

Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Policy control

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1. Purpose

Section A: Information to students

- 1 For the purpose of this policy, all references to students relate equally to apprentices.
- 2 A complaint is defined as the expression of a specific concern about the provision of an academic or related service by the University. The procedures set out below can be used by students to complain about any service the University provides.
- 3 The University aims to deal openly, fairly and effectively with any comment or complaint about services, and to offer an appropriate remedy to any student who is adversely affected by a service which fails to deliver to the University's standards.
- 4 The complaints policy should not be used to appeal against decisions made by examination boards. These should be dealt with through the Academic Appeals Policy. Where your complaint is material to an academic outcome, as specified in the Academic Appeals Policy, it may only be dealt with through that policy.
- 5 The University will not penalise you for making a complaint about services, and nothing will appear on your academic record to indicate that a complaint has been made.
- 6 The Students' Union (Beds SU) is able to provide advice on submitting a complaint. In all cases students are strongly encouraged to seek impartial advice from the Beds SU concerning their complaint.
- 7 You should make every possible effort to resolve your complaint within the relevant Faculty or Service, or in discussion with the Head of the relevant Faculty or Service. The formal procedure can of necessity take some time and should be used only if the stages above have been exhausted.
- 8 There are separate procedures for the following:
 - dealing with academic concerns and offences (Academic Discipline Policy and Procedures);
 - dealing with disciplinary offences including complaints by students about the behaviour of other students (Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure);
 - Informing the University of mitigating circumstances in relation to assessments (Student Engagement & Mitigation Team (SEAM)):
<http://www.beds.ac.uk/student-support>)
 - appealing against the outcome of academic decisions (Policy Regarding Academic Appeals and the Procedures to be followed when submitting an Appeal).
 - making disclosures in the public interest, i.e. 'whistleblowing' (<http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/qa/foi/policies/hr>)
- 9 The complaints procedures cannot be used for any of the above purposes, although in exceptional circumstances an academic appeal may follow a successful complaint (see paragraph 13 below and section D9).

- 10 The University does not normally deal with anonymous complaints, although it will consider the circumstances of any such anonymous submission and may, in exceptional circumstances, take forward the complaint.
- 11 If you have a particularly sensitive issue to raise, you can approach the Students' Union or Student Support for help. The University will endeavour to make sure that such a complaint is known to the smallest number of staff necessary to undertake a thorough investigation, and that staff deal with the complaint on a confidential basis.
- 12 A group of students affected by the same set of circumstances may wish to make a collective complaint through a single spokesperson. In such circumstances the spokesperson must at all times express the views of the group and relay and copy all correspondence to the group. Each member of the group must provide their names and contact details in the initial submission.
- 13 It is important that any complaint is timely. The longer the delay, the less likely it is that the University will be able to investigate your complaint properly.
- 14 A complaint that leads you to request reconsideration of an Examination Board decision, and which falls within one of the categories defined within the Academic Appeals Policy is an Academic Appeal and not a complaint.
- 15 In conducting the procedures to investigate complaints set out below, the University may invite you to meet staff. At all such meetings, you will be permitted to be accompanied by a friend: for example, an officer of the University of Bedfordshire Students' Union, a fellow student, a member of academic staff, or a contact from outside the University such as a member of the family. The University must be notified of the name and affiliation of the person concerned in advance of the meeting.
- 16 If you intend bringing someone from outside the University to such meetings, you must seek approval from the University in advance. It is not normally necessary to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, but if you do decide to seek approval to be accompanied by such a person, the University reserves the right to include a legally qualified colleague to participate in the meeting.
- 17 The accompanying person will not be permitted to present your case, but will be in attendance to support you and to clarify issues as appropriate.
- 18 The University constantly seeks to improve its services. The Academic Board and Vice Chancellor's Student Experience Group monitor the complaints received, and the effectiveness of these procedures in addressing them.
- 19 If your complaint is not based on the grounds specified in this Policy or accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence, the University will inform you that no action will be taken. You will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter and you may, if you so wish, pursue the matter further with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

Contacts

- Students' Union: Welfare and Advice Service, louise.tadiar@beds.ac.uk
- Student Adjudication Team, The Atrium, Park Square, Luton, adjudication@beds.ac.uk

