



Student Complaints Policy & Procedures

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External reference:	<p>Office for the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework Sep 2015</p> <p>UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [March 2018] Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Theme 11: <i>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students</i> Data Protection Act 1998, 2018. Article 51 GDPR</p>
Audience:	Students, Staff and other Stakeholders.

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1. Introduction

The College is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience, fully supported by a range of academic and administrative services and facilities. The Student Declaration sets out the entitlements and responsibilities of students and is based upon a spirit of partnership between staff and students.

As part of this partnership between students and staff, the College recognises and respects that students may wish to make a complaint. This policy and its procedures provide full information on how students can make complaints and how the College intends to deal with them in line with the guidelines set down by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The College welcomes the opportunity to correct mistakes, clarify misunderstandings and to respond positively and constructively on any occasion when students feel the need to express dissatisfaction with a particular service provided by the College and its staff.

2. Purpose

The College intends to provide access for students and staff to an effective system for handling students' complaints efficiently and effectively. Implementation of this policy and procedures by the College, should ensure that students feel able to make a complaint, knowing that it will be fairly investigated.

3. Aims and Objectives

The policy aims to ensure that students' complaints at the College are dealt with appropriately. The College has the following objectives in relation to student complaints:

- To provide clear information to students on complaint procedures
- To ensure students' complaints are dealt with fairly and honestly
- To ensure that the complaint handling process helps to improve the student experience

The College aims and objectives are further informed by the 8 principles of the Good Practice Framework for handling complaints as set out by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in Sep 2015:

- Accessibility
- Clarity
- Proportionality
- Timeliness
- Fairness
- Independence
- Confidentiality
- Improving the student experience

For further details on each of these principles please see Appendix 5.

4. Scope

This policy and procedures focus on student complaints. However, 'student' also refers to anyone who is or was recently a registered student. By 'recently' the College means no more than one academic year before the complaint is submitted. This College will only consider complaints from students who were registered more than one academic year ago at its discretion if the complaint is deemed reasonable. The College extends this policy, within reason, to applicants who are not yet enrolled/registered at the College but may have started the application process.

The policy and procedures, therefore, include applicants and students who wish to enrol, are currently enrolled or have recently been enrolled on any courses provided by the College, whether through blended or distance learning on virtual learning platforms, or in-person at any one of the College's campuses.

5. Definition

For the purpose of this procedure, and in line with the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UK Quality Code), a complaint is defined as the: 'expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities.'

6. Principles

The procedure is based on the principles of fairness and transparency and is in keeping with the UK Quality Code, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education's *Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals*. The procedure is set out to ensure:

- Timely resolution of complaints, with an emphasis on local resolution at the earliest opportunity
- Processes, decisions and the reasons behind them are clear and there is opportunity for independent
- Review of the way complaints are handles
- Students are supported throughout the process

In this spirit, it is anticipated that the majority of student complaints will be resolved as early as possible through informal dialogue between staff and students at a local level and to the satisfaction of all parties.

The College will make reasonable adjustments at any stage of the proceedings to accommodate the needs of students if they require special consideration due to a disability or any other reason.

Students making complaints will not suffer any disadvantage or discrimination as a result of making a complaint in good faith. However, if a complaint is judged to have been frivolous, vexatious or malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against the student.

The College expects all parties in a dispute to act professionally, respectfully and within the spirit of its policies and codes of conduct throughout all stages of the Complaints Procedure.

The College will monitor the operation of the Student Complaints Procedures in such a way as to assist in the maintenance and continuous improvement of service standards.

The College does not pay any expenses incurred by a student as a result of a complaint. In exceptional circumstances, the Managing Director has the discretion to offer a payment to meet reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses arising from the complaint. In such cases, complainants would be required to provide original receipts of expenses incurred.

7. Confidentiality

All information obtained during the process of making the complaint will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, 2018, Article 51 EU GDPR and the Student Privacy Notice.

