

STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY DETAILS	
Policy Category	Academic and Student Support
Version Number	V4
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	September 2026
Date Reviewed	August 2026
Date of next review	September 2027
Author	Quality Manager
Owner (if different from above)	Principal
Version Changes	1. Added 12-month OIA time limit from Completion of Procedures Letter. 2. Corrected clause numbering and cross-referenced policy titles. 3. added handling of anonymous, group and third-party complaints. 4. Added expectations for handling unacceptable, persistent or vexatious complaints. 5. Added a no detriment clause and confirmed mediation at the informal stage. 6. Added the remedies available where a complaint is upheld. 7. Added routing of complaints about partner universities 8. Added a Roles and Responsibilities table and acknowledgement deadlines. 9. Added monitoring and review, equality and accessibility, and data protection sections. 10. Enhanced the Student Compliant form and the Request forms in the appendices 11. Added provision for named postholders to appoint a nominee.
Related Policies / Procedures	Academic Appeals Policy Academic Misconduct and AI Use Policy Extenuating Circumstances Policy Grievance Policy Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bullying and Harassment Policy Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy
Effective Date	September 2026

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out how students can raise concerns about the College's services, facilities or treatment and how those concerns will be considered.
- 1.2 It provides a clear process for resolving complaints fairly, promptly and without disadvantage to the student.
- 1.3 Where possible, complaints will be resolved informally at a local level; where this is not possible, they will be escalated for further consideration.
- 1.4 It supports compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) regulatory framework and the Good Practice Framework of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students registered with the College, including those on franchised programmes.
- 2.2 It covers complaints about the College's services, facilities, learning environment, or staff conduct where this affects the student experience.
- 2.3 Where a complaint is submitted that falls under another procedure, it will be referred to that procedure. The College reserves the right to re-direct formal complaints into alternative policies and procedures as it sees fit. The Policy excludes aspects which are dealt with by separate policies, for example:
 - Academic Appeals – appealing against the outcome of Assessment Board. A complaint in relation to review of an Assessment Board decision, falls within the Academic Appeals Policy and will be considered as an Academic Appeal and not a Complaint.
 - Academic Misconduct – relating to academic offences, for example cheating, collusion, plagiarism etc.
 - Extenuating Circumstances – relating to extenuation in relation to assessments
 - Student Code of Conduct - disciplinary offences including complaints by students about the behaviour of other students.
 - Bullying and Harassment
 - Sexual Harassment and Misconduct
- 2.4 Complaints from applicants are outside the scope of this policy. Separate arrangements apply to admissions matters.
- 2.5 Complaints relating to the misconduct of a member of staff or student may be submitted initially as a complaint but may later be referred to the appropriate Grievance or Disciplinary Procedure

3. Definitions

Appeal: A formal request for a decision to be reconsidered. An appeal is made when an individual believes that a decision was reached incorrectly or unfairly and seeks a review of that decision.

Complainant: The student submitting the complaint.

Complaint: A complaint is the expression of a specific concern about an aspect of the programme, service, facility or site which is deemed unsatisfactory and should be investigated.

Formal Complaint: A written complaint submitted on the Student Complaints Form requiring investigation and a written outcome.

Informal Complaint: A concern raised directly with the staff member, department, or service involved for quick resolution.

Respondent: The individual or service against whom the complaint is made

Completion of Procedures Letter: The letter confirming that the College's internal complaints procedure is complete, which a student needs in order to take a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Group Complaint: A single complaint submitted by two or more students affected by the same matter, each of whom has confirmed in writing that they wish to be included.