- University of Bedfordshire Business School, Vicarage Street, Luton, bfo@beds.ac.uk
- Faculty of Creative Arts, Technologies and Science, Park Square, Luton, cats.facultyadmin@beds.ac.uk
- Faculty of Education and Sport, Polhill Avenue, Bedford, es.registry@beds.ac.uk
- Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Park Square, Luton, hssf FacultyAdmin@beds.ac.uk
- Campus Living Villages, Fitzroy Court, Vicarage Street, Luton info@studentvillagebeds.co.uk
- Liberty Living, Polhill Avenue, Bedford, libertypark-bedford@libertyliving.co.uk
- Student Support, sid@beds.ac.uk

2. Scope

3. Policy

Section B: The student complaints policy and procedure

Introduction

- 1 The University of Bedfordshire is committed to maintaining an effective procedure to allow all members of its community to make legitimate complaints. This document provides details of the University's complaints procedure for students who wish to make a complaint.
- 2 A complaint is defined as any specific concern about the provision of a programme of study or related academic or support service and may be made by a student or a group of students.
- 3 The University strongly encourages the informal resolution of complaints at the earliest opportunity, and before this formal procedure is required.
- 4 Complaints may relate to (though not be limited to):
 - (i) the teaching and learning experience of the student, e.g. quality of teaching, laboratory facilities, personal tutor support
 - (ii) academic services, e.g. computing and library services
 - (iii) administrative services, e.g. registry, finance office etc.
- 5 The Student Complaints Procedure excludes certain specific complaints where the University has separate policies to deal with these. This includes complaints concerning harassment (which should be dealt with under the Harassment Policy), disciplinary matters (which should be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary

Code) and matters of public interest which should be dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy.

- 6 An Academic Appeal is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment and awards. Academic Appeals should be dealt with under the Academic Appeals Policy.
- 7 Complaints from individuals who are dissatisfied in their dealing with the University of Bedfordshire Students' Union (Beds SU) will normally be dealt with under the Beds SU's own Complaints Procedure.
- 8 Complaints by students who are taught at a partner institution and which relate to that partner institution should in the first instance be raised in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure of the partner institution. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, or the way in which their complaint has been handled by the partner institution, then they retain the right to raise the complaint under this Student Complaints Procedure. The complaint will normally be raised at Stage 3 of this Student Complaints Procedure.
- 9 Where a student who is taught at a partner institution raises a complaint that relates to the actions of the University, it will be initiated under the Student Complaints Procedure. Complaints related to the actions of a partner institution will be dealt with through the partner institution's policies and processes.
- 10 In certain circumstances, it will be necessary for the Registrar to determine whether a complaint should proceed through the University's student complaints procedure or through an alternative process (for example, where the complaint relates to placement operations).
- 11 In all instances where a student is unsure as to how or where to raise their complaint they should seek advice from the Beds SU.
- 12 The University will not consider unsubstantiated complaints that it regards as vexatious or malicious. Complaints of this nature may result in disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Code.
- 13 A complaint by a student will not normally be investigated if a period of three months has elapsed since the alleged action, which is the basis of the complaint, occurred, although the Registrar may exceptionally allow such a complaint to proceed.
- 14 Where complaints are received anonymously or from third parties, it will be at the discretion of the Registrar, in consultation with the Student Adjudication Team, to determine whether the complaint will be considered and, if so, how.
- 15 The University recognises that remedies available in respect of complaints might include compensation and/or a change in University practices and procedures, and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 16 The University will also be prepared to meet expenses reasonably incurred by a successful complainant, subject to its prior approval of specifications of the nature of the expenses claim and the maximum sum involved.
- 17 Authoritative guidance on the application and operation of this procedure may be sought from the Student Adjudication Team.

a) Underlying principles

- 18 The Student Complaints Procedure has been established with the aim, where possible, of resolving complaints informally through negotiation between those individuals who are immediately concerned with the matter and where appropriate their immediate line management. The University recognises, however, that some issues cannot be resolved by informal means and may require the intervention of outside parties. The formal stages of the Student Complaints Procedure (Stages 2 and 3) are therefore available to students should informal pursuit of a complaint prove unsatisfactory.
- 19 The underlying principles of the University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedures, which should be respected by all those involved in the procedure are that:
- complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, as expeditiously as possible and in a consistent fashion;
 - complaints will be treated in a rigorous and fair manner with sensitivity and with a minimum stress to all parties concerned;
 - confidentiality will be respected throughout;
 - submission of a complaint will not lead to recrimination or adversely affect academic progression provided it is made in good faith and not maliciously or vexatiously;
 - there is a right for any decision to be subject to further review, including at the final stage, reference to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA); and
 - the use of the Student Complaints Procedure does not affect a student's right to pursue legal remedies outside the University.
- 20 The Complaints Procedure contains the following stages:
- Stage 1:** Informal discussion of the complaint with the individual(s) directly involved
Stage 2: Formal investigation by the Student Adjudication Team
Stage 3: Review by the Student Complaints Review Panel
- 21 At any point prior to the completion of Stage 3 review, a request for mediation made by a complainant. Mediation will only occur with the agreement of all parties involved, and the formal complaints procedure will be suspended while mediation takes place.

