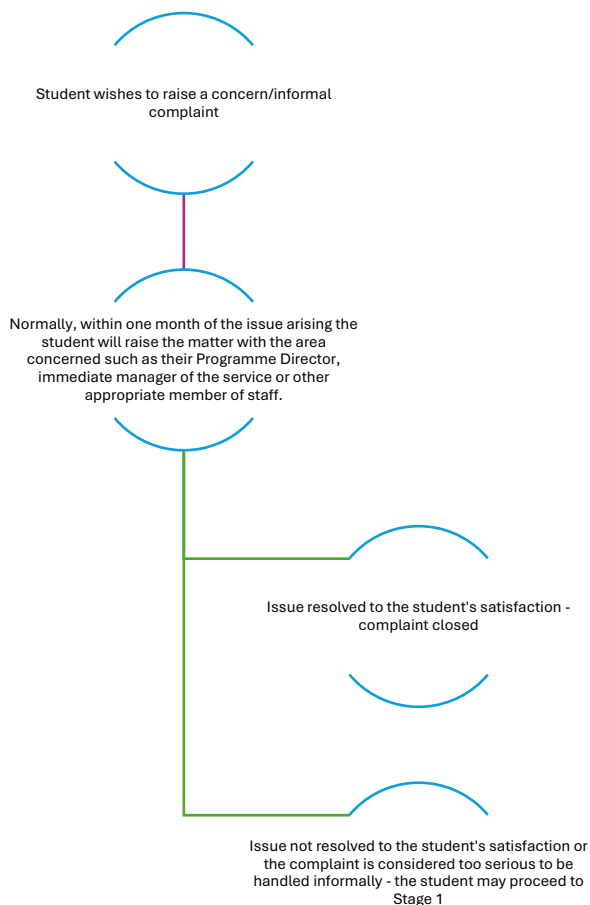


Student Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure is made up of three stages

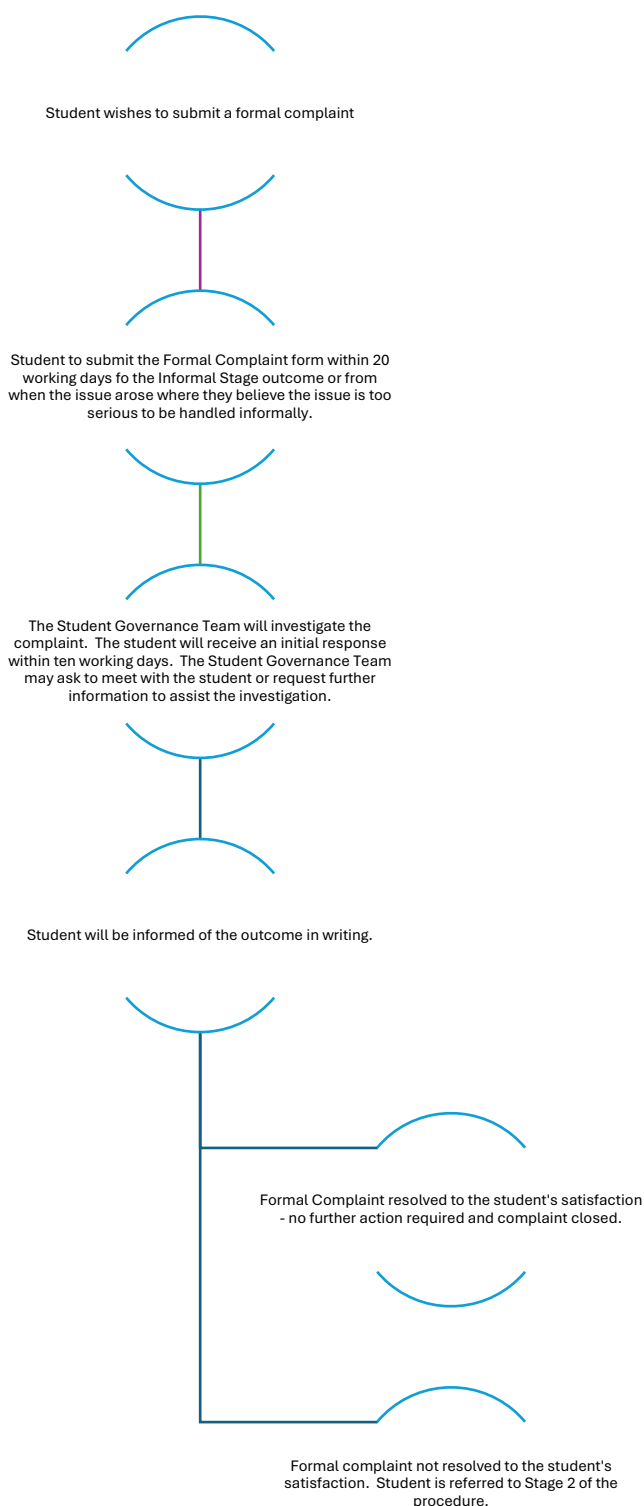
Informal Stage	Informal discussions with individual or area concerned
Stage 1	Submission of a Formal Complaint form, formal investigation and determination of an outcome If you require the form in an accessible format to you, please contact us and we will endeavour to supply the information in a more suitable format.
Stage 2	Following submission of a Complaint Outcome Review Request by email, review of the Stage 2 Outcome including and assessment of the reasonableness of the outcome and procedures followed.

