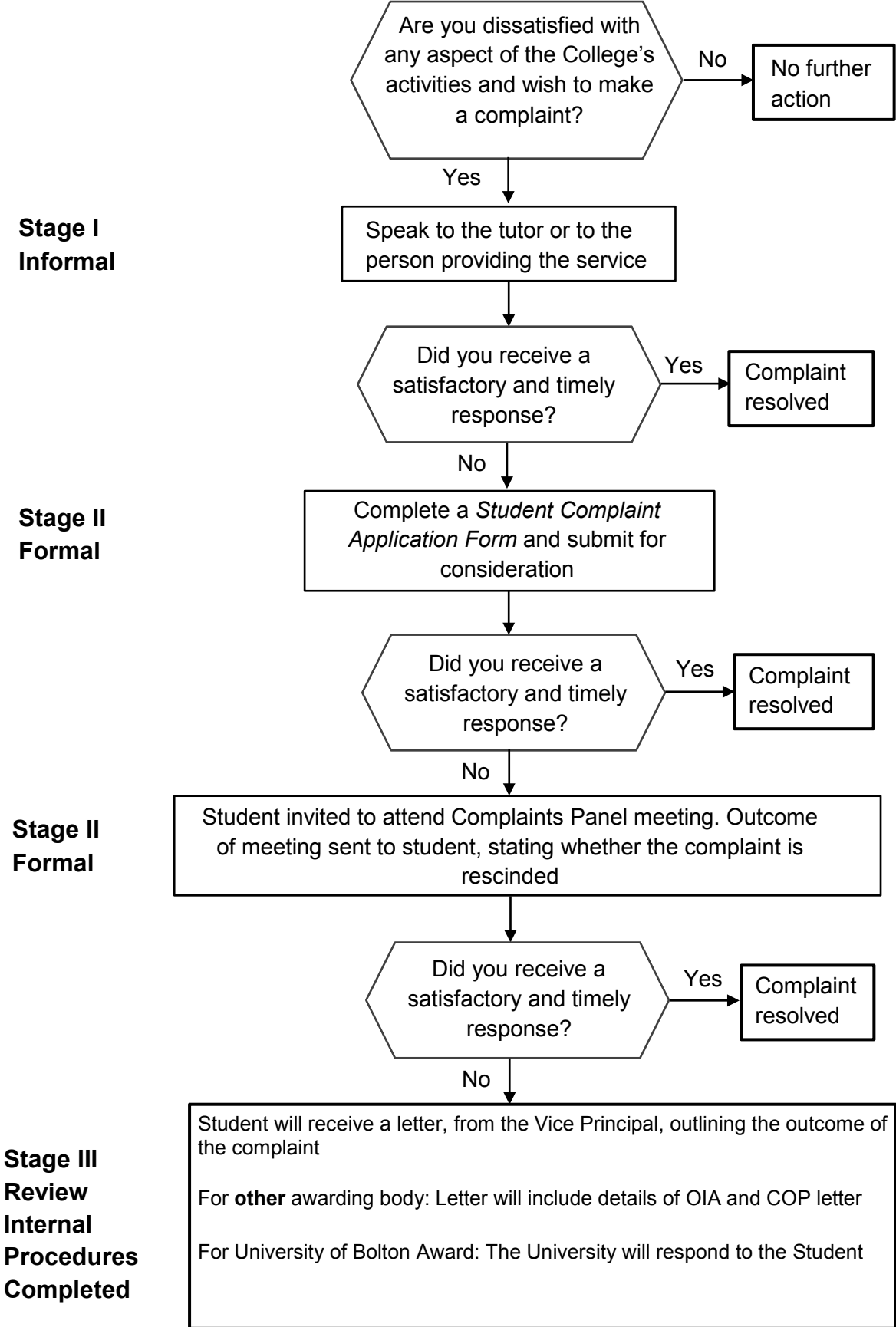
e-mail: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

www.oiahe.org.uk

Am I risking my results or services by complaining?

No - Please be reassured that you will not be disadvantaged in any way. The College welcomes complaints as a positive aspect of service monitoring and improvement and as an important aspect of student welfare.

Student Complaints Procedure Summary Flowchart



Area	HE Unit
Prepared by	HE Academic Quality Leader
Last Updated	September 2020
Next Review Date	September 2021