Mediation: A voluntary and confidential discussion, facilitated by a neutral member of staff, to help those involved reach an agreed resolution.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Student Welfare Team	Receives, acknowledges and logs complaints; arranges informal resolution and mediation; tracks timescales; issues Completion of Procedures letters; maintains the complaints log and records.
Investigator	Investigates a Stage 1 formal complaint impartially, meets the complainant, gathers and tests evidence, and issues the written response.
Principal	Nominates the Investigator; decides Stage 2 Reviews; reports complaints annually to the Governing Body.
Quality Manager	Monitors complaint volumes, outcomes, timeliness and themes; reports them for quality improvement; oversees the annual review of this policy.
Programme Lead	Supports informal resolution of programme-related concerns and implements agreed actions.
Students	Raise complaints promptly and in good faith, provide accurate information and evidence, and engage with the process.

- 4.1 Where a role named in this policy is vacant, or the postholder is unavailable, or the postholder has had prior involvement in the matter or has any other conflict of interest, that postholder or the Principal will appoint a nominee of equivalent seniority to act in their place. The nominee has the same responsibilities and authority under this policy as the postholder for that complaint.
- 4.2 A nominee must have had no prior involvement in the complaint. Where the Principal is unavailable or conflicted, the nominee will be a member of the Results Consortium Executive Team. The person deciding a Stage 2 Review must not be the person who decided the complaint at Stage 1.
- 4.3 The appointment of a nominee will be recorded on the complaint file, and the student will be told in writing who is dealing with their complaint and in what capacity. A change of postholder or nominee does not restart or extend the timescales in this policy.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 All complaints should be made without fear of penalty. Information will be released to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to it.
- 5.2 All complaints will be handled sensitively, will be fully investigated, and will receive an appropriate explanation. Confidentiality should be maintained from all parties involved in the process.

- 5.3 Details of any complaint about a student or a member of staff will be shared with them, so that they can respond to any allegations.
- 5.4 No student will be disadvantaged for making a complaint in good faith, for supporting another student's complaint or for acting as a witness. Any concern that a student has been treated less favourably for one of these reasons may itself be raised under this policy and will be investigated. This protection does not extend to a complaint that is knowingly false or malicious, which may be dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

6. Support

- 6.1 Students may refer to any staff member they feel comfortable to talk to for help, advice, guidance and support in making a complaint.
- 6.2 If there is a particularly sensitive issue to raise, they can approach the Student Welfare Team for help. The team will make sure that any such complaint will be made known to the smallest number of staff necessary for the purpose of the investigation and that the complaint will be dealt on a confidential basis.
- 6.3 A student may be accompanied at any meeting held under this policy by a fellow student, a student representative or a friend. The person accompanying the student is there to provide support and may not act in a legal or professional representative capacity. The student should give the name and affiliation of that person to the Student Welfare Team in advance of the meeting.

7. Who can make a complaint?

- 7.1 Any registered student can make a complaint. If a third party is making a complaint on behalf of a student, written consent from the student will be required and a valid reason as to why the student was unable to raise a complaint themselves.
- 7.2 Where a complaint is made anonymously, the College will record it and decide what action is possible. It will always consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern, a risk to health and safety, or a serious risk to students, staff or the College, and will act on it under the relevant policy where it does.
- 7.3 The limits of an anonymous complaint will be explained wherever it is possible to do so. An anonymous complaint does not carry a right of review under paragraph 8.4 and cannot be taken to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, because no Completion of Procedures Letter can be issued.
- 7.4 Two or more students affected by the same matter may submit a group complaint on a single Formal Complaint Form. Each student named on the form must confirm in writing that they wish to be included, and the group must nominate one student as the point of contact. The complaint will be investigated once and the same response issued to each student, together with any finding that applies only to an individual. A student may withdraw from a group complaint and pursue an individual complaint at any time before the response is issued.
- 7.5 Where a complaint is made on a student's behalf under paragraph 7.1, the College will correspond with the student unless the student asks in writing for correspondence to be sent to the third party. The student may withdraw their consent at any time, and the complaint will then be dealt with directly with the student or closed.

8. Procedure

- 8.1 The Student Complaints Policy follows the following stages:
 - 8.1.1 Informal Resolution, student-led informal discussion of the complaint with the individuals directly involved.