b) Complaints against staff

- 22 Any investigation that is conducted under the formal stages of the Student Complaints Procedures, and where an allegation against a member of staff is involved, must be conducted in accordance with principles that ensure a balance between the interests of the complainant and those of the member of staff involved. These principles include the expectation that there will be:
- an assumption of no fault until the balance of evidence from the investigation demonstrates otherwise;
 - respect for the dignity of the individuals involved;
 - the right of the member of staff to be told of the complaint and to know of the evidence presented by the complainant;

- the right of the member of staff to respond to the complaint and the evidence and to be accompanied by a colleague staff member in any investigatory meetings or at any stage of the Student Complaints Procedure;
 - the right of the member of staff to know the outcome; and
 - the right of the member of staff to have confidentiality preserved where there is any consequential action involving the employee.
- 23 Where a complaint involving an allegation of misconduct by a member of staff is upheld this may form the basis of further action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- 24 Whilst the complainant has the right to be told of the outcome of the complaint and any compensatory decisions taken, the complainant has no right to be informed of action taken under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

c) Staff involvement in investigation and as witnesses

- 25 It is the expectation of the University that members of University staff will support the operation of this Procedure. It follows therefore that staff members who are called as witnesses to appear before the Student Complaints Review Panel, or who are involved at any stage in the investigative process, are required to co-operate fully with the process whether called on behalf of the University or by the person making the complaint.
- 26 In exceptional circumstances a staff member may request permission to be excluded from an investigation or to not be required to appear as a witness before the Student Complaints Review Panel.
- 27 Where it is the view of the responsible officer at Stage 3 that the evidence that can be provided by the staff member is more important to the resolution of the complaint than the objections of the staff member, then the staff member will be required to participate in this process. Failure to do so may constitute a disciplinary offence.

Section C: The complaints process

Stage 1: Informal discussions

- 1 The University expects students to seek to resolve their complaint informally at Stages 1 prior to making a formal complaint and that the majority should be satisfactorily resolved at that level.
- 2 Therefore, in the first instance the complainant should normally seek to discuss their complaint with the person to whom the complaint relates or who is responsible for the matter that gives rise to the complaint.
- 3 In order to ensure that the complaint is raised at a mutually convenient time the complainant should try to arrange an appointment with the member of staff concerned. The complainant should make clear, when arranging the appointment, the matter that they wish to discuss and the nature of the complaint that they wish to raise. The member of staff may request the presence of a colleague and the complainant themselves may also be accompanied by a fellow student or a representative of the University of Bedfordshire Students' Union.

- 4 It may be possible for the circumstances of the complaint to be fully addressed and resolved through a meeting between the parties concerned, or further enquiries may be required. In either circumstance the staff member should keep a written record of the meeting and/or of any further enquiries and an oral response will be provided to the student within ten working days of the complaint being raised, except where good reason can be demonstrated for requiring a longer period.
- 5 The student will be informed if their complaint is upheld and if any remedy is proposed or if the complaint is not upheld the student will also be informed of his/her right to proceed to Stage 2 of the Procedure.
- 6 A record of the circumstances of the complaint will be retained by the Faculty or passed to the Faculty in the case of a complaint against a Service. This record will indicate either any corrective or compensatory action to be taken as a form of redress or the reason for the decision to reject the complaint. This record will be destroyed when the student graduates or otherwise ceases to be a student of the University.
- 7 Faculties/Services will keep basic details of all complaints resolved at this level, including details of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the outcome.
- 8 A student may proceed to Stage 2 of the Procedure where it is not possible to achieve a timely or satisfactory resolution using Stage 1 of the Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal investigation of written complaint