Students must note that information about complainants, and individuals against whom complaints are made, will be dealt with sensitively and will be kept confidential, except where the disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint or implement a decision on the complaint, or where it is required by law or in the public interest.

In submitting a complaint the student understands that their complaint will be shared with the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation into the matters raised, and that the content of their complaint may need to be disclosed to relevant staff in order for the complaint to be investigated and/or resolution sought. Also, it must be understood that an individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be made aware of any allegations and evidence against them. Suppose there are elements of a student's complaint that are particularly sensitive and have concerns about their confidentiality. In that case, they are welcome to raise this with the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director of the College, who will discuss if / how disclosure can be minimised.

Students should avoid disclosing unnecessary personal information (e.g. medical conditions etc.) in their complaint unless they feel that it is relevant to the issues raised. Students must also avoid disclosing personal data of another person/s in their complaint unless they have been given permission by them to do so.

8. Who can make a Student Complaint?

The Student Complaints Procedure may be used by anyone who is, or was, an applicant to the College, and anyone who is, or was, an enrolled student at the OBC. This includes those accepted to study with the College or registered for its awards; those currently on an internal placement of employment and those who recently left the College. Please note that **Section 8** of this procedure outlines specific timescales within which complaints must be lodged.

Where issues of complaint affect a number of students, those students may submit a complaint as a group. Students submitting a group complaint are expected to show how they have been personally affected by the matter which is the subject of the complaint. In order to manage the progression of the complaint in such circumstances, the group must agree in writing that they nominate one student to act as the spokesperson for those students complaining. A copy of this agreement must be submitted alongside the complaint. In agreeing to act as spokesperson the student accepts responsibility for representing the views of the group and to act as key contact in relation to the complaint. Any complaints affecting a module or course and its delivery as a whole should be raised with the relevant Module Leader, Programme Leader or Head of Academics as soon as they arise.

The College will only accept a complaint from a student and not from someone else on the student's behalf, for example, from a parent or spouse. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director, a third party may submit a complaint on a student's behalf if the student provides written consent and a reason deemed acceptable.

Student complaints, which are received anonymously, are not normally accepted but may be accepted at the discretion of the College. However, students who wish to raise a concern anonymously should be aware that this could impede the investigation and communication. If a member of staff receives an anonymous complaint, he/she will be expected to seek advice from the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director as to how the complaint should be dealt with.

At any stage of the procedure, students have the right to be accompanied, supported or advised by another member of the College community, which is a person who is a currently an enrolled student of the College, or a member of the College staff. If a student is under 18 years of age a parent, guardian or other responsible adult must accompany them. At the time of writing/updating this policy, the College does not offer any courses or services to anyone under 18 years of age.

9. Types of Complaints that can be submitted using this Procedure

Complaints can be academic or non-academic in nature. Academic-related complaints may include alleged inadequacies in the provision of a programme of study, tuition, supervision, learning support materials, etc. Non-academic complaints normally relate to alleged inadequacies in other services provided to students by the College such as a failure to provide appropriate reasonable adjustments related to a disability, or failure to meet contractual or other legal obligations.

Please note that there is a separate Academic Appeals Procedure which enables students to request the review of a decision by an Assessor or Assessment Board regarding matters of student progression, assessment and awards.

There may be times when what is expressed as a complaint contains within it an academic appeal and vice versa. Where this is the case, the Head of Academics will determine whether a complaint or academic appeal should be reclassified (at whatever stage they may have reached). This decision will be made in consultation with the student and they will be advised of the alternative procedure which will be used to consider their case.

The College recognises that students may raise multiple issues which do not fall neatly into the category of either a complaint or academic appeal. In these circumstances, the student will be informed which issues will be considered under which procedure and they will be directed to the alternative procedure as appropriate to allow all issues to be considered. This may require one procedure to be suspended pending the completion of the other or alternatively, the College may, with the agreement of the student, decide to consider the matters together. Students will be advised of the effects, if any, of following two procedures at once, particularly where one procedure may be suspended until the other is completed.

