

## Introduction

Problems can arise at any stage of your course and you may feel the need to raise a complaint about what you are experiencing. If you are to do this it helps to be clear about **what you are dissatisfied with** and **the outcome you would like**.

Address problems early on – don't let them grow. It is in everyone's interest to resolve issues quickly. It is a good idea to document what has gone wrong - record events and dates while you can still clearly remember them. If the issue affects a group of students ask everyone to write down their concerns individually.

The University of Brighton has a complaints procedure which needs to be followed. It is outlined below and can be found in more detail in your **Student Handbook** and online at **Student Central**.

At any point in the Complaints Procedure you can seek independent advice from the elected officers of the Students' Union or from the Students' Union Advice Centre.

### Stage 1 - INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Most complaints are resolved at this stage. Consider who the most appropriate person to discuss your complaint with is.

It may help to discuss the issue directly with the person involved. They may not be aware of there being a problem and can often sort out the issue quickly once it has been brought to their attention.

You could take the problem to your course rep if the problem relates to course delivery or support

and is likely to also affect others.

You may prefer to discuss the situation with your personal tutor, course leader or Head of School.

The Students' Union can help clarify with you the most appropriate step to take and support you when you do.

Discussion may involve talking with more than one of the above. Keep a record of all meetings – who they were with, what was discussed and outcomes or actions agreed upon.

### Stage 2 - FORMAL WRITTEN COMPLAINT

If you feel that despite discussion your complaint has not been resolved the next stage is to complete a **students' complaint form**. These are available from school offices or can be downloaded from student central and UBSU.net. You will need to provide information on

- 1 - The nature of the complaint (with dates and events) and how you have been affected.
- 2 - Evidence in support of the complaint.
- 3 - Actions you have taken to try and resolve the complaint with details of any meetings you have had.
- 4 - The outcome/resolution you are seeking.

This form should then be sent to your Head of School (Unless the Head of School or Students' Union is the subject of your complaint, in which case the forms should be sent to the Head of Student Services and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) respectively)

The Head of School then reviews the evidence, holds discussions and may arrange to meet with you to clarify the complaint. They will then make

a decision as to whether they consider there is reasonable justification for the complaint and any action that will be taken to remedy the situation.

If you are unhappy with the outcome and want to take your complaint further, move on to Stage 3.

### Stage 3 - STUDENTS COMPLAINTS PANEL

Within **15 working days** of receiving the conclusions from Stage 2 you should complete a **Stage 3 Complaints Form** (obtainable from your school office, student central and UBSU.net). This form should be submitted to your Dean of Faculty, who will arrange a **Students' Complaints Panel**. You can attend the panel (accompanied by a person of your choice) and will be able to question any person called to give evidence and address the panel yourself. The students' complaints panel will report to the Vice-Chancellor as to whether the complaint is justified and detail recommendations. The Vice-Chancellor will then ensure that any appropriate action is taken.

If you feel your complaint has not been handled properly at Stage 3 it is possible to refer the complaint to the **Clerk to the Board of Governors** for review by an independent person who is not a member of staff of the university. This is:

### Stage 4 – REFERRAL TO AN INDEPENDENT PERSON APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNERS

You must submit a letter giving the grounds for referral within **15 working days** of receiving the written confirmation of the conclusion of the

Students' Complaints Panel. The Independent Person will investigate the complaint and produce a written report to the Vice-Chancellor, who will write to you indicating what action is to be taken.

At completion of Stage 4, the Universities internal complaints procedures have come to an end. At this point the University will issue a '**Completion of Procedures Letter**'.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you may refer the matter to '**The Office of the Independent Adjudicator**'(OIA). This is an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. They will only consider complaints after the University's internal complaints procedures have been completed and applications need to be made within **three months** of the date of your Completion of Procedures Letter.

**This leaflet is only an outline of the University's Complaints Procedure and we would strongly recommend that you consult your Student Handbook for more detail and approach the Students' Union for support and advice.**

## Useful Contacts:

### Students' Union

Academic Adviser  
k.mayo@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 643532

Education Research Co-ordinator  
a.r.lewis@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 643328

Education and Equalities Sabbatical Officer  
s.u.v.p.education@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 643196

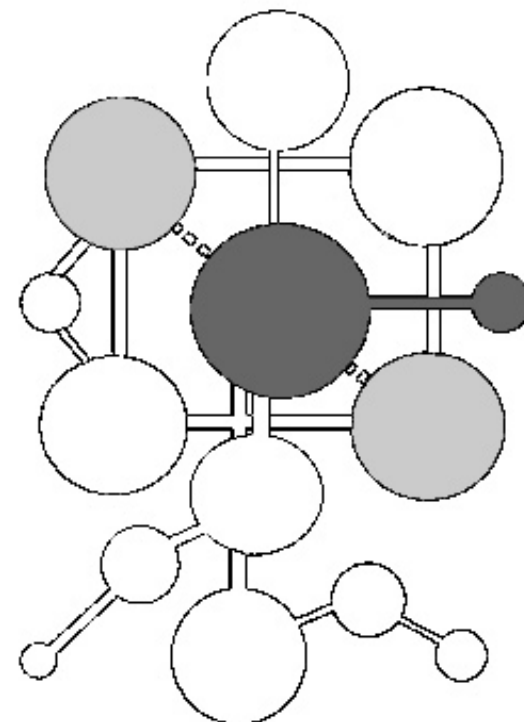
UBSU Student Advice Centre  
Room G33, Cockcroft Building  
s.u.advice@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 642876

University of Brighton  
Student Services Welfare  
studentservices@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 642895

Karen Jackson  
Head of Student Services  
k.l.jackson@brighton.ac.uk  
01273 642856

Office of the Independent Adjudicator  
www.oiahe.org.uk  
enquiries@oiahe.org.uk  
0118 959 9813

# Academic Complaints



Community  
Legal Service



student  
advice centre

university of brighton students' union