- 9 At Stage 2 the intention of this procedure is to allow for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the intervention of the Student Adjudication Team and formal investigation.
- 10 A complaint will proceed to Stage two where:
 - the complaint directly involves a Head of Faculty/Service, or a member of the senior management team. (In such cases, the student will write directly to the Vice Chancellor who will nominate appropriate officers to
 - be responsible for Stages 2 and 3 of this process, and no Stage 1 process will be required.)
 - a student is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, or where a student can provide good reason why Stage 1 is not possible to conduct, the student will raise the complaint in writing with the Student Adjudication Team.
- 11 The request to be made to the Student Adjudication Team must be made on the Formal Complaint Form (see appendix 1 below) and must include:
 - name of complainant(s)
 - a contact address (and preferably telephone and/or mobile number and email address)
 - course
 - the date(s) on which the problem arose
 - whether anyone else was affected, or saw what happened
 - any relevant documentary evidence
 - the response requested from the University.

- 12 The statement should also describe the steps he/she has taken to resolve the complaint informally or their reasons for not doing so.
- 13 On receipt of the written complaint the Student Adjudication Team will determine whether it is appropriate for the complaint to be considered under the Student Complaints Procedure and whether the nature of the complaint warrants its consideration under other procedures. The student will be informed of their decision within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 14 Where the Student Adjudication Team finds that the complaint is appropriate for processing at stage two of this procedure, they will request the Faculty Manager or a specified alternate (where the Faculty Manager is not appropriate/available) to investigate the complaint in accordance with the guidelines laid out at Appendix 2. The person investigating must have had no prior direct involvement in the matter.
- 15 The Faculty Manager (or alternate) will investigate the case by making such enquiries as he/she thinks fit.
- 16 As part of the investigative process, the Faculty Manager (or alternate) may need to conduct a meeting with the complainant, in which case a note of the meeting will be taken and the student will have the right to representation.
- 17 Following investigation of the complaint the Head of Faculty/Service will provide a written response to the Student Adjudication Team.
- 18 The Student Adjudication Team will respond to the student, and that response will be copied to the appropriate member(s) of staff concerned or responsible for the matter giving rise to the complaint.
- 19 This response will normally be provided within twenty working days of the complaint being lodged with the Student Adjudication Team, except where good reason can be demonstrated for requiring a longer period, in which case the student will be notified of the delay and of an expected response date.
- 20 The response will indicate whether the complaint has been upheld and will, where appropriate, identify any action to be taken as a consequence, or the reason for the decision to reject the complaint. It will also notify the student of his/her right to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure, where the complaint has not been upheld.
- 21 Where a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter and may pursue the matter further with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- 22 The Student Adjudication Team will forward copies of the complaint and response including details of any corrective or compensatory action to the Registrar.

Stage 3: Review by the Student Complaints Review Panel

- 23 Students will be entitled to seek a review by the Student Complaints Review Committee of the decision concerning their complaint, only where:
 - There is evidence that Stage 2 investigation did not include in its deliberations all relevant issues, and any relevant issues identified as not included at Stage 2 are material to the decision and do not constitute a new basis for complaint;

- There is evidence that the Stage 2 investigation was not operated in accordance with University policies.
- 24 This will be initiated by submitting a copy of the Formal Complaint Form to the Student Adjudication Team, normally within ten working days of having received the outcome of the investigation of the complaint at Stage 2 of this procedure.
- 25 The Formal Complaint Form will be accompanied by the Supplementary Sheet 1 (Appendix 1a) giving details of what action has been taken to resolve the complaint at previous stages and why the student remains dissatisfied.
- 26 The Student Adjudication Team will record and acknowledge the request for a review by the Student Complaints Review Panel, normally within ten working days of receipt, and will inform the Registrar and Vice Chancellor of the complaint.
- 27 Where the Registrar determines that there are grounds for a Stage 3 review of the Stage 2 complaint outcome, the Vice Chancellor will nominate a Chair to convene a meeting of the Student Complaints Review Panel.

The Panel

- 28 The Panel will comprise three members of the Corporate Management Team not involved in prior stages of this procedure, one of whom will be nominated by the Vice Chancellor to act as Chair.
- 29 A Clerk to the Panel will be nominated by the Registrar.

Conduct of proceedings

Representation

- 30 All students and staff members who are required to attend the meeting of the Student Complaints Review Panel will have the right to be accompanied by another individual as specified in this policy.

