



# **Student Complaints Policy and Procedures 2026- 2027**

| Document Version Control   |                                                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Document Title</b>      | Student Complaints Policy and Procedures 2026-2027 |
| <b>Version</b>             | 1                                                  |
| <b>Reviewing Committee</b> | Academic Board                                     |
| <b>Approving Committee</b> | Academic Board                                     |
| <b>Document Lead</b>       | Provost                                            |
| <b>Date of Last Review</b> | May 2026                                           |
| <b>Date of Approval</b>    | June 2026                                          |
| <b>Date Effective from</b> | July 2026                                          |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b> | June 2027                                          |

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## 1. Introduction

William College is committed to providing its students with a positive experience that changes their lives, fosters a culture of positive wellbeing and values their voices. However, the College recognises that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time. This policy sets out how to raise complaints and the process through which they are considered.

It is the College's policy to resolve any complaint as quickly and fairly as possible that is made by a student about their programme; a service provided by William College or a third party on behalf of William College, including external consultants; their treatment by another student; or their treatment by a member of staff.

For the purposes of this policy, students are defined as those who are or have previously been enrolled at William College on any of its partner programmes. Former students may also submit a complaint, provided that the complaint relates to a matter which occurred whilst they were a student and they comply with the timescales for the submission of complaints set out below.

This policy does not apply to applicants; any applicant complaints are covered under the Admissions Policy.

Nothing in this policy shall affect or limit the right of students to refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ([OIA](#)), should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the College's internal complaints procedure.

## 2. Scope

This policy covers complaints lodged by current and former students. It applies to complaints that arise:

- Complaints about students' educational experience.
- Complaints about a service provided by William College or a third party on its behalf.
- Complaints relating to dissatisfaction with the College's academic facilities.
- Complaints about misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material.
- Complaints concerning discrimination by William College on the grounds of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Complaints from a student who believes they have suffered injustice as a result of action or inaction by or on behalf of William College.
- Complaints about the behaviour of a member of staff towards a student. Such complaints may be received under this procedure but considered in line with staff disciplinary procedures, such as the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure.
- Complaints about the behaviour of a student or students. Such complaints may be considered in line with the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Complaints cannot normally be accepted on the following issues:

- Academic judgement, i.e. the grade received for an assignment.
- Disruption to learning or assessment because of non-payment of fees.
- The Student Loans Company (SLC). Complaints about the SLC must be submitted directly to the SLC.

## 2.1 Alignment with Partner Universities

### Bath Spa University (BSU)

William College manages Stage One of the complaints process, while BSU manages Stages Two and Three.

### Birkbeck, University of London (BBK)

William College manages the initial informal stage (Early Resolution – Stage One) and Formal Stage Two. To understand the procedure for Formal Stage two, please refer to the Internal Investigations Procedure.

If students wish to escalate the complaint, BBK manages Review Stage Three in accordance with the BBK Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

## 3. General Principles

The processes within this policy and procedures are established on the basis of being:

- Accessible and clear.
- Fair, independent, and confidential.
- Inclusive.
- Flexible, proportionate, and timely.
- Designed to improve the student experience.

The principles which underpin this policy are:

- Students will not be penalised for raising a sincere and legitimate complaint.
- William College is committed to addressing complaints promptly and finding fair and appropriate resolutions.
- Students will be given reasonable time and support to seek advice during any stage of the complaints process.
- All parties should make sincere efforts to resolve issues informally before proceeding to formal complaints.
- Investigations will be conducted by impartial staff who have had no previous involvement in the matter.
- Students may bring a friend, family member, or a student representative (not acting in a legal capacity) to any meetings concerning their complaint. Anyone joining the meeting is there to support the student and should not involve themselves in the discussion of the complaint.
- All individuals involved will be regularly updated on the status of the complaint and will receive written notification of the outcome, including explanations for decisions and any recommended actions.
- While confidentiality will be maintained throughout, students should be aware that sharing information with relevant individuals or bodies may be necessary for a full and fair investigation.
- For complaints that fall under the College's responsibility, appropriate actions will be taken to resolve the issue and improve any operational practices identified through the process.