8.1.2 Formal Investigation of the Complaint (Stage One).

8.1.3 Formal Review Hearing (Stage Two).

8.2 Informal Resolution

8.2.1 The College expects students to try to resolve their complaint informally at a local level in the first instance. Students are to contact the member(s) of staff directly to raise their concerns either in writing or as part of a discussion.

8.2.2 Where this is not possible, the students are to contact the Student Welfare Team to raise their concerns.

8.2.3 Mediation meetings will be arranged by the Student Welfare Team, and the details will be communicated to the student. Students should receive at least two clear working days' notice to attend. If they cannot attend a meeting, they will be required to provide notice in advance.

8.2.4 Meetings may be held in person or online. Written representations will be considered where the student explains why they are unable to attend.

8.2.5 If a complainant fails to attend scheduled meetings, without reasonable explanation, the College reserves the right not to schedule any further appointments. In such cases the complaint will be decided on the evidence available, and the student will be told that this has happened.

8.2.6 A written record of the discussion and any written correspondence must be kept.

8.2.7 A response and any remedy proposed should be provided to the student within 15 working days of the complaint being raised. If there is a good reason for requiring a longer period, the student should be informed.

8.2.8 The student will also be informed of their right to proceed to the formal stage of the process should they not be satisfied with the outcome of the Informal stage.

8.2.9 A basic record of the Complaint will be retained, including details of the Complainant, the nature of the Complaint and the outcome.

8.2.10 Mediation is voluntary and will only take place where all those involved agree to it. What is said in mediation is confidential and without prejudice to any later stage of this procedure. Agreeing to mediation does not remove a student's right to make a Formal Complaint, and the timescale in paragraph 8.3.3 runs from the date the informal stage is concluded.

8.3 Formal Investigation of the Complaint

8.3.1 If an issue is not resolved informally, the complainant must complete a Formal Complaint Form with accompanying evidence and details of the steps the student has taken to resolve the issue informally or their reasons for not doing so and send it to the Student Welfare Team.

8.3.2 To make a Formal Complaint, the student must complete a Formal Complaint Form (Appendix 1).

8.3.3 Complaints must be escalated within 15 working days of the response made at informal stage. The College reserves the right to reject any complaint outside of this timescale.

8.3.4 The Student Welfare Team will review the complaint form and accompanying evidence and will acknowledge the receipt of the form.

8.3.5 The Principal will nominate an impartial investigator who will offer to meet face to face with the complainant who will receive at least two clear working days' notice to attend. A note of the meeting will be taken, and the complainant may be accompanied by a fellow student or a student representative.

8.3.6 The Investigator will work with the co-operation of staff and management of the College to investigate complaints speedily, fairly and transparently. Where possible the investigation should be tracked by written notes or documentation.

- 8.3.7 Following the Investigation, a written response with appropriate explanations, should normally be sent to the complainant within 15 working days. All responses should be copied to Student Welfare Team.
- 8.3.8 The response will indicate whether the Complaint has been upheld, not upheld or partially upheld and will, where appropriate, identify any action to be taken.
- 8.3.9 Where the complaint is not upheld, the student will be notified of their right to proceed to a Stage 2 Review.
- 8.4 Formal Review Hearing
- 8.4.1 Students are entitled to seek a Review of the decision concerning their Stage 1 complaint, only where:
- There was a procedural irregularity at the Stage 1 formal stage (e.g. there was a material failure by the College to follow the complaints procedure at Stage 1, or clear reasons were not provided for the Stage 1 decision, or there is evidence of bias)
 - The Stage 1 outcome was not reasonable in all the circumstances (e.g. aspects of the complaint were not sufficiently covered by the investigation, or the outcome is contradictory to regulations)
 - New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- 8.4.2 A request for a Stage 2 review must be made in writing within 15 working days of the written notification of the Stage 1 outcome. The College reserves the right to reject any requests outside of this timescale.
- 8.4.3 Requests should be sent to the Student Welfare Team and clearly indicate the reasons for dissatisfaction and why a review is required.
- 8.4.4 Stage 2 does not normally involve a full new investigation.
- 8.4.5 The Principal will review all information collated for the complaint, together with any new evidence presented. The Principal may also contact anyone previously involved in the complaint as well as any new witnesses.
- 8.4.6 The decision taken at the Review stage is final and will be communicated in writing normally within 20 working days of a request being accepted.
- 8.4.7 The student will also receive a Completion of Procedures letter which will include the Stage 2 Review response.
- 8.5 The Student Welfare Team will acknowledge a Formal Complaint, or a request for a Stage 2 Review, in writing within 5 working days of receipt. Where the College cannot meet a published timescale at any stage of this procedure, it will tell the student, explain why and give a revised date.

9. Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 9.1 If the student remains dissatisfied with the College's response, they have the right to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The OIA must receive the complaint within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.
- 9.2 Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Guidance, including the Good Practice Framework: Handling complaints and academic appeals, can be found at:
- www.oiahe.org.uk

10. Complaint Outcomes and Remedies

- 10.1 A response at the informal stage, at Stage 1 and at Stage 2 will state whether the complaint is upheld, upheld in part or not upheld, give the reasons for the decision, set out any action to be taken and by whom, and state what the student can do next and the deadline for doing it.
- 10.2 The Stage 2 response will confirm that the College's internal procedure is complete and will be accompanied by the Completion of Procedures letter referred to in paragraph 8.4.7.
- 10.3 Where a complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the remedy will be proportionate to what went wrong. Remedies may include:
- an explanation of what happened
 - putting right the matter complained about, or providing the service or support that was missed
 - a review of the decision or process that gave rise to the complaint
 - a change to College procedure, guidance or staff training to prevent a recurrence
 - referral of the matter to another College procedure where that is the proper route.
- 10.4 Remedies are decided case by case. Nothing in this policy creates an entitlement to a particular remedy or to financial compensation, and any question of a refund or fee adjustment will be considered separately under the College's tuition fee arrangements.

11. Managing Unacceptable or Vexatious Complaints

- 11.1 The College expects students to raise complaints in good faith and to behave reasonably towards the staff dealing with them.
- 11.2 A complaint, or the way in which it is pursued, may be treated as unacceptable where, for example:
- the same matter is pursued repeatedly after it has been fully considered and there is nothing new to add
 - the complaint is not made in order to resolve a matter but to harass a member of staff or to disrupt the College
 - the volume or frequency of contact prevents staff from dealing with the complaint or with their other work
 - the complainant behaves in an abusive, aggressive or threatening way towards staff.
- 11.3 Where a complaint, or the way in which it is pursued, is treated as unacceptable, the Student Welfare Team will write to the student explaining the concern, what needs to change and by when, and will give the student 10 working days to respond. Where the student's conduct towards staff is or may be a disciplinary matter, it will be dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, separately from the complaint, which will continue to be considered on its merits.

12. Complaints about Partner Universities and Awarding Organisations

- 12.1 Where a student is registered on a programme awarded by a partner university, a complaint about the College's own services, facilities, learning environment or staff is dealt with under this policy. The College will inform the partner university of complaints where the partnership agreement requires it.
- 12.2 A complaint about a decision, service or regulation of the partner university itself will be forwarded by the Student Welfare Team to that university's complaints procedure, normally within 5 working days, and the student will be told that this has been done and given the partner's contact details. Where a complaint concerns both the College and the partner, the

College will agree with the partner which of them will lead and will tell the student. Students on franchised programmes may be able to take a complaint about the partner university to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator once that university's internal procedure is complete.