Where there is significant overlap, the College may decide to consider matters together, if the student agrees to this. For example, if an appeal includes matters that could also be dealt with under other procedures, such as the Student Complaints Procedure, a joint investigation may be carried out. In such cases, the student will be informed where responsibility for the overall investigation lies and who will issue the final decision.

10. Types of Complaints that cannot be submitted using this Procedure

The Student Complaints Procedure cannot be used for any of the following matters, for which separate policies and procedures exist:

- Complaints by applicants about admissions decisions, where separate Admissions Procedures exist
- Matters relating to assessment of performance and issues of academic judgement, except where there is a complaint about a service provided which needs to be resolved before an academic appeal decision can be made.
- Matters relating to Fitness to Practise or Supported Study Procedures, where separate procedures exist
- Complaints which relate to whistleblowing, Freedom of Information or of personal harassment or bullying, where separate procedures exist

The following includes policies and procedures for the above types of complaints not covered by this policy:

- Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure
- Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure
- Fitness to Study & Practice Policy

11. Advice and Guidance

For independent, non-judgemental guidance students may find it helpful to ask the Student Council or Student Welfare on how to proceed with their intended complaint. If students have any questions about how the complaints process works, they can contact a member of the Senior Management Team at the College such as the Head of Academics, Head of Programmes, or Managing Director.

12. Timescales

To enable the College to investigate and resolve complaints in a timely manner, students should raise issues of complaint as soon as they occur and make reasonable attempts to resolve the matter informally at a local level. If the matter is not resolved and the student wishes to pursue a formal complaint, this should be raised no later than 3 months after a student has completed the year of study in which the complaint arose or within three months of the date of withdrawal, or beginning of an approved leave of absence from their programme of study, whichever is earlier. Student complaints received after this period will only be accepted at the discretion of the College and where there is good reason supported by evidence for late submission.

The College is committed to dealing with complaints as quickly as possible, and to complete the processing of a formal complaint and any associated review within 90 calendar days. In most cases the College intends to deal with the complaint well before the 90-day deadline has passed. Within that 90-calendar day timeframe, students must meet any College deadlines for the submission of documentation and attending meetings. There may occasionally be circumstances when the timeframe needs to be extended for different stages of the procedure for good reason, particularly if the complaint is complex, extensive, or was submitted at a time when key staff are away from the College. If this is the case, the student will be notified and regularly informed of progress. Please see **Appendix 3**.

The College defines a 'working day' as Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays and other days when the College is closed.

13. Procedures for Submitting a Complaint

Stage 1: Informal Immediate Local Resolution

- 1.1 The believes that a complaint should be addressed quickly. In order for this to happen, students are expected to attempt to resolve issues or concerns directly with the appropriate member of staff best able to deal with it as soon as possible. For example, this may be the Module Tutor, Programme Leader or Head of Academics for academic-related complaints or an appropriate member of staff or member of the Senior Management Team for non-academic complaints.
- 1.2 Informal resolution enables the College to resolve as quickly as possible concerns which are straightforward and require little or no investigation. Concerns raised at this stage can be handled by a face-to-face discussion in-person or virtual with the complainant or by asking an appropriate member of staff, or trained mediator, to help them deal with the matter. If the responsibility for the matter raised lies within the staff member's area of work, every attempt should be made to resolve the concern in consultation with the student where appropriate. If responsibility lies elsewhere, the staff member should liaise with the relevant area to facilitate swift resolution.
- 1.3 Staff should make every effort to resolve complaints informally but, in the interests of the student, may suggest use of the formal (Stage 2) complaints procedures if they regard the matter to be highly complex, believe that a solution cannot be reached within the required timeframe for informal resolution (10 working days), or that only part of the complaint can be resolved at this stage.
- 1.4 Where it is evident to the student or to staff that a concern will need to be considered at the formal stage of the procedures, the student should be directed promptly to Stage 2 of the Student Complaints Procedure.
- 1.5 Students must have tried to resolve the issue informally at a local level first wherever possible before moving to the formal stages of the procedure.
- 1.6 **Mediation:**
 - If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily through the normal procedure, mediation may be arranged.
 - Mediation is voluntary and will only take place with the agreement of both parties.
 - The Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director will be responsible for arranging mediation.
 - The mediator will be neutral to the dispute.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint Resolution

