



Student Complaints Procedure

This procedure applies to:

- All students on the University of the Built Environment taught programmes.
- London School of Architecture students studying on University of the Built Environment award.
- Postgraduate research students.

Version: 20.00

Status: FINAL

Date: 12/05/2026

Student Complaints Procedure

Approval History

Version	Date	Name	Organisation
19.00	13/08/2025	Approved	Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee
20.00	12/05/2026	Approved	Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee

Document History

Version	Date	Reason	Person
V00.01	20/04/2026	Updates to Postgraduate Research Student guidance	Laura Brown

Student Complaints Procedure

Table of Contents

1.	<i>Summary.....</i>	<i>1</i>
2.	<i>Scope.....</i>	<i>1</i>
3.	<i>Principles.....</i>	<i>4</i>
4.	<i>What are the possible outcomes of a complaint?</i>	<i>6</i>
5.	<i>Stages of Procedure</i>	<i>6</i>
5.1	<i>Stage 1: informal direct complaint at source.....</i>	<i>7</i>
5.2	<i>Stage 2: formal complaint to the Complaints Officer</i>	<i>8</i>
5.3	<i>Stage 3: review for Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Students.....</i>	<i>10</i>
5.4	<i>Stage 3: review for Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students</i>	<i>11</i>
6.	<i>Student Complaints about University Staff Conduct.....</i>	<i>13</i>
7.	<i>Other Complaint Options</i>	<i>14</i>
7.1	<i>Group Complaints.....</i>	<i>14</i>
7.2	<i>Complaint about another student.....</i>	<i>14</i>
7.3	<i>Complaints outside of the expected timeframe</i>	<i>15</i>
7.4	<i>Anonymous Complaints.....</i>	<i>15</i>
7.5	<i>Complaints raised on a student's behalf.</i>	<i>16</i>
8.	<i>Final Arbitration</i>	<i>16</i>
8.1	<i>Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).....</i>	<i>16</i>
8.2	<i>Completion of Procedures Letter.....</i>	<i>17</i>
8.3	<i>Department for Education (DfE) – Apprentices only</i>	<i>18</i>
9.	<i>How will my personal information be dealt with?.....</i>	<i>18</i>
10.	<i>Additional Information and Support</i>	<i>19</i>
11.	<i>Guidelines for Members of Staff</i>	<i>20</i>

Student Complaints Procedure

1. Summary

The University of the Built Environment is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience through its programme provision and range of services.

However, no service is perfect: mistakes can happen; things could always be improved.

Students are encouraged to let us know if things could be enhanced. There are lots of ways to let us know what needs to be improved, from speaking to your Student Representatives, for students studying on taught programmes responding to surveys on your modules or responding to the annual survey.

A student complaint will usually be about something that has a direct impact on the person making the complaint. Sometimes, you may feel that the issue you have experienced warrants making a complaint. The University welcomes constructive complaints and encourages a positive environment where complaints can be dealt with effectively.

2. Scope

This procedure is applicable to the following:

- Any student studying with the University of the Built Environment, including students that are in the application process and have not yet completed the formal registration processes. The term 'student' also includes apprentices.
- Persons who have previously registered as students with the University of the Built Environment provided that the issue or concern is raised with the University normally no later than three months after the date that the student left the University or not more than three months after the date on which the student received the award from the University.
- Students studying with the University of the Built Environment on a postgraduate research programme.
- Students studying at the London School of Architecture (LSA) on a University of the Built Environment award.

Student Complaints Procedure

- Students studying with the LSA on an award validated by the University of Liverpool (i.e., students that commenced their studies prior to autumn 2025 with the LSA) where the complaint is about a non-academic facility or service delivered by the LSA or University of the Built Environment are within scope of this procedure. Complaints about academic matters or facilities or services delivered by the University of Liverpool fall outside of the scope of this procedure and students should instead refer to the [University of Liverpool Student Complaints Policy and Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

Please note that there is a separate process for complaints for employers of apprenticeship students please see our [Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices](#) (opens new window).