- 12.3 Where a matter concerns an assessment result, a progression decision or an award, it will be dealt with as an academic appeal under the Academic Appeals Policy and not as a complaint, as set out in paragraph 2.3.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 13.1 The Quality Manager will maintain the complaints log and will record for each complaint the stage reached, the subject matter, the outcome, any remedy applied and whether the published timescales were met.
- 13.2 Themes arising from complaints, and any weaknesses in College practice that they reveal, will be used to inform quality improvement and will be considered in the College's Self-Assessment Review and in annual programme monitoring.
- 13.3 The Principal will report on complaints to the Governing Body annually, using the record maintained under paragraph 13.1.

14. Equality, Diversity and Accessibility

- 14.1 This policy will be applied in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. No student will be treated less favourably in the complaints process because of a protected characteristic.
- 14.2 Reasonable adjustments will be made to the complaints process itself on request.

15. Data Protection, Confidentiality and Records

- 15.1 Personal data processed under this policy will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- 15.2 Information about a complaint will be shared as set out in section 5.
- 15.3 Complaint records will be retained in line with the College's Records Retention and Disposal Policy, normally for six years from the date on which the complaint is concluded, after which they will be securely destroyed. The basic record described in paragraph 8.2.9 will be retained on the same basis.

Appendix 1 – Student Complaints Form – Formal Complaint

Please read the Student Complaints Policy before completing this form. All sections must be completed in full and supporting evidence provided wherever possible. Please sign and date the form. Your complaint will be delayed if the form is not complete.

If you need help completing the form, contact the Student Welfare Team for your programme: HND studentwelfare@resultsco.org.uk; Leeds Trinity University programmes studentwelfare.ltu@resultsco.org.uk; Health and Social Care hscstudentwelfare.ltu@resultsco.org.uk; Plymouth Marjon University programmes pmustudentsupport@resultsco.org.uk.

Section 1: Student details

Student name	
Programme	
Phone number(s)	
Email address(es)	
Address for postal correspondence	

Section 2: Nature of the complaint

Date of the event(s) or situation you are complaining about.

Set out what happened, in the order it happened.

Set out the consequences for you, and why you are making a complaint.

List any documents you have attached as evidence, if applicable.

Section 3: Action you have already taken

If you have already tried to resolve your complaint informally, set this out below. If not, go to Section 4.

What steps have you taken to resolve this informally?

Why are you dissatisfied with the response?

Section 4: Desired outcome

What would resolve the complaint to your satisfaction?

Declaration

By submitting this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Student Complaints Policy.
- The information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand that if any information I have provided is found to be false or malicious in intent, I may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Student name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 2 – Student Complaints Form – Request for Review

Please read the Student Complaints Policy before completing this form. All sections must be completed in full and supporting evidence provided wherever possible. Please sign and date the form. Your complaint will be delayed if the form is not complete.

If you need help completing the form, contact the Student Welfare Team for your programme: HND studentwelfare@resultsco.org.uk; Leeds Trinity University programmes studentwelfare.ltu@resultsco.org.uk; Health and Social Care hscstudentwelfare.ltu@resultsco.org.uk; Plymouth Marjon University programmes pmustudentsupport@resultsco.org.uk.

Section 1: Student details

Student name	
Programme	
Phone number(s)	
Email address(es)	
Address for postal correspondence	

Section 2: Eligibility check

Have you submitted a Stage 1 complaint form and received formal notification of the outcome?	☐ YES ☐ NO
Are you providing new evidence or information that there was a procedural irregularity at the Stage 1 formal stage?	☐ YES ☐ NO
Are you providing new evidence or information that the Stage 1 outcome was not reasonable in all the circumstances? (e.g. aspects of the complaint were not sufficiently covered by the investigation or the outcome is contradictory to regulations etc.)	☐ YES ☐ NO
Are you providing new material evidence or information that you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process?	☐ YES ☐ NO

Section 3: Grounds for the review

Set out the grounds for the review of your complaint.

List any documents you have attached as evidence, if applicable.

Section 4: Desired outcome

What would resolve the complaint to your satisfaction?

Declaration

By submitting this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Student Complaints Policy.
- The information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand that if any information I have provided is found to be false, I may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Student name	
Signature	
Date	