- 2.1. If the complaint is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the student at Stage 1, the student has the right to pursue a formal complaint by submitting a Student Complaints Form (please see Appendix 1) by email (sent to: headofacademics@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk or by post (addressed to: Students Complaints, The Head of Academics, Oxford Business College, 65 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2BQ). In an instance where the student feels that contacting the Head of Academics is inappropriate (e.g. if the complaint directly or indirectly involves the Head of Academics), the student should contact the Managing Director by email (sent to: director@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk or by post (addressed to: Students Complaints, The Managing Director, Oxford Business College, 65 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2BQ).
- 2.2. It is a requirement that the Student Complaints Form is completed so that the matter can be carefully managed; so that students may be precise about their concern(s), how they have attempted to resolve the matter informally at a local level, and what resolution they are seeking. Wherever possible, the form should be accompanied by evidence to support the issues of complaint. This may be for example, copies of relevant correspondence. Advice on how to complete the form can be obtained from Student Welfare or the Head of Academics.
- 2.3. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they raise all relevant issues and that they provide all the necessary information and supporting documentation at the point of submission. The Head of Academics and Student Welfare Officer may ask the student to provide further information or evidence and will set an appropriate time limit for this to be made available by the student.
- 2.4. Students should expect to receive an email acknowledgement to their formal complaint within 3 working days of receipt. If a student has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, they should contact headofacademics@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk to check that the complaint has been received.
- 2.5. Stage 2 of the procedures allows for the complaint to be investigated by an appointed Student Complaints Officer. The Student Complaints Officer will be appointed by the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director. Upon concluding their investigation, the Student Complaints Officer will make a recommendation to the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director on what action should be taken, normally within 1 calendar month of receiving the Student Complaint Form. They may recommend that, in the interests of the student, partially unresolved matters be considered at a Stage 3 Review.
- 2.6. The student will be provided with a written outcome of the conclusion of Stage 2. If the complaint is upheld, the student will be informed what action is to be taken, or any recommendations that have been made. If the complaint is partially upheld or is dismissed, the student will be informed of reason(s) for the decision.

- 2.7. In cases where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld (e.g. The College finds that some, or all, of the issues raised by the complainant are justified), the College may offer a range of compensations or actions to be put in place. In cases where a complainant accepts the settlement being offered by the College (i.e. financial payment, a written apology, further tuition etc), this acts as acceptance of the outcome of the complaint, and there is no further recourse to move to Stage Three. The complainant cannot accept the settlement the College offers, and then ask for the case to be subsequently reviewed.
- 2.8. In the case of financial settlement of a group student complaint, where the reason for awarding the settlement is partial refund of tuition fees, this will be awarded on a percentage basis (not a set fee) in order to best compensate all those involved (e.g. an international student and a home student who have paid different initial fees will be most equally compensated).
- 2.9. Students will also be advised on how they may proceed if they remain dissatisfied following Stage 2.

Stage 3: Formal Complaint Review

- 3.1. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student at Stage 2, the student has the right to have the complaint considered by a Student Complaints Review Panel. The request for a review will be on limited grounds that the student does not think the outcome of Stage 2 is reasonable because:
 - There were unresolved matters at the end of Stage 2, and which may need to be dealt with at a higher level within the College
 - New material evidence has now become available and which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process
 - There was procedural irregularity in how the College followed the process in Stage 2
- 3.2. If the student wishes a review to take place, they must present notice of this in writing to the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director. This should be sent by email or post within 10 working days from the date of the outcome of Stage 2. The student must include a statement explaining why they remain dissatisfied and on what grounds, and what the desired outcome of the complaint is. The request for a review will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.
- 3.3. It is not normally possible to introduce new grounds for complaint at this stage unless it relates to evidence that could not have been provided sooner.