1 Informal Stage



- 1.1 It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis and close to their point of origin. It is expected that concerns/complaints will be raised promptly and usually within one month of the issue being identified so that they can be resolved quickly.
- 1.2 The student should seek to raise the issue with an appropriate member of staff: such as their Course Leader, Academic Registrar, Head of Finance. The concern can be raised in person or by email.
- 1.3 Should the student remain dissatisfied after raising their concern/complaint informally, or if they believe that their complaint is too serious to be handled in this manner, they may move to Stage 1 of the procedure.

2 Stage 1



- 2.2 If the concern cannot be resolved or clarified by this informal discussion, the student should submit the complaint using the Formal Complaint Form and enclosing the relevant evidence to the Student Governance Team within twenty days of the outcome of the informal stage or from when the issue occurred if the student believes it too serious to be handled informally. If the complaint is submitted outside of this timescale the Student Governance Team may ask for evidence as to why this has been delayed. The Student Governance team will investigate the complaint. The Student Governance Team may request a meeting with the student or ask for further information to clarify the complaint.
- 2.3 The student will receive an initial response within ten working days of the submission of the formal complaint.
- 2.4 It is usually expected that the student will receive the outcome of their complaint within twenty working days of the submission of their complaint. If this is not possible the student will be kept informed as to progress.
- 2.5 Should the student remain dissatisfied on receipt of the complaint outcome they may submit a request for a Complaint Outcome Review (Stage 2).

3 Stage 2 – Complaint Outcome Review

- 3.1 The Allowed Grounds for requesting a Complaint Outcome Review are:
- That a procedural irregularity occurred during Stage 1 which had a material impact on the outcome.
 - That new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process casts substantial doubt on the appropriateness of the outcome of Stage 1.
 - That the outcome of Stage 1 could be considered unreasonable taking account of all the circumstances.
- 3.2 Unless there is a demonstrable, good reason for needing a longer period, the Complaint Outcome Request must be submitted by email within 10 working days of the Stage 1 outcome. In the Complaint Outcome Review Request, the student must clearly demonstrate how they meet one of more of the Allowed Grounds.
- 3.3 The Complaint Outcome Review Request will be acknowledged within three working days.
- 3.4 The Academic Registrar will nominate a Reviewer to conduct the Complaint Review. The Reviewer will be a senior manager not previously involved in the matter and from an area not related to the complaint. The Reviewer will review the procedures followed at Stage 1 and the reasonableness of the outcome.
- 3.5 The Complaint Review will not involve a re-opening of the investigation conducted at Stage 1, but a consideration of whether:
- The relevant procedures were properly followed during Stage 1 and whether any errors or failings made a material difference to the outcome.
 - The outcome could be considered unreasonable taking account of all the circumstances.
 - Any new evidence provided by the student could have been supplied earlier in the process, and if it had been, whether it would have made a difference to the decision.
 - The student received clear reasons why their complaint was not upheld.
- 3.6 If a student requests a review beyond this remit, the Reviewer will communicate the limits of the Complaint Review.

- 3.7 If the Reviewer determines the Complaint Review to be able to be determined from the evidence and papers already received, the Reviewer will conduct the Complaint Review on the papers. The reviewer may decide that they will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and Complaint Review.
- 3.8 If the Reviewer determines that the Complaint Review is too complex to reach a decision through the paperwork alone, in consultation with the Academic Registrar they will request the creation of a panel comprising the Reviewer, the President of Health Sciences University Students' Union (or their nominee) and another senior member of University staff not previously involved in the matter and/or from an area the complaint relates to. This panel will review the complaint. The panel may reach a conclusion from the paperwork and this will be provided to the complainant.
- 3.9 If the Panel, having reviewed the papers, determine at their sole discretion that a Hearing should take place, the complainant and the representative of the University's Stage 1 outcome decision will be invited to attend the Hearing. If a Hearing takes place, the student may be accompanied by an adviser or friend. The Hearing will take place in person or via video conference.
- 3.91 For Complaint Reviews which do not involve a Hearing, the Reviewer will communicate the outcome of the Complaint Review in a Completion of Procedures letter within 20 working days of the University's acknowledgement of receipt of the Complaint Outcome Review Form.
- 3.92.1 For Complaint Reviews which have involved a Hearing, the Reviewer will communicate the outcome of the Hearing in a Completion of Procedures letter within 15 working days of the Hearing.
- 3.92 The Completion of Procedures letter will confirm the outcome of the Complaint Review along with the reasons for why the decision has been made. It will also include details of how to take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if they remain dissatisfied.

This concludes the University's Complaints Procedure.

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

- 4.1 If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint following completion of Stage 2 and receipt of the University's Completion of Procedures letter, they may take their complaint to the OIA. The OIA will not normally review complaints unless they have been considered through the University's own complaints procedure.
- 4.2 The student must submit their complaint in writing using the OIA complaint form which can be found on the OIA's website OIA Complaint Form (oiahe.org.uk).
- 4.3 The OIA must receive the student's complaint form within 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter received following Stage 2 under this Complaints Procedure.
- 4.4 Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA can be found on the OIA's website. Students may also wish to seek advice from the Students' Union.
- 4.5 Students should note that the OIA will not review complaints about an application for admission to the University unless the individual is a former student of the University.

Version:	1.0
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Reference/ source	
Date approved	13 August 2025
Effective from	August 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.