

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction Buckingham School of Setting Out Engineering Ltd (BSSE) prides itself on ensuring the quality of learning opportunities. Therefore, BSSE adheres to the UK Quality Code for Education and Learning to ensure that applicants and students can raise concerns and complaints that they feel need resolution. It is a fundamental principle of BSSE that no discrimination, harassment, or victimisation occurs against any applicant or student who raises a concern or complaint.

2. Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about a service, academic decision, or treatment.
- **Appeal:** A request to review a decision that has already been made.
- **Misconduct:** Unacceptable or improper behaviour by a student.
- **External Review:** A request to have an independent review of a complaint decision by an external body, such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

3. Scope This policy applies to all applicants, students, parents, guardians, and other third-party representatives of BSSE who wish to raise a complaint about the admissions process, learning experience, or conduct of staff or students.

4. Applicant Complaints

Informal Complaints Resolution Procedure:

- Applicants are encouraged to seek resolution informally by raising their concerns with the relevant person(s) involved before lodging a formal complaint.
- If the informal approach is ineffective, unsatisfactory, or not preferred by the applicant, they should escalate their concerns to the admissions team lead. All applicant complaints are handled impartially.
- If a resolution is not achieved or the applicant remains dissatisfied, they should proceed to the Formal Complaints Resolution Procedure.

Formal Complaints Resolution Procedure:

- An applicant wishing to make a formal complaint should complete the Complaints Form and send it by post or via email to the administration team within 30 days of the cause for complaint. The Complaints Form can be accessed from this policy. If the informal resolution route was pursued, causing the applicant to submit the Complaints Form beyond the 30-day period, this will be considered, and the complaint will proceed.
- The administration office will acknowledge receipt of the Complaint Form via phone, email, or letter within 7 working days.
- The administration will forward the Complaint Form to the Director or a nominated person not subject to the complaint. A decision will be made on whether the complaint should proceed. The applicant will be informed of the decision within 10 working days. If the complaint does not proceed, full disclosure of the reasons will be provided to the applicant. If the complaint proceeds, those subject to the complaint will be notified within 10 working days and will receive a copy of the Complaint Form.
- Those subject to the complaint will have 20 working days to provide a formal response.
- The applicant will receive the formal response and have 20 days to comment on its factual accuracy.
- The Director (unless the complaint is against them) and the Internal Quality Assurance team will decide on the complaint's standing and reach a resolution, which will be communicated in writing to both the applicant and the person subject to the complaint within 20 days of receiving the applicant's comments.

- If complaints are lodged against the Director or any member of the Internal Quality Assurance team, appropriate nominated personnel will investigate the complaint, reach a decision on its standing, and determine a resolution.
- If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

5. Student Complaints

Types of complaints or matters can include:

- **Outcome of assessed units and/or observations:** Complaints about academic judgement will be considered under the complaints procedure only to the extent that procedures were not followed correctly. Appeals regarding assessment results must be submitted through the Appeals Procedure.
- **Inadequate supervision**
- **Inadequate delivery of lectures/course of study:** Complaints can be raised if the delivery of the course did not adhere to the structure outlined in the documentation provided to students, such as handbooks.

Informal Complaints Resolution Procedure:

- Students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution by raising the issue with the relevant person(s) involved. Alternatively, a Student Representative may raise a concern on behalf of a student or group of students.
- If this approach is ineffective, not preferred, or unsatisfactory to the student, they should then raise their concerns with the Student Welfare Officer and Curriculum Manager for informal resolution. All student complaints are handled without bias.
- Where a resolution is not achieved or the student remains dissatisfied, they should pursue the matter through the Formal Complaints Resolution Procedure.

Formal Complaints Resolution Procedure:

- Students who wish to make a formal complaint should complete the Complaints Form and send it by post to Administration within 30 days of the occurrence of the cause for complaint. The Complaints Form can be obtained from the virtual learning platform and can be sent electronically if requested from the administration team.
- Notification of receipt of the Complaints Form will be given to the student within 7 working days via phone, email, or letter.
- Administration will forward the Complaints Form to the Director or a nominated person not subject to the complaint. It will then be decided if the complaint should proceed or not. The student will be informed of the decision within 10 working days.
- Those subject to the complaint will have 20 working days to provide a formal response.
- The student who made the complaint will be sent the formal response. The student will have 20 days to comment on the factual accuracy of the response.
- The Director (unless the complaint is against them) will, along with the Internal Quality Assurance team, decide on the standing of the complaint and reach a resolution. Communication will be made in writing within 20 days of receiving the student's comments.

6. Confidentiality All complaints and related records will be maintained with the utmost confidentiality and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will only be shared with individuals required to investigate or respond to the complaint. If the Student Representative Society is involved, permission will be sought from the complainants regarding the sharing of data (name and complaint). If permission is not granted, names will be anonymised.

7. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments Complaints forms can be made available in alternative formats, such as large print or braille, on request. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities to ensure they can engage with the complaints process on an equal basis.



8. Data Retention Complaints and all related records will be retained for a period of 6 years in line with best practices for record-keeping and data protection obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018.

9. Version Control and Review

- **Version:** 1.1
- **Last Updated:** December 2024
- **Next Review Date:** December 2025
- **Reviewed By:** Senior Leadership Team (SLT)