- 3.4. The Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director will identify the membership of the Student Complaints Review Panel. The constitution of the Panel will be as follows:
- Chair (drawn from the Senior Management Team at the College)
 - Student representative
 - Member of the Academic Board
 - Chair of the Board of Governance or their nominee (non-voting)
 - A member of College staff appointed as note-taker/minutes
- 3.5. No members of the Student Complaints Review Panel should have a connection with, or will have previously advised, the student or be part of the College involved in the complaint.
- 3.6. The Head of Academics will make arrangement for the hearing of the Review Panel at the earliest opportunity. This will normally be within 20 working days. The College expects the student requesting the Review to attend the hearing and requires all parties to make reasonable efforts to find a mutually suitable date within the desired timeframe. In the event that the hearing date cannot be found within the desired timeframe or has to be delayed, all parties will be kept informed as to the reasons for this.
- 3.7. All papers presented to the Student Complaints Review Panel will also be provided to the student and the relevant members of the College staff to which the complaint relates.
- 3.8. The student will be invited to attend a hearing in the course of the review, as will any individual against whom the complaint is made. The student may be accompanied by a member of the College community if he or she so wishes. The student must confirm the name and status of the person accompanying them in writing to the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director no less than 4 working days before the Panel hearing. Students under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. At the time of writing/updating this policy and procedures the College does not accept student on any courses under 18 years of age.
- 3.9. On the basis that reasonable steps have been taken to find a mutually suitable date for the hearing, the College will not normally rearrange the date of a hearing due to the absence of the student. If the student is unable to attend, they may nominate a representative to attend on their behalf, providing that the representative is also a member of the College community. The Chair of the Student Complaints Review Panel will decide how the Panel will proceed with a hearing in the voluntary or unavoidable absence of the student and whether or not it will permit a proxy to be nominated to represent the complainant.

Consideration by the Student Complaints Review Panel

A quorum of the Student Complaints Review Panel will be two voting members including the Chair.

In the interest of natural justice, both the student requesting review and those responding to the complaint will normally be invited to be present at the hearing at the same time so that both parties will hear all of the evidence presented to the Panel and have the opportunity to comment on it.

The student may opt not to attend at the same time as the other parties and should confirm this preference in writing to the Head of Academics at: headofacademics@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk when they receive notification of the Review Panel date.

The College will normally expect that if the student is happy for all parties to be present that staff members will also agree to be present. However, the College recognises that this may not be reasonable in all cases and a member of staff as well as the student may request to be heard separately by the panel if they have particular grounds for making the request. The appropriateness of an invitation for all parties to be present at the same time is a matter on which the Chair may exercise discretion depending on the nature of the case.

Where agreed, a student's presence at a Panel may be through virtual means such as video or telephone conferencing. This should be arranged in advance.

The Chair will provide the Panel with an initial briefing before the student and those responding to the complaint join the meeting.

The student will be invited to present their case and to answer any questions of clarification. Representative(s) from the College will be invited to make an initial statement on behalf of the College responding to the complaint and will also be asked questions of clarification. If the student is accompanied by a member of the College, the representative may speak on behalf of or otherwise represent the interests of the student but may not give evidence except on matters of which he/she has direct knowledge.

The Panel may call any other members of staff or student it considers might assist it in reaching a decision. Any such persons shall be notified in advance of the hearing.

The Panel will review the evidence and reach a decision. The possible decisions arising from the hearing are:

- That the complaint is **upheld**
- That the complaint is **partially upheld**
- That the complaint is **dismissed**

There may be occasions in which the Panel cannot make its decision without re-convening at a subsequent date and time. In such cases, the Chair and officer of the Panel would do so in consultation with the student.