## 4. Application of Policy:

Students considering making a complaint are advised to first contact the Student Support Team, who will provide guidance and help determine the appropriate steps. Students can visit their office on campus, or they can be contacted via email on:

- Stratford campus: [studentsupport\\_stratford@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport_stratford@williamcollege.ac.uk) .
- Leeds campus: [studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk) .

Programmes delivered at William College are designed and awarded by partner universities. In some circumstances, depending on the nature of the complaint, the College may need to refer the complaint to the awarding body.

If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the student will be directed and supported to follow the partner university's complaints procedure.

## **5. Who Can Make Complaints?**

### **5.1 Individual Complaints**

Any individual student can make a complaint.

### **5.2 Group Complaints**

While most complaints are expected to come from individual students, group complaints are also accepted. In such cases, all students in the group must confirm their participation in writing and designate one member to serve as the group's spokesperson and primary contact.

### **5.3 Third-party or Anonymous Complaints**

In general, William College does not accept complaints submitted by third parties on behalf of a student. However, exceptions may be made, such as in situations involving mental health concerns, provided the third party is not acting in a legal capacity and the student has given explicit written consent for that person to represent them.

Anonymous complaints are not accepted, as thorough investigation and resolution require full disclosure of the complainant's identity. Furthermore, it would not be possible to communicate the outcome of the complaint to an anonymous party.

### **5.4 Disability and Mental Health Support**

If the student has a disability or mental health concern and needs additional support or a reasonable adjustment to the Complaints Policy and Procedure, they should contact the Student Wellbeing Team ([wellbeing@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@williamcollege.ac.uk)).

The Student Wellbeing Team will provide advice on how to support the student effectively throughout the complaints process. The Student Wellbeing Team can also advise the College if reasonable adjustments are required for the consideration of the complaint.

## **6. Responsibilities**

The College will ensure that each party involved in a complaint is given an equal opportunity to present their case. All parties involved in a complaint are expected to act courteously, fairly and reasonably towards each other.

They must comply with procedural requirements, including completing complaints documentation, adhering to deadlines, responding appropriately to requests for information or attendance at meetings, and undertaking reasonable actions required to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

The College will investigate all complaints brought under the informal part of the procedure. However, it reserves the right to refuse to consider any student complaints which are thought, after initial investigation, to be unreasonable, vexatious or malicious.

Examples of such complaints include:

- Complaints which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive.
- Insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes.
- Insistence on pursuing what may be a meritorious complaint in an unreasonable manner.
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

William College may decline to consider a complaint if it considers it to be frivolous or vexatious and in these circumstances the student will receive a written explanation of the reasons. Where a student has made a complaint of this nature, or used false information, the College may consider taking action under the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

## 7. Advice

All students are entitled to impartial and confidential advice. If they wish to discuss a sensitive matter or are considering making a complaint, they are encouraged to consult the following staff:

### Stratford Campus

- Student Services Team: [studentsupport\\_stratford@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport_stratford@williamcollege.ac.uk) .
- Wellbeing Team: [wellbeing@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@williamcollege.ac.uk) .
- Programme Leader or Dean.
- Provost: [nick.h@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:nick.h@williamcollege.ac.uk) .

### Leeds Campus

- Student Services Team: [studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk) .
- Wellbeing Team: [wellbeing.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk) .
- Programme Leader or Dean.
- Provost: [nick.h@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:nick.h@williamcollege.ac.uk) .

## 8. Complaints Procedure

William College welcomes constructive feedback from students and encourages concerns to be raised as early as possible, with the aim of resolving issues informally in the first instance.

There are three stages to the complaint's procedure:

### 8.1 Stage One: Informal Local Resolution

All students (Leeds and Stratford) should raise their concerns informally with the relevant staff member, such as a Module Tutor, Programme Leaders or Student Support Officer. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing via email. Students are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than three months from the date on which the matter giving rise to the complaint occurred.

Students should be encouraged and supported in providing concrete examples and evidence, if they have it, to support their points. They should also be advised on possible solutions that might be available.

Staff dealing with the complaint should focus on building a clear, chronological paper trail using concrete records such as emails, handbook extracts, and notes from verbal conversations. The goal is to provide enough clarity for a quick resolution without needing an extensive, formal investigation.