Definitions

A '**complaint**' is defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the University's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the institution.'*

Examples of issues students might raise as complaints include:

- the university not meeting obligations including those outlined in the programme specification or student handbooks
- misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the provider
- concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration
- poor quality of learning resources, facilities or services
- events causing significant disruption to the normal delivery of a course, service or other aspect of the [student experience](#)
- bullying or harassment by another student or a staff member
- concerns about policies or procedures relating to financial support or welfare support

Examples of issues that are **not** normally handled as complaints include:

- a concern about a decision made by an academic body regarding student progression, academic assessment, and awards, which would normally be considered under the academic appeals process.
- a concern raised by a student about the outcome of their own disciplinary process.

Student Complaints Procedure

- a concern about a decision made under other specific regulations, such as mitigating circumstances decisions, disciplinary or academic misconduct decisions. Such issues may be raised as an appeal.

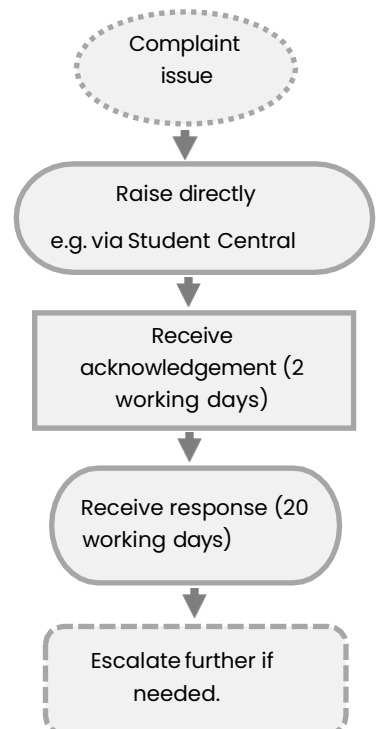
An **'appeal'** is *'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions about students' progression, assessment, and awards.'*

Appeals are dealt with through the [Student Appeals Procedure \(opens new window\)](#) for undergraduate and postgraduate taught and through the PGR Student Appeals Procedure for postgraduate research students.

Normally a formal complaint cannot be raised whilst a matter is in the process of being considered as an appeal.

How do I raise a complaint?

- You should first raise your complaint directly with the department at the source of the complaint, as soon as possible and normally within 20 working days of the issue arising or as a maximum **within three calendar months** of the incident which is the cause of your complaint. For example, if you have a complaint about a module, contact your module or programme leader directly, or if you have a complaint about admissions, contact the admissions team directly. If you are unsure who to raise your complaint to, you can raise an enquiry in [the VLE](#).
- You will receive an acknowledgement within 2 working days.
- The relevant department at the source of the complaint will respond to your complaint (classified as a Stage 1 informal complaint) within 20 working days.
- If you are a Postgraduate Research Student, once the University (as the Affiliated Research Centre's) complaints process has been exhausted' you may initiate a complaint using the Open University's complaints process. You will receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days.



Student Complaints Procedure

The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner. However, if you are not satisfied with the department's response, there are further options for escalation.

Worried about making a complaint?

We know that sometimes students worry about raising complaints, but we work to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because they raised a complaint. We believe in an open, fair, and accessible complaints procedure and we try to resolve your complaint promptly, fairly, and courteously. If we are not aware that there is a problem, we cannot put it right. Alerting us to problems can also help other students and future students to get a better service. By raising a complaint where you feel there is real justification, you are helping yourself, helping other students and helping the University.

3. Principles

3.1 The University aims to handle complaints in a manner which:

- is clear and accessible, ensuring, as far as possible, that the parties involved are on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in the proceedings, including assisting or otherwise facilitating the student in presentation of their case;
- is proportionate and encourages early, informal resolution nearest to the source of the complaint;
- is efficient, avoiding delay as far as is compatible with fairness and the proper consideration of the matter;
- is fair and treats complaints courteously and with appropriate seriousness, sympathy, and confidentiality;
- safeguards the interests and wellbeing of all those associated with a complaint; and
- where relevant, ensures that the institutes practice improves as a result.

