

## Student Complaints and Non-Academic Appeals Policy

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Next review</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>09/18</b>	<b>Minor errors</b>		<b>CM</b>	<b>July 2019</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>07/21</b>	<b>Revised external reference points</b>	<b>Changes made in line with trends in the UK HE Sector</b>	<b>Head of Quality Assurance</b>	<b>07/22</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>07/22</b>	<b>Minor changes</b>	<b>Planned review</b>	<b>Head of QA</b>	<b>07/24</b>

### External Reference Points

- The Complaints Policy provides practical guidelines on how Brit College will ensure that all student complaints are dealt fairly and according to the current policies relating to providers registered with the Office for Students
- It is developed based on the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals
- As far as possible, this policy references and reflects the good practice guidelines from the Office of Independent Adjudicators.

### Internal References

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Attendance, Retention and Support Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- Appeals Policy

## Table of Contents

<b>Quality Code.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Policy.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Complaints procedure .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stage1 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stage 2 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Stage 3 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OIA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Informal Complaints.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OIA.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Complaints Form .....</b>	<b>7</b>

## **Policy**

Every student has the right to make a complaint and academic appeal to ensure academic standards are maintained. All complaints and appeals will be taken seriously and treated with utmost confidentiality, fairness and promptness. Brit College will ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a result of lodging a complaint/appeal. Students can also lodge complaints/appeals collectively or through a Student Representative if they wish. In this case, there should be one nominated spokesperson that the College will communicate with.

Brit College seeks to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity and cooperates with students to reach an amicable resolution. Complaints/appeals are monitored and may be used to inform strategic decisions. The following procedures are applicable to all registered Brit College students. If you have left the College you can also use the procedures within 30 days of the end of registration.

## **Complaints procedure**

The following procedure is used to deal with a complaint from a student, including any complaint regarding educational matters. The aim is for problems to be resolved quickly, simply and fairly. It is hoped that most issues can be settled amicably at the first stage. To make a complaint, you must start at Stage 1 of the process.

### **Stage1**

Timescale: Outcome will be communicated within 2 weeks of the complaint being made. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale. Students are expected to try and resolve a complaint informally with the person involved. If you have a complaint, speak directly to the member of staff concerned. If you feel unable to approach that person, you should raise it with someone you feel comfortable with, such as your personal tutor or the Head of Student Engagement. The complaint should be raised within 1 month of the circumstance occurring so that it can be resolved quickly.

You are expected to give a clear explanation of the problem and the outcome that you are expecting. The staff member is expected to listen to your complaint and offer a solution that is practical and reasonable. You should engage in conversation to reach a mutual understanding of the problem and the agreed outcome.

Staff should keep record of the agreed outcome and you will be informed that the complaint has been resolved.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can progress to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 2**

Timescale: The complaint should be submitted within one month of the outcome from Stage 1. The outcome of Stage 2 will be communicated to you within 4 weeks of the complaint being received. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale.

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure, you may refer it to the Registrar as a formal complaint. This should be submitted in writing and include the following:

- The nature of your complaint;
- Any supporting evidence;
- Why the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint was unsatisfactory;
- What outcome you are seeking.

The Registrar will refer the complaint to the appropriate staff and ensure that an investigation is carried out which is fair and transparent. Other parties involved may be contacted if required. You will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at all stages.

After the investigation has been completed, you will receive a written response of the outcome.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can progress to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 3**

Timescale: The complaint should be submitted within one month of the outcome from Stage 2. The outcome of Stage 3 will be communicated to you within 4 weeks of the complaint being received. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale.

If you are not satisfied that the grievance has been dealt with satisfactorily, you may make a formal complaint to the Head of Quality. This should be made in writing and include the following:

- Why the outcome of the Stage 2 complaint was unsatisfactory;
- How the procedure of the Stage 2 complaint was procedurally incorrect and how this made a significant difference to the outcome of the complaint.

The Head of Quality will convene a Complaints Panel whereby each stage of the complaint will be reviewed to see how it was dealt with. You will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at all stages.

Once a decision is made, you will be given a written notice of the outcome. You will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter which confirms that the complaint has gone through all of Brit College's internal complaints procedures, and is now closed.

## **OIA**

If you are still dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome of a complaint after all internal procedures have been exhausted, you may refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body, external to the College, set up to review student complaints. Further information is available from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

## **Informal Complaints**

The College has developed an informal complaints procedure which seeks to formalise all complaints and then systematically analyse them and utilise it for our enhancement agenda. This procedure includes complaints covered under the College's student support responsibilities discussed in the Student Experience and Engagement Policy.

All informal complaints will be recorded on the attached form (appendix 1). Any form of informal complaint, whether for engagement purposes or complaints that learners would have put to the attention of management or staff and have elected to resolve them informally.

Once an informal complaint has been reported, the Registrar enters it onto the form anonymously and investigates the case. All the details of the complaint and how it was resolved will be included.

The Registrar will report these complaints on all committees on a regular basis, and periodically prepares a report showing trends and patterns of the complaints received.

## OIA

If you are still dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome of your academic appeal after all internal procedures have been exhausted, you may refer it to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body, external to the College, set up to review student complaints. Further information is available from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

## Appendix 1: Complaints Form

	Complaint logged by	Student Name and ID Number	Date and Time	Detail of complaint	Outcome
1				Extra sheet attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2				Extra sheet attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3				Extra sheet attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4				Extra sheet attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5				Extra sheet attached? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	