Considerations of the Panel will be confidential and, where necessary, its decision will be reached by ballot. The Chair will have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

The decision will be communicated to the complainant and all other relevant parties, including the Head of Academics, Principal or Managing Director, in writing (via email), normally within 5 working days. If this timescale is to be extended for any reason, the student will be advised in writing. This concludes the College's internal procedures.

14. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

If a student has completed the College's internal Student Complaints Procedure and they remain dissatisfied with the outcome, they may be able to forward their complaint for review to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), providing that it is eligible under the OIA's Rules.

Where a student has exhausted the College's internal complaints procedure, they will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter by the College (please see **Appendix 2**). If a student chooses to refer their complaint to the OIA for review, they must do so in writing to the OIA within 12 months of the receipt of their Completion of Procedures letter, using the Scheme Application form. The procedures and the form can be accessed from the OIA's website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>. For other alternatives please see **Appendix 4**.

15. Recording, Reporting and Organisational Learning

Acceptance of Minutes:

- During the hearing, minutes will be taken by an impartial member of staff.
- At the end of the hearing, the complainant and any other members involved in the hearing, and the members of the Panel, will be asked to read through and sign that they agree what has been written is a true representation of the events that occurred.
- In the case where one does not agree with the minutes, this must be communicated at this point, and any amendments made must be agreed upon and initialled by all signatories.
- There is no recourse for any party to dispute the minutes after these signatures (neither the complainant nor any member of the Review Panel can argue that the minutes are false once they have been signed).

The College will record student complaints in sufficient, proportionate detail for analysis and management reporting to allow the causes of complaints to be identified, addressed and, where appropriate, for training opportunities and improvements to be introduced.

On an annual basis, an anonymised report on the number and nature of formal student complaints considered and their outcomes will be presented to the Academic Board. An anonymised annual summary report of Stage 2 complaints will also be considered. This process will ensure appropriate monitoring of all complaints and related outcomes and is intended to facilitate learning from complaints.

The College will keep and dispose of records relating to student complaints in accordance with its Data Privacy Notice.

Appendix 1: Student Complaints Form

The completion and submission of this form initiates a formal investigation into your complaint.

You should only complete it if either (a) you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled informally or (b) you feel that the substance of the complaint is such that attempted informal resolution is inappropriate. All sections of the form should be completed in as much detail as possible.

- 1. About You** In the case of a group complaint, please attach details of all complainants on a separate sheet. We will not consider any student to be a member of a complaint without their written permission.

Full Name:

HUSID No.:

Programme of Study:

Year of Study:

Address for correspondence:

Telephone No:

Email:

2. About your Complaint

- a. Please set out the details of your complaint, including dates of incidents or events if appropriate, with copies of any relevant documents (e.g. emails and other correspondence that you wish to have considered). Such evidence should normally be contemporaneous and capable of verification. If you need more space, please continue on separate sheets of paper and attach them to the form.
- b. Please explain what steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally and attach copies of any relevant correspondence and the names of staff with whom you have raised the complaint. If you have not attempted to address your complaint informally, please provide the reason why.
- c. Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received at the informal stage (if the informal stage has been used).
- d. Please outline all evidence you wish to submit to support your case using the format below. Smaller items can be included in this form, or a link to where items can be found electronically can be listed. If you wish to submit in hard copy, please state 'hard copy given to (Head of Academics/ Managing Director)'

Date	Description of item of evidence	How does it support your complaint?	Where can it be found?

5. Resolution

Please indicate, without prejudice, what outcome or further action you are wanting in resolution of your complaint.

6. Declaration

I declare that the information given in this Form is true. I have consulted the relevant Procedure above that I wish my complaint to be considered as indicated on page one of this Form.