The Procedure follows the principles of a good complaints process as set out by the [OIA Good Practice Framework](#) (opens new window) i.e. Accessible, Clear, Fair, Independent, Confidential, Inclusive, Flexible, Proportionate, Timely and Improving the Student Experience.

Student Complaints Procedure

- 3.2** The procedures outlined below have been established with the aim, where possible, of resolving complaints informally and through negotiation between those individuals who are immediately concerned with the issue. We recognise, however, that some complaints cannot be resolved by informal means alone and may require formal intervention. The formal procedure is therefore available to students in the event that informal pursuit of a complaint proves unsatisfactory.
- 3.3** The University is confident that the overwhelming majority of students will use this procedure in a positive spirit. However, it is possible that a very small minority may misuse the procedure. In exceptional circumstances, therefore, the University reserves the right to investigate complaints, and then to decline to consider any that are merely vexatious or abusive (including complaints made against staff due to a protected characteristic held by the staff member). The University will provide a brief response outlining the reasons for deciding not to investigate further but will not enter into lengthy correspondence about such cases.
- 3.4** For Postgraduate Research (PGR) students, once the Affiliated Research Centre's complaints process has been exhausted, if you are unsatisfied with the University's decision, you may initiate a complaint using the Open University's complaints process.
- 3.5** Making repeated and/or unfounded false, malicious and/or vexatious complaints may be considered misconduct and result in the application of the [Disciplinary Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).
- 3.6** While using this procedure, the University expects that students and staff act reasonably and fairly towards each other. Unacceptable behaviour, as outlined in [Student Disciplinary Procedure \(opens new window\)](#), will not be tolerated. The University reserves the right to pause investigation into a complaint if the student does not act reasonably and fairly with those involved in the complaint investigation.
- 3.7** The complaints procedure is a stand-alone process. Any student raising a complaint should continue to engage with their studies, including any resubmissions on the premise that the original decision stands until their complaint outcome is provided.

Student Complaints Procedure

Engagement with the complaints procedure will not be recognized or considered as mitigating circumstances in accordance with the [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure](#) (opens in new window)

4. What are the possible outcomes of a complaint?

4.1 When making any sort of complaint, it is always worth thinking about how the complaint can be resolved and what the University can do to address the problem. This can help you when writing the complaint and makes it clear to the person addressing the complaint what outcome is desired.

4.2 Having considered your complaint, we will find that your complaint is either:

Justified;

Partly justified; or

Not justified.

4.3 The University will ensure, as far as we reasonably can, that where a complaint is found to be justified or partly justified, appropriate corrective action is taken.

All outcomes will include clarification on the decision-making process.

5. Stages of procedure

If you wish to make a complaint, the steps that should be taken are detailed below. If your complaint is about staff conduct, see instead [section 6](#) for the procedure.

Before making a complaint, it is recommended that you seek advice and guidance from a trusted source, such as the Student Advice team, your Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer, relevant module leader or for postgraduate research students from your third-party monitor. The Complaints Officer will be pleased to provide impartial advice regarding the Student Complaints Procedure.

If a complaint is deemed by the University to be of a particularly serious nature, we reserve the right to move the complaint to formal investigation at the most appropriate stage of the procedures from the beginning.

