

Student Complaints Policy

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 The University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religious or political beliefs. All complaints will be considered on their merits and in accordance with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Where a student or staff member working with this policy has specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate their needs.
- 1.2 The University believes as a learning institution in continuous improvement. The University uses information and data from received complaints, whether they are upheld or not, to learn and make improvements.
- 1.3 The scope of this Complaints Procedure includes suggestions, comments and concerns and complaints in respect of the student experience at the University, including but not limited to services provided by Academic and Professional Services departments such as the Schools and Registry, Finance, Catering, Library and Learning Services.
- 1.4 This Policy uses the term 'student' or 'students' throughout. This refers to:
 - all learners currently enrolled at the university whether part or full time, including undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprentices. Where separate arrangements or rules apply, the target group or groups are named in the paragraph.
 - former students who have been enrolled at the University at any time within the previous twelve months
 - students who are on an official study break
 - a group of two or more students who are making a Group Complaint
- 1.4 Students undertaking a course delivered via an Educational Partnership should refer to the partner's complaint procedure in the first instance, as appropriate.
- 1.5 The University defines a complaint as: an expression of dissatisfaction by a student or students about the University's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.
- 1.6 A student should raise complaints following this procedure; where a complaint is taken directly with the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor will not undertake any investigation but will refer the student to this policy.
- 1.7 Complaints about the Students' Union action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Students' Union should be referred to the Students' Union and Engagement Manager rlewis@aecc.ac.uk

- 1.8 The Complaints Policy does not cover the following:
- Disciplinary or fitness to practise issues, including appeals against exclusion on academic or other grounds (for which separate regulations and policies exist)
 - Matters where other separate procedures apply, e.g. harassment
 - Academic appeals relating to examinations or assessments for which a separate policy applies
 - A complaint relating to admission, for which a separate policy applies
 - Complaints by an apprentice about their employer. These must be raised using the organisations own complaint process in the first instance. An apprentice can however raise concerns with their Course Leader that relate to their employer's responsibilities in the apprenticeship. Issues raised will be discussed with the employer where these are in breach of the employer's responsibilities within their agreement with government for the use of funding and/or in the Apprenticeship Funding Rules. The Employer and Apprentice Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found [here](#).
 - A complaint that has already been considered and the procedure has been completed.
 - A complaint that is currently being considered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). HSU expects all complaints to have completed this procedure before being submitted to the OIA.
- 1.9 Where the issues raised affect a number of students affected students may submit a 'group complaint'. Each member of the group must be able to demonstrate that they have been personally affected by the matter which is the subject of the complaint. In such a case the students must nominate one individual to act as the group representative, and all affected students must agree in writing to the spokesperson acting on their behalf. Correspondence will be directed to that named individual.
- 1.20 As independent adults responsible for their own learning, students are expected to make their own representations within this policy. No investigation of a complaint made on behalf of a student will be undertaken without that student's written agreement to that person acting on their behalf. This includes complaints made by the parent(s) or partner of the student concerned or the employer or employer representative of the apprentice concerned.
- 1.21 Members of the public wishing to make a complaint should use the relevant email address:
- For complaints from patients/members of the public about HSU clinics - cliniccomments@aecc.ac.uk
 - For complaints from members of the public: community.support@aecc.ac.uk.
- 1.22 Where any meetings are held in connection with investigations of complaints under this policy any student or staff member invited to such a meeting may be accompanied by a member of the Students' Union, a representative or a friend for support or representation as appropriate.
- 1.23 There will be no negative consequences for any student raising a concern/complaint unless the complaint is found to be vexatious or a form of harassment. If the complaint is found to be made not in good faith, there may be disciplinary consequences.
- 1.24 Students wanting advice and support on making a complaint should contact the Students' Union suexec@aecc.ac.uk Students can always access support through our Student Services teams. studentservices@aecc.ac.uk

Version:	4.0
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Reference/ source	The Expectation and Indicators of sound practice set out in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)'s UK Quality Code OIA: The good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals OIA Guidance Note regarding Completion of Procedures Letters
Date approved	13 August 2025
Effective from	September 2025
Review date	2028/29
Target	All staff and all students, and apprentices enrolled on courses leading to University awards
Policy location	Public Website/ Internal
Equality analysis	No direct impact. The policy provides for reasonable adjustments to be made, where appropriate, for students with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess whether there is any differential impact in the raising and handling of complaints.