



STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Scope and Purpose	This guidance is for all students
Implication of non-adherence	Potential discrimination
Compliance and Regulatory requirements	NI Act 1998
Who uses the process	Students who may have a complaint
Roles and Responsibilities	Principal will oversee the process
Process review	This process should be reviewed and confirmed annually
Date last reviewed	June 2022
Date of next review	June 2023

When a student has a complaint, it is usually best to try to resolve it verbally and informally with a member of staff or with the College Student Committee. However, a formal complaints process exists to deal with formal complaints where that becomes necessary. The process followed depends on the nature of the complaint and is set out in the flow charts (pp5-7).

Notes

- The Student Complaints Committee comprises any three members from the Director of Education, the Management Team and the full-time academic staff.
- The Residential Staff Team can comprise of any three members of middle management staff or above.
- Neither team will include a member of staff to whom the complaint refers.

A. GENERAL BBC COMPLAINTS

Any student may raise a complaint, verbally and informally, with a member of the College staff, or with the College Student Committee. Should the student wish to pursue the matter, the student should submit his/her complaint in writing to the Director of Education using the Student Complaint Form below (see Appendix).

Whatever your concerns, please raise them as soon as possible and no longer than 3 months after your concerns first arise. The sooner they can be considered - early resolution - the better for everyone. Complaints dating further back than 3 months are not easy to consider because of the length of time that has elapsed. You would need to offer a strong reason why you could not raise your concerns sooner if your concerns date back later than 3 months. The College reserves the right not to progress your complaint if your concerns do date back further than 3 months and we do not believe you have offered good reason.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two working days of receipt and an indication will be given as to how the complaint will be processed. ¹

B. THE BBC STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The BBC Student Complaints Committee will meet to address the complaint as soon as possible and not more than 5 working days following receipt of the complaint. The student MAY be invited to that meeting to clarify any matter related to the complaint. If so, the student will have the right to bring with him/her one additional person who might be a student of the College, a family member or other person of the student's choosing.
2. Following the meeting of the Student Complaints Committee, a written response will be made to the student within a further period of five working days.
3. If the student is not satisfied by the Committee's response, he/she can request, in writing, within five working days of the Committee's written response², an opportunity to meet with the Committee for the purpose of achieving a resolution to the matter. The student will have the right to bring with him/her one additional person who might be a student of the College,

¹ Outside of the semesters, and particularly at peak holiday times such as Christmas, Easter and the summer, the College cannot guarantee meeting the response times indicated above as key members of staff and students who may be needed for the investigation may be on annual leave.

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a family member or other person of the student's choosing. No legal representation is permitted.

4. Should resolution not be achieved at this point, the student will have the right to request a meeting with the College Principal and a member of the College Board, preferably, but not necessarily, with the Chair of the Board. This meeting will take place within five working days of the Complaints Committee's meeting with the student.
5. Within a period of five working days following this meeting, the student will be advised in writing of the decision reached by the Principal and Board member. This decision will be final.
6. If the student's complaint has not been dealt with to his /her satisfaction, the student may
 - a. follow the guidance at C below, if appropriate **OR**
 - b. take the complaint to the NI Ombudsman. This is an external process and details are available below.

c. STUDENTS FOLLOWING UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA COURSES

c1 Formal complaints should follow the College's internal procedures; if, at the end of the College process, a complaint is unresolved the student has the right to refer the complaint to the UOC Student Complaints Process

<https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Support/Responding-to-your-concerns/Student-Complaints-Procedure/>.

c2 UOC Students - Academic Appeals

Where a student wishes to appeal a final mark that has been awarded, he or she should appeal direct to UOC via the UOC academic appeals process:

<http://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Public/AQS/Documents/AcademicRegulations/5.pdf>

FOR FURTHER ADVICE CONTACT: Academic Office ³

³ · See College handbook for relevant staff contact details.