Student Complaints Procedure

5.1 Stage 1: informal direct complaint at source

- 5.1.1 The aim of Stage 1 is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved this way.
- 5.1.2 You should first raise your complaint directly with the department at the source of the complaint, as soon as possible and normally within 20 working days of the issue arising. For example, if you have a complaint about a module, contact your module or programme leader directly; if you have a complaint about admissions, contact the admissions team directly; or if you have a complaint about your apprenticeship, you can contact your Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer directly. If you are unsure who to raise your complaint to, you can raise an enquiry in [My VLE](#). If you are a Postgraduate Research Student, you can raise an enquiry with the Graduate Research School (GRS).
- 5.1.3 Where possible, you should raise your complaint immediately, and within 20 working days of the cause for complaint. Raising your complaint promptly means that a better investigation into your complaint can take place and usually means there will be more options available to the University to put the issue right.
- 5.1.4 You will receive an initial acknowledgement of your complaint within two working days.
- 5.1.5 Your complaint will be investigated by a member of staff from the department at the source of the complaint. They will provide you a full response to your complaint within 20 working days. They may provide this response verbally, by email, or via a discussion forum or other media. If the response is provided verbally, a summary of the response will follow in writing.
- 5.1.6 We aim to resolve all complaints when you first raise them but, if you are not satisfied with the action taken at this level, you may choose to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure within 20 working days of receiving

Student Complaints Procedure

the outcome of Stage 1. See [section 5.2](#) for details on how to raise a Stage 2 complaint.

- 5.1.7 If you feel unable to approach the relevant department to raise a Stage 1 complaint, please contact the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk to advise them of this.
- 5.1.8 The staff member responding to your Stage 1 complaint must send a summary of the outcome to the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk. The Complaints Officer will record this and, if appropriate, share it internally within University of the Built Environment to improve the student experience. This allows complaints to be recorded so trends can be identified and acted on to improve the University's service.

5.2 Stage 2: Formal complaint to the Complaints Officer

- 5.2.1 You can raise a Stage 2 complaint within 20 working days of the Stage 1 response if you are not satisfied with the action taken at that stage.
- 5.2.2 When escalating a complaint, you should explain why you are dissatisfied with the response so far.
- 5.2.3 You can raise a Stage 2 complaint by completing the [Student Complaint Form \(Formal Complaint\)](#) (downloads document) and submitting it, along with any relevant evidence, to the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can send the completed form and evidence to the following address:

The Complaints Officer,
University of the Built Environment, Horizons,
60 Queen's Road, Reading, RG1 4BS

- 5.2.4 Relevant evidence could include medical evidence, communication on the VLE or copies of relevant correspondence. All evidence received will

Student Complaints Procedure

be confidential, and only those who need to review the evidence as part of the complaints process will have access to the information.

- 5.2.5 You will receive an initial acknowledgement of your complaint within two working days.
- 5.2.6 For former students, University reserves the right not to investigate a complaint at Stage 2 if it is initially raised significantly outside of expected timescales.
- 5.2.7 After a brief review by the Complaints Officer into the issues raised, the complainant will be contacted again to be advised of the timescale of the inquiry into the complaint.
- 5.2.8 The Complaints Officer will allocate your complaint to an 'Investigating Officer' to review your case. The Investigating Officer will be a member of the University's Senior Leadership Team with no previous involvement in the case.
- 5.2.9 To investigate the complaint, the Investigating Officer will review all papers submitted and meet with relevant members of staff. The Investigating Officer may also speak with you if they need to clarify any facts of the complaint.
- 5.2.10 The Investigating Officer will normally provide you a response within 20 working days.
- 5.2.11 If you are not satisfied with the action taken at this level, you may choose to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2. See [section 5.3](#) for details on how to raise a Stage 3 complaint.
- 5.2.12 If you are a postgraduate research student on an Open University validated award and are not satisfied with the action taken at Stage 2 of University of the Built Environment's procedure, you can escalate your complaint to the Open University by contacting

Student Complaints Procedure

studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk. See [section 5.4](#) for details on how to raise your complaint to The Open University.

- 5.2.13 The Complaints Officer will record the outcome of your complaint and, if appropriate, share internally within University of the Built Environment to improve the student experience.

