

# Code of Practice for Student Complaints and Appeals

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Governance and Compliance Office.	Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee.	5 October 2017.	Every three years.

Note: In exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the Chair of the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee, responsibilities assigned to Schools, Heads, of School, School Officers or School Committees in these Regulations may be assumed by the College, Head of College, College Officers or College Committees respectively, as appropriate.

# Code of Practice for Student Complaints and Appeals



PRIFYSGOL  
**BANGOR**  
UNIVERSITY

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## Introduction

1. This Code applies to all student complaints and appeals procedures operated by the University. This includes procedures for complaints and appeals relating to academic matters and processes that form part of other central and departmental procedures.
2. This Code must be read in conjunction with:
  - Student Complaints Procedure
  - Academic Appeals Procedure

## General Principles

3. The University's procedures to respond to student complaints and appeals are based on the following principles:

### The Procedures

- All procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals are clearly documented.
- The submission and outcome of complaints and appeals are formally recorded.
- Complaints and appeals procedures are non-discriminatory and unbiased.
- Complaints and appeals procedures ensure privacy and confidentiality.
- The aim is to resolve complaints and appeals as quickly as possible.
- Complaints should be addressed informally in the first instance, as close to their source as possible, and involving the individuals most directly concerned.
- Any disappointment with the eventual resolution should not be aggravated by the processes used to consider the complaint or appeal.
- Students who remain dissatisfied after a complaint or appeal has been considered by the University, and after a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued, may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

### Students' Rights and Responsibilities

- Every student has a right to complain or appeal against any service, academic or administrative procedure, perceived discrimination or harassment.
- Formal complaints should only be lodged and pursued if it has not been possible to resolve the issues informally.
- Complaints and appeals should not be made lightly or maliciously.

- Complaints and appeals should be made by individual students and pursued individually on a case-by-case basis. Where the issues raised affect a number of students, those students can submit a complaint or academic appeal as a group complaint or a group appeal.
- Complaints and appeals should normally be made by the student unless the student has authorised someone (for example, staff from the Students' Union) to act on their behalf.
- For any meeting or correspondence in connection with a complaint or appeal, students may be accompanied and/or represented (e.g. by the Students' Union, a personal tutor, a family member or a friend).
- Students have the right to receive reasons for decisions following consideration of a complaint or appeal and to be informed of any opportunity for further appeal.

### **Complaints**

4. The aim is to resolve complaints informally. Matters can often be resolved informally if they are raised in a timely and reasonable manner. If a student has concerns about any aspect of the course, teaching and learning facilities, or support services, the matters should be discussed in the first instance with a member of staff who is associated with delivering the service. Alternatively, the concerns may be discussed with the student's tutor or other appropriate member of staff.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the response following the initial informal process then the student should bring the concerns to the attention of the head of the relevant department (School or Central Service Department).
6. If the student is not satisfied with the response from the head of department a formal complaint can be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience).
7. A route is provided to appeal against the decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) on a complaint.
8. The aim is to ensure that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible. In the event of a delay at any stage, students must be kept informed in writing and must be given an estimated timescale for consideration of the complaint.

### **Appeals against the decisions of Boards of Examiners**

9. The University has a procedure for students to appeal against Boards of Examiners' decisions. Appeals must be based on defined grounds, and appeals which question the academic judgement of examiners are not allowed.
10. The University also has processes to appeal against decisions reached under other procedures (e.g. disciplinary procedures, the Academic Integrity procedure, and suitability for practice procedures).
11. Appeals against Boards of Examiners' decisions have a confirmation (verification) and appeals stage. Confirmation is a process by which students can check that:

- Published results are free of arithmetical or other errors of fact.
- The examiners were aware of exceptional personal circumstances reported by the student prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- The examiners were aware of defects or irregularities in arranging or conducting examinations/coursework and which might, in the student's opinion, have affected the marks.

12. Appeals are only allowed after the confirmation procedure has been completed. Appeals are considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) or nominee. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) or nominee will decide whether to reject the appeal or refer it to the Senate Appeals Panel.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Bangor University is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome from Bangor University, you may be able to ask the OIA to review your case. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and cannot look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed this procedure before you complain to the OIA. Bangor University will send you a letter called a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' when you have reached the end of these processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your complaint/appeal is not upheld, Bangor University will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your complaint/appeal is upheld or partly upheld you can still ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter from Bangor University if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

To bring a complaint to the OIA, you need to submit a completed OIA Complaint Form within 12 months of the date of Bangor University's final decision (usually the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter), and you will normally need to send the OIA your Completion of Procedures Letter.