In many instances, these staff members will be best placed to respond to the complaint and to resolve it quickly and effectively. The relevant staff member involved in the informal procedure will record on the Complaints Log:

- The actions taken to consider and resolve the concern.
- The decision reached.
- Brief details of what was communicated to the student, and when.

This information can then be made available to those dealing with any formal complaint should the student decide to make one.

If resolved at this stage, no further action is necessary. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved after this discussion, the student has the right to address the issue through the formal stages (Stage Two) of the process.

Determination of a complaint being satisfactorily resolved will be based on an evaluation of whether the College properly followed its procedures, whether their findings are reasonable, and if the agreed remedy adequately addresses the issue.

## 8.2 Stage Two: Formal Complaint

### 8.2.1 Students Studying in Stratford (BSU course)

Students with courses awarded by Bath Spa University should use the BSU [Complaints Stage Two Form](#) and submit it to [complaintsofficer@bsu.ac.uk](mailto:complaintsofficer@bsu.ac.uk).

William College Student Support Team can support students in completing this form.

The BSU Complaints Procedure can be found at: [BSU Complaints Procedure](#).

### 8.2.2 Students Studying in Leeds (BBK course)

Stage Two complaints for students whose courses are awarded by BBK are investigated by William College, through the Internal Investigation Procedure. Students should complete the Student Complaint Form (in [Appendix A](#)) and email it to: [studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk).

The complaint should:

- Clearly outline the issue.
- Summarise actions taken at Stage One\*.
- Specify the desired outcome.
- Be submitted within 10 working days of the Stage One outcome.

\*Where an issue is raised formally before a reasonable attempt has been made for local informal resolution, William College may refer the matter back to Stage One.

An independent investigator, not previously involved, will review the case in accordance with the Internal Investigation Procedure. Investigations may involve meetings with relevant parties, and a written response will be provided, typically within 10 working days.

Matters of concern should be raised at the earliest opportunity and in any case no later than three months from the complainant becoming aware of the event, or sequence of events, giving rise to the complaint. Only exceptionally, and at William College's discretion, will a complaint raised after this timeframe be considered.

## 8.3 Stage Three: Review

### 8.3.1 Students Studying in Stratford (BSU Course)

If students are dissatisfied with the outcome of their Stage Two complaint, they may request a review by BSU.

For Stratford/BSU students a review of the findings at Stage Two may be allowed, subject to the discretion of the BSU Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience, or their nominee.

Students should refer to the BSU Complaints Procedure: [BSU Complaints Procedure](#).

### 8.3.2 Students Studying in Leeds (BBK course)

If students are dissatisfied with the outcome of their Stage Two complaint, they may request a review by BBK.

For Leeds/BBK students a review of the findings at Stage Two may be allowed if the student remains dissatisfied. The review stage is not an automatic reconsideration of the issues raised, but of the processing of the complaint at Stages One and Two. Where William College has concluded its Stage Two investigation, it will issue a written summary of findings to the student, including guidance on how to request a review by Birkbeck and, if applicable, how to escalate to the OIA.

Students should refer to the Birkbeck Complaints Policy and Procedure: [Birkbeck Student complaints Policy and Procedures](#).

## 9. Timings for Complaints Procedures

### 9.1 Students Studying in Stratford (BSU course)

| Stage                               | Timescale                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Early Resolution                    | As soon as possible.                                                         |
| Submission of Stage Two form        | Within 10 working days of the outcome of the early resolution stage.         |
| Acknowledgement of Stage Two        | Within five working days of receipt of form.                                 |
| Response to Stage Two issued        | Ordinarily, within 20 working days.                                          |
| Request for review (Stage Three)    | Within 10 working days of date of written notification of Stage Two outcome. |
| Notification to conduct Stage Three | Within 10 working days of receipt of request.                                |
| Completion of Stage Three review    | Within 20 working days.                                                      |

### 9.2 Students Studying in Leeds (BBK course)

All timescales for Leeds/BBK complaints are expressed in calendar days, in line with Birkbeck's procedures.

| Stage            | Timescale |
|------------------|-----------|
| Early Resolution | N/A       |

|                                                        |                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Submission of Formal Complaint                         | Start of complaint (within four weeks of incident occurring). |
| Formal Stage                                           | Up to 28 calendar days.                                       |
| Submission of Request for Review of Original Complaint | Within 14 calendar days.                                      |
| Review Stage                                           | Normally within 28 days, but up to 42 calendar days.          |

### 9.3 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

If the student remains dissatisfied following completion of the College's and partner university's procedures, they may refer the complaint to the OIA. A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued by BSU or BBK to support this.