5.3 Stage 3: review for Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Students

- 5.3.1 You can raise a Stage 3 review if you are not satisfied with the action taken at Stage 2.
- 5.3.2 To raise a Stage 3 review, contact the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 2 response and request that your case is referred for Stage 3 Review
- 5.3.3 The University will acknowledge receipt of your request within 2 working days.
- 5.3.4 The Complaints Officer will allocate a Stage 3 Reviewer to consider your appeal.
- 5.3.5 The Stage 3 review is completed by an external independent reviewer, normally an Independent Trustee from the Board of Trustees, who sits outside the University's management structure.
- 5.3.6 The Reviewer will normally provide a response within 20 working days.
- 5.3.7 The Stage 3 Review is confined to:
- A review of whether the appropriate procedures were followed at Stage 2 of the complaint.
 - A consideration of whether the decision was reasonable in all circumstances.
 - A review of any new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons (to be decided by the Reviewer), to provide earlier in the procedure.

Student Complaints Procedure

- 5.3.8 A member of the University's Executive will also consider the report from the Stage 3 Reviewer when providing the University's response to your Stage 3 complaint.
- 5.3.9 This is the final stage of the complaint's procedure. For all outcomes you will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter detailing our final response to the complaint within 28 days of the Stage 3 outcome. The Completion of Procedures letter is a requirement of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) and confirms that the complaint has reached the end of the University of the Built Environment's complaints procedure.
- 5.3.10 If you are not satisfied with the response at Stage 3 your complaint may be eligible for consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. ([How to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#) (opens new window)).

5.4 Stage 3: review for Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students

- 5.4.1 This section outlines the process for postgraduate research students on an Open University validated award to raise their complaint to The Open University (OU) on completion of Stage 2 of University of the Built Environment's procedure.
- 5.4.2 To raise a Stage 3 review, contact the OU's Student Case Work Office on studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 2 response and request that your case is referred for Stage 3 Review.
- 5.4.3 The OU will request from the University, copies of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints paperwork for review in line with Stage 3 of the Student Complaints Procedure.
- 5.4.4 The OU will acknowledge receipt of your request within 3 working days.
- 5.4.5 The OU Student Case Work Office will normally provide a response within 20 working days.

Student Complaints Procedure

- 5.4.6 Where a request for a review has been accepted, an OU Casework Manager will conduct a review on behalf of the OU Vice-Chancellor's Delegate and submit the report for review. The Stage 3 Review is confined to:
- A review of whether the appropriate procedures were followed at Stage 2 of the complaint.
 - A consideration of whether the decision was reasonable in all circumstances.
 - A review of any new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons (to be decided by the Reviewer), to provide earlier in the procedure.
- 5.4.7 Once the OU Vice Chancellor's Delegate has reviewed and approved the report, the OU Student Case Work Office will send a copy of the report to you, to University of the Built Environment, and to the OU Director, Academic Services.
- 5.4.8 If the University of the Built Environment decision is confirmed following the review, the OU will send a completion of procedures letter together with the OU Vice-Chancellor's Delegate's report.
- 5.4.9 If the decision of the OU Vice-Chancellor's Delegate is to set aside the decision of University of the Built Environment, in whole or in part, the OU will refer the complaint back to University of the Built Environment, with recommendations for reconsideration of the complaint. The University of the Built Environment will contact you directly within 15 working days of the referral confirming how the OU's recommendations will be implemented. A copy of the University of the Built Environment correspondence will be sent to the OU Student Case Work Office.
- 5.4.10 Following the OU Stage 3 Review the OU will send you a completion of procedures letter which confirms that both University of the Built Environment and OU internal processes have been concluded. If you are not satisfied with the response at Stage 3 your complaint may be eligible for consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator as outlined in [section 8](#) below.