Documentation

- 31 The documentation submitted to the Student Complaint Review Panel will normally consist of:
- (a) the Formal Complaint Form accompanied by supplementary paper 1 submitted by the complainant;
 - (b) details of witnesses to be called by both the complainant and the officer responsible for the investigation of the complaint at Stage 3 together with a brief statement giving the purpose of the attendance of the witnesses;
 - (c) any other background documentation.
- 32 All documentation will require to be submitted by the complainant, to the Clerk of the Panel not less than seven working days before the meeting of the Panel.
- 33 Papers will be circulated to Panel members, the complainant, and where appropriate the individuals against whom the complaint is being made, not less than five working days before the meeting of the Panel.

- 34 Following the hearing all documentation must be returned to the Clerk of the Panel to be destroyed and a single master set of documentation will be retained by the Student Adjudication Team under safe and secure conditions.
- 35 It is the responsibility of the complainant to ensure that any witnesses whom they wish to call in support of their complaint are available for the meeting of the Panel and are briefed as to the arrangements for the Panel.
- 36 It is the responsibility of the Registrar, through the Student Adjudication Team, to ensure that those witnesses, whom the University wishes to call in support of its decision on the complaint, are available for the meeting of the Panel and are briefed as to the arrangements for the Panel.
- 37 The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure sets out the expectations of the University in respect of staff participation in the complaints process.

Formal Hearing Meeting

- 38 Non-attendance by either party will normally result in the hearing continuing in their absence and therefore being based only on the documentation previously submitted.
- 39 The proceedings of the Committee are at the discretion of the Chair but will normally be as follows:
 - 39.1 The Chair will open the proceedings by establishing that all parties have received full documentation.
 - 39.2 The Chair will also have the opportunity to raise any questions of clarification in respect of the documents submitted.
 - 39.3 Where details of witnesses have been provided by either party the Chair will have the discretion to decide not to hear any of the evidence to be provided by the witnesses, but will be required to give all parties details of the reasons for such a decision.
 - 39.4 The complainant or his/her representative will be invited to outline the complaint briefly, making reference to previously submitted documentation, in support of their complaint. The complainant will also have the opportunity to call the witnesses that the/she has previously notified to the Committee to provide evidence in support of his complaint.
 - 39.5 Any new evidence that has not been presented at previous stages of the Complaints Procedure, may only be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.
 - 39.6 The officer of the University responsible for Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure will have the opportunity to question the complainant and/or his/her representative and the witnesses, who are called by the complainant.
 - 39.7 The officer who conducted Stage 2 of the Procedure will then have an opportunity to state their reasons for having found against the complainant at Stage 2 making reference to previously submitted documentation. The officer will also have the opportunity to call witnesses whose details have previously been submitted and the

complainant and/or his/her representative will have an opportunity to question these witnesses.

- 39.8 Both parties will be provided with an opportunity to sum up their aspects of the case and at all points members of the Panel may choose to ask questions of any of the parties in order to seek clarification on points raised.
- 40 At the conclusion of the Hearing, the Panel will meet in private in order to make its decision. The decision will be notified in writing to all concerned by the Registrar, normally within five working days.
- 41 The decision of the Student Complaints Review Panel will be final and will bring the University's investigation of student complaints to a close, and the complainant will receive a Completion of Procedures letter along with the Panel response.
- 42 If the student remains dissatisfied with The University's response, they have the right to refer the University's decision to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Details are available at: www.oiahe.org.uk/.

Section D: Additional notes

How to make a comment or suggestion about a service

- 1 If you want to comment or make a suggestion about improving one of the University's services, you can do so using a form on the University's web site at www.beds.ac.uk. Such suggestions will be considered carefully, and the University will provide general information on the web site about the action being taken in response to the comments and ideas received.
- 2 If you have a general comment relating to a course, you may like to raise it directly with the committee concerned with its quality, through your course representative. Representatives' names appear on all field notice boards. The Students' Union can also take up an academic issue on your behalf.

Compensation

- 3 Where compensation has been claimed by the student, the University Registrar may make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor on the matter. The Vice Chancellor's decision will be notified to the student in a separate letter.

Expenses

- 4 The University may meet reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses submitted by the student lodging the complaint, within the procedures governed by its financial regulations (see above for details).

Monitoring and review of this policy and procedure

- 5 The Student Adjudication Team will be responsible for preparing an annual report to the Academic Board covering the operation of this procedure.
- 6 The Registrar will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of remedies agreed under this procedure.