Further information:

**OIA Website:** [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0118 959 9813

**Address:** Second Floor, Abbey Wharf, 57–75 King's Road, Reading RG1 3AB

## 10. Privacy and Confidentiality

Staff investigating complaints respect the privacy of all parties. Information about the complaint is only given to those immediately involved and/or those whose participation is necessary for a resolution.

Confidentiality will be respected in conducting all aspects of the complaint procedure. Any individual about whom a complaint is made has the right to be informed of the complaint and its nature and to have access to relevant evidence.

If you request that your identity is kept confidential, this is respected up to the point where disclosure is necessary to progress or resolve the issue, in which case you will be informed in advance that this information is going to be disclosed.

William College will not disclose any information to third parties regarding investigations and outcomes from student complaint cases unless legal exceptions under the Data Protection Act apply.

## 11. Review of this Policy

This Policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board annually, or earlier if there are changes to the regulatory framework. Any amendments require the approval of the Academic Board.

## 12. Related Policies and Procedures

### Internal

- Internal Investigations Procedure.
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- Admissions Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Student Code of Conduct.
- Partner Universities' Academic Appeal Policies.
- Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

**External**

- Bath Spa University Student Complaints Procedures.
- Birkbeck, University of London Student Complaints Policy and Procedures.

## 13. Appendix A: Stage Two Student Complaints Form (Leeds/BBK Students)

**Please Note:** This form should only be used by students studying BBK courses at William College for Stage Two formal complaints.

### Guidance notes

Before completing this form, you should read William College's Student Complaints Policy and Procedures. It is recommended to try to resolve complaints with the relevant Tutor, Programme Leader, Head of Division or Head of Department in the first instance **before** moving on to the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

If you have not raised your concern 'informally' yet, please do so before completing this form.

Please note: all sections must be completed before we can consider your complaint.

### Section One - Your details

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/Other:

First name:

Surname:

Student ID Number:

Student email address:

Programme of Study:

### Section Two – Your contact details

Address:

Postcode:

Email Address:

### **Section Three – Your complaint**

#### **3.1. If relevant, which Division/Department or area is the subject of your complaint?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **3.2. Person to which the complaint relates**

If relevant, which student or member of staff is the subject of this complaint?

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **3.3. Details of complaint**

Please outline details of your complaint below and attach any separate information that you feel is relevant to your complaint.

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **3.4. Steps taken so far**

Please confirm that you have already tried to resolve this matter informally and explain what steps you have taken to resolve your complaint so far.

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **3.5. List Attached Evidence:** Enclose copies of any letters or emails relating to your complaint and list them below.

| <b>Type</b><br>Please specify the supporting documents you have attached/enclosed | <b>Evidence Supplied</b><br><b>(please tick)</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                   |                                                  |
|                                                                                   |                                                  |
|                                                                                   |                                                  |
|                                                                                   |                                                  |

#### **3.6. Reason for dissatisfaction**

Explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received.

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **3.7. What will resolve the complaint?**

What would you like William College to do to resolve your complaint? (i.e. what reasonable solution(s) are you looking for?)

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **Section Four – Your declaration and signature**

I confirm that the information given on this form is true and correct and in submitting this I understand that William College:

- Will not accept complaints or appeals from third parties or anonymous sources.
- May need to share information with other persons or organisations as part of any investigation to resolve my complaint or appeal.

- Will deal with any complaint or appeal that it believes to be malicious and unfounded under the provisions of its Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission:**

Please email this form together with any supporting documents to:  
studentsupport.leeds@williamcollege.ac.uk .

You may also submit in person or by post, for the attention of the Student Support Team, to:  
William College  
Bridge House  
320 High St  
London  
E15 1EP

**Keep a copy of the completed complaint form and any associated documents for your own records.**