Student Complaints Procedure

6. Student Complaints about University Staff Conduct

- 6.1** If your complaint is about the conduct of a member of staff, you must submit a formal complaint by submitting a completed [Student Complaint Form \(opens new window\)](#) to complaints@ube.ac.uk as soon as possible and normally within 20 working days.
- 6.2** You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt within 2 working days.
- 6.3** For former students, the University reserves the right not to investigate a complaint about staff conduct if it is initially raised significantly outside of expected timescales.
- 6.4** Your complaint will initially be reviewed by the Director of HR who will determine who is the best person to investigate your complaint. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Director of HR to lead the investigation, either informally or formally in accordance with the University Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- 6.5** To investigate your complaint, the Investigating Officer will review all papers submitted and meet with relevant members of staff. The Investigating Officer may also speak with you if they need to clarify any facts of the complaint.
- 6.6** We will try to provide you with a written response to your formal complaint within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint as required by Stage 2 of the procedure ([see section 5.2](#)). However, sometimes the nature of employment-related investigations means they can be complex and lengthy, and the University is required to adhere to employment legislation and statutory guidance throughout the process. In these cases, the University will aim to provide you with a response as soon as reasonably possible and will keep you updated on progress.
- 6.7** The University will still provide a formal written response outlining the University's position in as much detail as is possible to give. This includes whether the University will deal with the complaint on an informal or formal basis with the member of staff. However, due to the confidential nature of employment investigations, University may not be able to

Student Complaints Procedure

disclose the findings of the investigation, nor confirm what action may or may not be taken as a result of the outcome of the investigation.

- 6.8** If it is stated that any part of the complaint response is provided on a confidential basis, you have an obligation to keep this information confidential.
- 6.9** **The Complaints Officer will record the outcome of your complaint and, if appropriate, share internally within the University to improve the student experience.**
- 6.10** If you are not satisfied with the action taken at this level, you may choose to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2. See [section 5.3](#) for details on how to raise a Stage 3 complaint for students on taught programmes of study, and [section 5.4](#) for Postgraduate Research Students.

7. Other Complaint Options

7.1 Group Complaints

- 7.1.1 If a group of students are dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint, a group complaint may be submitted, following the usual complaints process. However, a representative should be nominated from the group who will be the contact person with the University. It will be the responsibility of the representative to liaise with the other students who are part of the group complaint. Each student forming part of the group complaint needs to confirm (e.g., via a signature, or email) that they consent to the representative acting on their behalf.

7.2 Complaint about another student

- 7.2.1 If you need to make a complaint about another student, you can contact the Complaints Officer in the first instance on complaints@ube.ac.uk. The Complaints Officer will then provide advice on which of University's student behaviour procedures is most appropriate to use, for example, the Anti-bullying and Harassment Procedure, the Disciplinary Procedure,

Student Complaints Procedure

the Academic Misconduct Procedure or Plagiarism and Research Misconduct Policy for Postgraduate Research Students.

7.3 Complaints outside of the expected timeframe

You must raise a stage 1 complaint within three calendar months of the incident which is the cause of your complaint. The University will respond to all Stage 1 complaints even if made after the deadline, you should be aware that if a complaint is made outside the deadlines stated, this may hinder our ability to fully investigate the complaint or provide appropriate outcomes. The University will only consider Stage 2 or 3 complaints made after the deadlines in exceptional circumstances where there is medical evidence, such as mental health issues, which has prevented submission.

Such requests will be considered in consultation with the Head of Disability and Welfare, to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

- 7.3.1 For former students, the University reserves the right not to investigate a complaint at Stage 2 if it is initially raised significantly outside of expected timescales.

7.4 Anonymous Complaints

- 7.4.1 Only in exceptional circumstances can an anonymous complaint be made, and there must be exceptional reasons why the complaint has to be anonymous. These should be discussed with the Complaints Officer in the first instance.
- 7.4.2 Individuals who are the subject of a complaint are entitled to know who is complaining and the nature of the complaint. If you are at all concerned about this, you should get advice from the Complaints Officer. If, in exceptional circumstances and for justifiable documented reasons, you wish to remain anonymous, this may be considered, for example, in the initial stages of harassment procedures. However, the

Student Complaints Procedure

Complaints Officer will normally wish to undertake confidential discussions with you for further information.