Collaborative partnerships

- 7 Students at any of the University's partner institutions should, in the first instance, be addressed to the institution's registrar, or the head of its administration, and the complaint will be conducted under that institution's own procedures.
- 8 If the student is not satisfied with the response to this process, they should proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

Academic appeals

- 9 Where the circumstances of a complaint are found to have impacted adversely on the academic performance of a student, in line with the specifications of the University's academic appeals policy, a summary of the findings and their impact will be passed by the Registrar to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) who will take Chair's action in lieu of Stage 2 of the academic appeals process.

4. Forms/Instructions

See 6. Appendices

5. Links/Dependencies

None

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure – Stage 2: Formal Complaint Form

Appendix 1a: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure – Stage 3: Supplementary Paper 1

Appendix 2: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure: Advice for individuals undertaking investigations

Appendix 3: Guidelines on mediation

Appendix 1: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure - Stage 2

Formal Complaint Form

Note: This form is only to be used once attempts to resolve the complaint under Stage 1 of the Student Complaints Procedure have been exhausted.

| | |
|---|--|
| Name: | |
| Student ID Number: | |
| Contact Address: | |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Course of Study: | |
| Please explain your complaint fully: | |
| Please explain how you have attempted to resolve your complaint so far and why you remain dissatisfied: | |

Please explain what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint:

Please continue on another sheet of paper if there is insufficient room on this form for you to explain any of the above details.

I agree that information about my complaint may be gathered from within the University by members of staff in the University as directed by the Student Adjudication Team.

Experience has demonstrated that in order to investigate complaints properly, and to balance fairness with the rights of the person about whom the complaint is made, disclosure is needed, and accordingly I agree that my name and other necessary information about the complaint may be disclosed in order to investigate it.

I also understand and accept that the outcome of formal complaints must be recorded for the purposes of monitoring and analysing complaints generally, and for reporting to Academic Board for monitoring and evaluation in terms of quality assurance as the University is required to under the section of the QAA Code of Practice on Appeals and Complaints.

Signature Date

For Administration Purposes:

Date Received..... Acknowledgement Sent.....

Appendix 1a: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure - Stage 3

Supplementary Paper 1

Note: This form should be submitted to the Student Adjudication Team along with a copy of the original Formal Complaint Form (Appendix 1) to provide additional information for consideration of a complaint at Stage 3.

Has this complaint already been considered at Stage 2? YES / NO

If NO, please provide details as to why the complaint has not been considered at Stage 2 together with a completed Formal Complaint Form (Appendix 1)

If YES, please indicate why you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint at Stage 2 (please refer to the criteria specified for stage 3 complaints)

Appendix 2: University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Procedure

Advice for individuals undertaking investigations

1. Any member of staff required to carry out investigations into student complaints under the Student Complaints Procedure should observe the following guidelines:
2. Investigation is of a fact-finding nature and should not involve any debate as to rights and wrongs of the event.
3. Formal meetings may be arranged with all parties involved in the issue and any witnesses.
4. All parties should be fully advised of why you are meeting with them, your role in the investigation and what happens on completion of the investigation.
5. Advance notice of meetings should be given to all parties, if appropriate. This notice should clearly state the issue under investigation.
6. All parties should be fully advised of their right to be accompanied by another individual as identified in the Complaints Policy.
7. All interviews should be properly structured and to the point.
8. To ensure that there is no dubiety on records taken, each party should be given the opportunity, as soon as possible following the meeting, to view the record of the meeting, and wherever possible, a signature confirming the accuracy of the record should also be obtained.
9. On completion of the investigative meetings, a report should be compiled which sets out the facts, together with considered conclusions.

Appendix 3: Guidelines on mediation

The purpose of mediation is to provide a forum for reaching a decision on, or solution to, a student's complaint, particularly where the complaint centres on a certain member of staff or a group of staff.

The forum consists of the student and their friend, a member of the Students' Union (additional to the student's friend), the member of staff who is the subject of the complaint, the member(s) or staff responsible for the area of the University's activity that is the subject of the complaint, a member of staff from another faculty or equivalent, and a chair appointed by the Vice Chancellor from among the senior staff of the University not previously involved in the complaint.

The mediation procedure may be invoked or rejected by either the student or the University.

The key features of the mediation procedure are that it provides a forum for the discussion of key issues contributing to the case, and that members agree at the outset to abide by the outcomes of the discussion. From the University's perspective, the outcome of the mediation forum concludes the complaints procedure.