**BBC STUDENT GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS
(but not appeals against final marks)**

1. Submit completed BBC Student Complaints Form to the Director of Education



2. BBC Student Complaints Committee (normally chaired by Director of Education)



3. College Principal and Member of College Board



If still unresolved and **the complaint is an academic matter that involves UOC provision**, go to Step 4 (See paragraph C above)

OR

If still unresolved, and the complaint **is not an academic matter with a direct link to UOC**, go to Step 5



UOC Complaints Procedure

<https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Support/Responding-to-your-concerns/Student-Complaints-Procedure/>.

If still unresolved...



5. NI Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO)

<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/>

E. HOSTEL COMPLAINTS

Any residential student may raise informally by any appropriate method including telephone call, email or face to face discussion, with a member of the College staff or with the College Student Committee a complaint about the hostel. Should the student wish to pursue the matter, he/she should submit the complaint in writing to the Operations Manager, using the Student Complaints Form in the Appendix.

The BBC Hostel Formal Complaints Procedure is as follows:

1. The Residential Staff Team will meet no later than five working days following receipt of the complaint to consider the matter raised by the student.⁴ The student will be notified of the date of the RST meeting. During a period of five working days following the Team's initial meeting, the Team may request the student to meet with them to clarify any matter related to the complaint. The student will have the right to bring with him/her one additional person who might be a student of the College or a family member ; this meeting will take place no later than five working days following the RST's request.
2. Following this meeting, a written response will be made to the student. The response made will confirm the actions the College proposes to take and the overall timetable we aim to achieve.
3. Any settlements, or agreements, reached are recorded and honoured within a defined period of the settlement being agreed.
4. If the student is not satisfied by the RST's response, he/she can refer the complaint to the BBC Student Complaints Committee by instigating the BBC Student Complaints Procedure as set out above. The BBC Student Complaints Committee will initially be required to consider the written report of the RST.
5. The closure of disputes will be recorded to provide a clear audit trail of the actions taken to resolve the dispute and we will maintain courteous, professional relations with residents at all times during any dispute.

⁴ Outside of the semesters, and particularly at peak holiday times such as Christmas, Easter and the summer, the College cannot guarantee meeting the response times indicated above as key members of staff and students who may be needed for the investigation may be on annual leave.

HOSTEL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

1. Submit completed BBC Complaint Form to
Operations Manager



2. Residential Staff Team
(Normally chaired by the Operations Manager)



3. BBC Student Complaints Committee



4. College Principal and Member of College
Board

If still unresolved...



5. **NI Public Service
Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/>

APPENDIX

STUDENT COMPLAINTS FORM

Please read the Student Complaints Procedure (above) before completing this form.

While every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, in the interests of fairness, any available relevant information will be sought from sources additional to those identified by the student.

NB: Complaints made anonymously will not be accepted.

1.	Name of Complainant (BLOCK CAPITALS) Click or tap here to enter text.	Student No: Click or tap here to enter text.
	Programme/Course: Click or tap here to enter text.	
2.	Address for correspondence: Click or tap here to enter text.	
	Telephone/Mobile: Click or tap here to enter text.	Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
3.	*Details of Complaint: Click or tap here to enter text.	
*Please ensure all relevant details are provided e.g. The identities of witnesses and the date, time and place of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint. You may wish to use an additional sheet if necessary		
4.	Summary of informal action taken to resolve the complaint (if any: the student is not obliged to have taken any such action)	

	Click or tap here to enter text.
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I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this form contains a complete and accurate account of all the factors relevant to my complaint. I understand that a copy of this form may be provided to a member of staff who is the subject of the complaint, or who is otherwise involved and that making a complaint which is deemed to be mischievous or malicious may be deemed to be a breach of the Conduct regulations as set out in the Code of Conduct of the College.

Signed: _____ Click or tap here to enter text. _____

Date: _____ Click or tap to enter a date. _____

For **General Complaints** the completed form should be addressed to:

*The **Director of Education**, Belfast Bible College, Glenburn House, Glenburn Road South, Dunmurry, BT17 9JP*

For **Hostel Complaints** the completed form should be addressed to:

*The **Operations Manager**, Belfast Bible College, Glenburn House, Glenburn Road South, Dunmurry, BT17 9JP*