7.5 Complaints raised on a student's behalf.

- 7.5.1 You should normally submit your own complaint because you are the expert in your own experiences.
- 7.5.2 However, if you have a disability or other impairment which makes you unable to make your complaint effectively, please contact the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk for details on how to appoint a representative.
- 7.5.3 If you are an apprentice:
- While your employer cannot raise a complaint “on your behalf”, we do have a separate [Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices \(opens new window\)](#) where your employer can raise a complaint with us. However, if your employer raises the complaint, we will deal directly with them and we will not provide you a copy of our response.
 - You can choose to make an individual student complaint using this procedure even if your employer also chooses to use the Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices to make a complaint.
 - If an issue is raised by both you and your apprentice employer, the issue will be investigated using both this procedure and the Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices. Separate responses will be provided to each party, taking into account the different perspectives, the level of information that can be shared, and the different resolutions appropriate for apprentices and employers.

8. Final Arbitration

8.1 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

If you have completed the three stages of University's Student Complaints Procedure and are still not satisfied, you can choose to raise your complaint, free of charge, to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) within 12 months of being

Student Complaints Procedure

issued with a Completion of Procedures letter from University of the Built Environment.

The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints about higher education providers. For further information about the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) and how to submit a complaint please visit the [OIA website \(opens new window\)](#). Please note there are some complaints that the OIA cannot look at and these are outlined on their website.

8.2 Completion of Procedures Letter

A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued, or offered, to the student complaining at the end of the internal procedures, when there are no matters outstanding, and the final decision has been reached by the University regarding the matter raised.

The Completion of Procedures Letter for Postgraduate Research Students will be issued by the OU.

The Completion of Procedures Letter will confirm one of the following complaint outcomes:

- a) Justified;
- b) Partially justified;
- c) Not justified;
- d) Submitted out of time.

The letter will contain the following information:

- Date of completion of internal procedures.
- Summary of the issues raised.
- Summary of the issues considered.
- Details of University of the Built Environment's final decision for students on taught programmes of study, or the OU's final decision for Postgraduate Research Students.
- What procedures/ regulations were applied.
- Details of final (external) arbitration, including the deadline for submission.

Student Complaints Procedure

Completion of Procedures Letters will be issued no more than 28 calendar days after the completion of University's internal procedures for students on taught programmes of study, or no more than 28 days after the completion of the OU's and University's internal procedures for Postgraduate Research Students. However, students may request a Completion of Procedures Letter in advance of this as appropriate.

Completion of Procedures Letters will not be issued while there are still outstanding matters under the same procedure.

8.3 Apprenticeship Funding Body – Apprentices only

- 8.3.1 If you are an apprentice student and have completed all internal procedures and are still not satisfied, The Apprenticeship Funding Body may be able to consider your complaint under their [Complaints Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).
- 8.3.2 Please note that the Apprenticeship Funding Body will not usually investigate complaints more than 12 months after the original decision or action has been taken.
- 8.3.3 A complaint may be escalated to the Apprenticeship Funding Body via their online [customer portal \(opens new window\)](#).

9. How will my personal information be dealt with?

- 9.1 The University will treat students' personal information gathered on complaints confidentially, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Sensitive personal information gathered through the complaint will only be disclosed to those who need to investigate the complaint and provide a response. Relevant case information will be disclosed within the University only to support providing a good student experience. Postgraduate research students' information will be shared with the OU to support the investigation of complaints raised to the OU at stage 3 of this procedure.
- 9.2 Identifiable student information on complaints will be retained for three years from the date of completion of the complaints process. Completion may occur at stage 1, 2, or 3, depending on whether you have decided to progress your complaint or not.

