



## **Student Complaint Procedure**

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Student Complaint Procedure is the name given to the process under which you are able to complain about a course of study or a service offered by Arts University Bournemouth.
- 1.2 If you are considering making a complaint, you should refer to the *Student Complaint Procedure Guidance for Students* for further information and advice.

### **2. Definition of a complaint**

- 2.1 Under this procedure 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 University. Examples of this might be where the University has not followed its own policies and procedures, or where the service outlined in one of its published documents has not been delivered.
- 2.2 You should raise any complaint within 6 months of the cause of your complaint, or within 3 months of leaving the University. Arts University Bournemouth will not accept complaints which fall outside these timescales unless you can provide evidence that you were materially prevented from submitting a complaint more promptly.

### **3. Early Resolution**

- 3.1 The most effective way of raising and addressing any matter which is causing you concern is to discuss it directly with the person involved on an informal basis. Arts University Bournemouth expects the majority of complaints to be resolved in this way. The *Student Complaint Procedure Guidance for Students* includes advice on how best to raise an informal complaint.
- 3.2 If you do not feel able to discuss your informal complaint with the person involved, the Senior Investigating Officer can help you prepare and accompany you to the meeting.
- 3.3 If your complaint concerns a particular member of staff, you may be offered mediation with a trained mediator to help resolve the issue. The meeting or mediation will usually take place within 10 working days.
- 3.4 If you do not feel able to attend mediation or believe that early resolution is not possible or appropriate, you should make a formal complaint.

### **4. Formal complaint**

- 4.1 You should complete a Student Complaint Form (available from Student Services or from [complaint@aub.ac.uk](mailto:complaint@aub.ac.uk)), summarising your complaint and any resolution you are seeking. You should make clear any attempts at Early Resolution which have been made, and the outcome. Additional details and supporting evidence should be attached securely to the form.

- 4.2 You should send your completed complaint form to [complaint@aub.ac.uk](mailto:complaint@aub.ac.uk). The Senior Investigating Officer can offer you advice about the complaints process and will undertake an initial evaluation to check that your complaint is appropriate for formal investigation under the Student Complaint Procedure. The Senior Investigating Officer may refer your complaint to a different procedure or may request that you take steps to resolve your complaint informally if you have not already done so. The Senior Investigating Officer will also check that your complaint has been raised within the timescales specified in 2.2 above.
- 4.3 The Senior Investigating Officer will contact you within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt of your complaint. They will conduct an investigation into your complaint and will prepare a report outlining the findings. The Senior Investigating Officer will let you know how long the investigation is likely to take and will set a date by which you can expect to receive their report. This will usually be within 1 calendar month of receiving the details of your complaint. They may request a meeting with you to clarify and agree the issues to be investigated.
- 4.4 The Senior Investigating Officer will provide you with a report detailing the outcome of their investigation (note that information relating to other staff or students may be masked for reasons of confidentiality). A copy will also be sent to the Head of Academic and Student Services.
- 4.5 You have up to 10 working days after receiving the report to let the Senior Investigating Officer know if you wish the matter to progress to the Review stage of the Student Complaint Procedure.
- 4.6 You may request that your formal complaint is reviewed on the following grounds:
- To request a review of the procedures that were followed at the Formal stage;
  - To request a consideration of whether the outcome stated in the report was reasonable, given all the circumstances;
  - That you have new material evidence which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process
- 4.7 If you wish to progress your complaint to the Review stage you should state clearly the grounds for your request; you may do this in person, by email or in writing. If you do not notify the Senior Investigating Officer of your wish to progress to the Review stage within 10 working days of receiving their report, they will assume that you do not wish to pursue your complaint and will issue a letter confirming that your complaint has been concluded.

## **5. Review Stage**

- 5.1 The Senior Investigating Officer will refer your complaint to a member of the Vice Chancellor Executive team, or a nominee who is a member of the University Leadership Team who has not previously been involved with your complaint. The Senior Investigating Officer will provide the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) with copies of your original complaint and supporting documentation, including a copy of the investigation report.
- 5.2 The Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) will review your complaint and the grounds under which you have requested a review, and will make one of the following decisions following consideration of the complaint:

- a) That the complaint is not upheld. This decision will be made where the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) finds that you have not established sufficient grounds to substantiate the complaint or complaints alleged.
  - b) That the complaint is upheld. In this instance, the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) will recommend the action that should now be taken by the University, or its representatives, to redress the complaint. In making this judgement, the Vice Chancellor Executive team member (or nominee) will have due consideration for your own preferred resolution and may if appropriate overturn the outcome of the Formal stage.
  - c) That there are outstanding issues for investigation. In this instance, the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) will refer the outstanding issues to the Senior Investigating Officer. The Senior Investigating Officer will provide the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) with a report detailing the outcome of their additional investigations within 5 working days. You will also receive a copy of this report. The Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) will then make a judgement to uphold, or not uphold, your complaint.
- 5.3 The Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) will inform you of the outcome of their review in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being referred to them or, if there were outstanding issues for investigation, within 10 days of receiving the Senior Investigating Officer's additional report.
- 5.4 In all cases the decision of the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee) is the final stage of AUB's Students Complaint Procedure.

## **6. Completion of Procedures**

- 6.1 The Senior Investigating Officer will send a Completion of Procedures letter to you within 10 working days of the written notification from the Vice Chancellor Executive Team member (or nominee). This letter is the formal notification that all AUB procedures have been completed.
- 6.2 If you are not satisfied with the outcome and wish to pursue the matter further, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). You must do this within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. Details of the OIA will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures letter or may be obtained from the Senior Investigating Officer. Information is also available from the OIA's website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)
- 6.3 Copies of all documents will be held confidentially by the Senior Investigating Officer and will be used for statistical monitoring purposes. An annual summary of all formal complaints is reported to Academic Board.

Arts University Bournemouth is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness. It has developed and implemented an Equality and Diversity Plan to guide its work in this area. All the University's policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the commitments set out in the Equality and Diversity Plan. This policy has been subject to an equality analysis to ensure consideration with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Date of last EA review: May 2021  
Date of last Policy Review: May 2021