Signed:

Date:

Notes:

1. The College will have due regard towards maintaining confidentiality in relation to your complaint but, in order for it to be considered fully, the content will need to be disclosed to members of staff who are involved in putting the relevant Procedure into effect e.g. the relevant department as well as staff whose input may be required to respond to the issues you have raised e.g. the person to whom the complaint relates, Counsellor if involved etc. By signing the declaration above you are consenting to the disclosure and sharing of information relevant to the complaint within the College at all stages of the applicable Procedure.
2. If your complaint relates to the service or treatment you have received from an office or department outside the academic department, it will be forward to the head of that service provider for investigation for e.g. Head of Admissions etc.
3. The Student Complaints Procedure is only available for students applying to or enrolled on programmes of study at the College, inclusive of recently registered students for complaints concerning pre-graduation grievances (please note the submission timescales above). A complaint submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from a student. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted under this Procedure.

Appendix 2: Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter Template

Dear [Name of complainant],

Completion of Procedures Letter

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of Oxford Business College in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc** regarding [please describe] have been completed.

The issues that you raised in your *complaint / appeal etc** were [details]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc was / were**: [brief summary of the complaint etc].

The final decision of Oxford Business College is* [detail] because [reasons].

The procedures / regulations applied were*: [details and date as supplied to the OIA's electronic Regulations Bank].

Oxford Business College subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint / appeal etc** to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint you take to the OIA is eligible under its rules.

Should you decide to make a complaint to the OIA, your OIA Complaint Form **must be received by the OIA** within **12 months** of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA **on or before** [insert date - e.g. if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 9 July 2021, this date should be 9 July 2022].

[Include here any factors of which the College is aware which mean that it is particularly important for the student to bring the complaint promptly.]

You can fill in the OIA's complaint form online or download a copy from the OIA website. <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>. The OIA also publishes *An Introduction to the OIA Scheme for Students*, which can be downloaded from http://oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia_intro_leaflet_16pp.pdf. Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. **You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.**

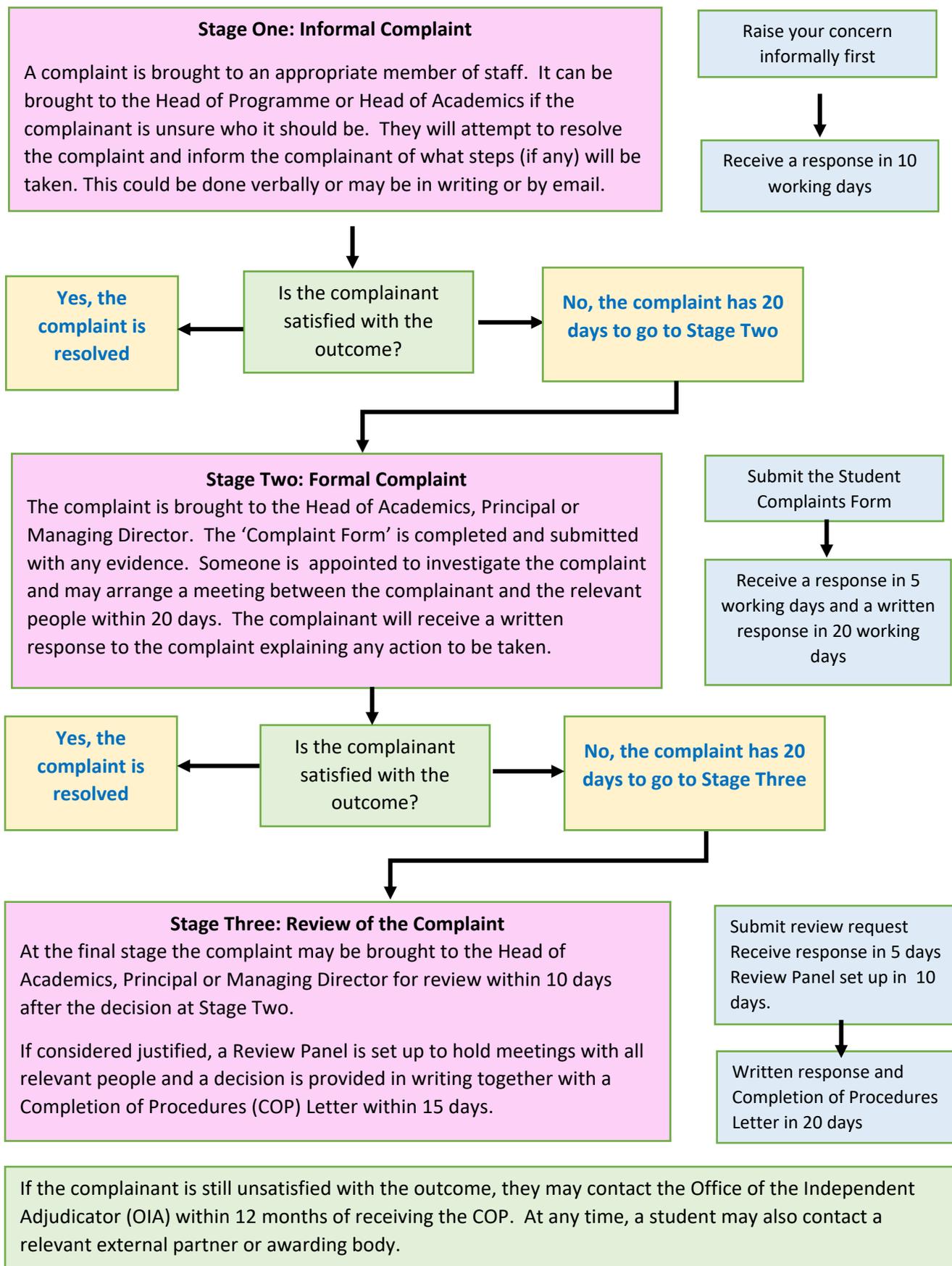
Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia.aspx>.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues that have been dealt with through the provider's internal procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Academics