Student Complaints Procedure

- 9.3** To preserve the confidentiality of others, you are asked not to include unnecessary personal information about third parties such as family members when submitting a complaint. Under the GDPR, the University is required to notify third parties if it is processing their information, so please think carefully before submitting personal information about yourselves or others. You may wish to seek advice from University's Data Protection Officer or Complaints Officer.
- 9.4** In line with guidance from the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Students in Higher Education (OIA), the Complaints Officer will record all complaint outcomes. Monitoring complaints is an effective way of helping the University to ensure that procedures are fair and are working as intended.
- 9.5** The University may be required to inform relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies about information relating to complaints.

Details of complaints, including outcome, are reviewed on a quarterly basis by University Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees. The complaint log is analysed for continuous improvement in processes and provision.

- 9.6** An anonymised summary of complaints and how they are managed are reported annually to University's Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee. Numbers of complaints raised by postgraduate research students will be shared with the OU as required. Additionally, numbers of complaints raised by LSA second year students will be shared with the University of Liverpool as required.

10. Additional Information and Support

- 10.1** The Complaints Officer is happy to provide impartial advice on the complaint's procedure, how to present your complaint and to help you if

Student Complaints Procedure

you struggle to formulate ideas in writing. You can contact the Complaints Officer on complaints@ube.ac.uk.

- 10.2** If you are an apprenticeship student, your Apprenticeship Officer can also provide advice and guidance.
- 10.3** If you are a postgraduate research student, you can contact the [Graduate Research School](#).
- 10.4** If you are a second year LSA Student, you can contact the University of Liverpool Academic Compliance Team (actadmin@liverpool.ac.uk), or from the Guild of Students (guildadvice@liverpool.ac.uk).
- 10.5** The University has a dedicated Disability and Welfare Team that can provide information, advice, and guidance to support disabled students to fully engage with the University's processes. If students are experiencing any barriers to engaging in a process or are finding their mental health is being impacted, they can contact wellbeing@ube.ac.uk for support.

11. Guidelines for Members of Staff

General

- 11.1** **All members of staff must encourage a positive environment where contact with, and feedback from, students is welcomed, and constructive complaints can be dealt with effectively.**
- 11.2** All members of staff must have a good working knowledge of the Complaints Procedure and its underlying principles. The University will notify staff of where this procedure can be accessed and will advise of any updates.
- 11.3** All members of staff must have due regard to treating students' personal information gathered on complaints confidentially, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Sensitive personal information gathered through the complaint should be appropriately stored and only disclosed to those who need to investigate the complaint and provide a response. Relevant case information can be disclosed within University of

Student Complaints Procedure

the Built Environment only to support providing a good student experience.

- 11.4** Complaints should be dealt with as near to the source as possible, in a timely manner and progressed to the next stage of the complaints procedures as appropriate.
- 11.5** Staff are encouraged to speak with students directly to clarify their understanding of the complaint.
- 11.6** Members of staff involved in handling the various stages of complaints are obliged to ensure that a student complaining is not disadvantaged either in the manner of treatment or in discrimination in academic assessment as a result of raising the complaint.
- 11.7** All complaints must be reported to the Complaints Officer via complaints@ube.ac.uk so they can be recorded, trends can be identified and acted on to improve the University.

The Complaints Officer

- 11.8** **Clear written records of the various stages of the complaint's procedure must be confidentially maintained, in accordance with data protection guidance, and with a note of decisions and actions taken (with dates) and a record of outcomes.**
- 11.9** The Complaints Officer must ensure that any members of staff involved in a student complaint are kept informed of the outcome of each stage of the process and of how the matter has been resolved, including the Apprenticeship Team for all complaints involving apprenticeship students.
- 11.10** The Complaints Officer will provide information to the OU to support the investigation and their oversight of complaints raised by postgraduate research students.

Student Complaints Procedure

Appendix A: Overview of University of the Built Environment Complaints Procedure

For Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students only: Postgraduate Research Students on an Open University (OU) validated award can, following completion of Stage 2 of the University's procedure escalate the complaint to the OU by contacting studentcaseworkoffice@open.ac.uk