Appendix 3: Flow Chart of Complaints Procedure and Time Frames



Appendix 4: Complaints to Pearson or other External Bodies

Following the outcome of the official internal complaints process, if a student is still unsatisfied, or feels the outcome was not fully justified, they are entitled to appeal externally to the following relevant external agencies:

- **Edexcel/ Pearson- academic complaints (in the case of courses where the outcome is a BTEC HNC or HND)**

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf

- **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for all students on Higher Education courses**

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>

- **Office for Students (OfS) for all students on Higher Education courses**

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/notifications-and-complaints/>

- **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**

www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint

Appendix 5: 8 Principles of the Good Practice Framework (OIA)

A good complaints process must include the following:

Accessibility

- Is open to anyone who is or was recently a registered student.
- Is easy to navigate for students.
- Gives students clear information about how to access advice and support.
- Allows students to appoint a representative.
- Is responsive to the needs of individuals.

Clarity

- Is well signposted so that students know which process to follow.
- Is easy to understand and gives clear information about time limits.
- Includes clear definitions of what constitutes a complaint.
- Includes effective record keeping.

Proportionality

- Is flexible where a student raises issues which fall under more than one process.
- Expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- Allows for the complaint to be resolved informally and as early as possible, including by mediation or conciliation where possible and appropriate.
- Consists of three stages:
 1. Early resolution at the local level
 2. Formal stage
 3. Review stage

Timeliness

- Includes time limits within which students are normally expected to submit complaints.
- Allows for the identification of complaints which require particularly swift action.
- Will normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal stage.

Fairness

- Ensures that decision-making staff are properly trained, resourced and supported, and able to approach each decision afresh.
- Allows each party an equal opportunity to present their case.
- Requires clear reasons to be given for decisions reached.
- Ensures that students are not disadvantaged as a result of bringing a complaint.

Independence

- Ensures that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest at all stages of interest at all stages of the process.

Confidentiality

- Ensures an appropriate level of confidentiality without disadvantage.

Improving the student experience

- Captures learning to ensure that:
 1. Decisions are made consistently.
 2. Decisions are made at the
 3. appropriate level.
 4. Appropriate action is taken on
 5. issues identified.
 6. Information gathered is used to improve services for students and the student experience.