Student Complaints Procedure

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PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

Date	Supersedes	Description of Change
27 August 2026	2019 Version 1.4	Full review of procedure.
1 February 2021	2019 Version 1.3	Minor changes to job titles.
1 February 2021	2019 Version 1.2	Minor amendments to timescales.
1 April 2020	2019 Version 1.1	To increase the availability of staff who may oversee the formal complaints procedure, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) has been included in this procedure.

Document Owner	Approved By	Date Approved	Review Frequency
Director of Student & Academic Services and Academic Registrar	Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee.	27 August 2026	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.

Student Complaints Procedure

PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

Regulatory alignment: OIA Good Practice Framework; Medr registration conditions (TER(W) Act 2022); Equality Act 2010; Welsh Language Standards.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Gall myfyrwyr ofyn am gynnal unrhyw gyfarfod neu ohebiaeth o dan y weithdrefn hon yn Gymraeg heb unrhyw gost. Cysylltwch â'r Tîm Gwaith Achos Myfyrwyr studentcases@bangor.ac.uk i drefnu. (Gweler adran 2.5.)

This document is available in Welsh. Students may request that any meeting or correspondence under this procedure be conducted in Welsh at no charge. Please contact the Student Casework Team studentcases@bangor.ac.uk to arrange. (See section 2.5.)

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PART A - Student Guide to This Procedure

What is this procedure?

This procedure explains what to do if you are unhappy with something the University has done or not done, or with the standard of a service provided by or on behalf of the University. A complaint might relate, for example, to the quality of teaching or another service, to facilities or learning resources, or to the University not following one of its own processes.

Some concerns are dealt with under other procedures. Appeals against Examination Board decisions are handled under the Academic Appeals Procedure; a challenge to an admissions decision under the Admissions Policy; and allegations that another student has breached the rules under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. If you raise something that belongs elsewhere, the Student Casework Team will tell you which procedure applies and help you take it forward.

Quick guide: the rights, the stages and timescales at a glance

Stage	What happens	Timescale
Stage 1 — Early Resolution	An Investigating Officer reviews the complaint and contacts you. You may be asked to meet informally. Minor matters may be resolved here.	Raise as soon as possible and at the latest within 3 months of the matter arising. Outcome normally within 20 working days.
Stage 2 — Formal Complaint	If the matter cannot be resolved at Stage 1, or you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you are able to escalate the matter for formal consideration. A Senior Investigating Officer is appointed to investigate your complaint.	Escalate within 10 working days of the Stage 1: Early Resolution outcome. Outcome normally within 20 working days.
Stage 3 — Review (Internal)	If you disagree with the outcome and you have grounds, a senior member of staff not previously involved reviews the decision under the University's Review of Decisions of the University Procedure. This is the final internal stage for complaints, not a rehearing of your complaint.	Request within 10 working days of the Stage 2: Formal Complaint outcome.

Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) review	If you remain dissatisfied after the final internal decision, you will receive a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter and may ask the OIA (the independent higher education ombudsman) to review your complaint. If you choose not to pursue an available review, you may request a CoP letter, which will explain that the University's internal procedures have been completed.	CoP letter normally within 20 working days after the final internal decision. OIA complaint within 12 months of the CoP letter.

Your key rights throughout this procedure

- You can raise a complaint without fear of reprisal - no student will be disadvantaged, academically or otherwise, for making a complaint in good faith.
- You will be told clearly how your complaint will be handled and under which procedure.
- Decisions are made on civil standard of proof - the balance of probabilities (what is more likely than not), based on a fair and impartial assessment of the available evidence.
- You will receive clear written reasons for the outcome at each formal stage.
- You may be accompanied at any meeting by a friend, relative or Students' Union representative; a Students' Union representative may speak on your behalf with your consent.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made if you are disabled, so that you can take part fully in the process.
- Your complaint will be handled confidentially, with information shared only with those who need it to deal with the matter.
- Everyone involved is expected to act with dignity and respect, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- You have the right to escalate to the next stage where you have grounds, and ultimately to ask the OIA to review your complaint once the University's internal procedures are complete.

Who can help you?

Support service	How they can help
Students' Union Advice Service	Free, independent and confidential advice and, where appropriate, representation at all stages. This is a good first port of call.

	Contact: academicadvice@undebbangor.com
Student Casework Team	Information about the procedure and administrative support; manages Formal Complaints and Reviews. Contact: studentcases@bangor.ac.uk
Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service	Emotional support throughout the process and support with reasonable adjustments to the procedure. Contact: wellbeingservices@bangor.ac.uk
Welsh Language support	Arrangements for Welsh-medium hearings and translation. Free of charge. Contact: studentcases@bangor.ac.uk
Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	Independent review once internal procedures are complete. Contact: www.oiahe.org.uk | 0118 959 9813

PART B - Full Student Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction and scope

1.1 Purpose

This procedure fulfils the Medr Condition: Complaints Procedures, as an ongoing condition of registration and condition of funding.

Bangor University's Student Complaints Procedure has been developed to reflect the framework of the Higher Education Ombudsman and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). It is based on *The Good Practice Framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals* and takes cognisance of the advice and guidance on concerns, complaints and appeals published by Quality Assurance Agency within the UK *Quality Code for Higher Education,* specifically Principle 12.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more Students about something a provider has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University. A complaint may relate to, but is not limited to:

- the quality and standard of service provided by the University, including teaching and learning provision;
- failure to provide a service as advertised or reasonably expected;
- unsuitable facilities or learning resources;
- failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative or academic process.

Bangor University recognises that central to this procedure is the University's responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students.

The Student Complaints Procedure should be read in conjunction with other University's statements and policies which might apply to the concern the Student wishes to raise, which includes but is not limited to Academic Appeals Procedure, the Dignity & Respect Policy, General Regulations for all Students, Student Code of Conduct, Code of Practice on Inclusive Provision for Disabled Students, Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy, Research Misconduct and Whistleblowing. Links to these and other related information can be found on the Academic Support webpages here: https://www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/index.php.en .

The University is committed to providing a high-quality service to our Students throughout their courses of study to graduation and beyond as part of the Bangor University community. The University actively encourages feedback on all aspects of the teaching and learning experience and other services provided by the University. However, there

may be occasions when the level of service received falls short of that which might reasonably be expected.

The aims of the Student Complaints Procedure are:

- to resolve complaints in a timely, effective and fair manner;
- to resolve complaints in the area in which they arise;
- to improve service delivery and the student experience.

Options for early resolution, such as mediation (facilitated discussion) (see section 5.3), should be considered wherever possible. A fair and thorough investigation of formal complaints will be undertaken when necessary.

This procedure explains what students can expect if they have a concern or complaint. The University:

- makes sure its policies on handling student concerns and complaints are clear
- aims to address issues quickly whenever possible
- uses a formal process if early resolution is unsuccessful
- provides solutions when concerns or complaints are found to be valid
- aims to abide by timelines for all processes set out in this policy.

The University is committed to providing an inclusive environment. No person (Student, Staff or visitor) shall be unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or natural origin, or nationality, gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, economic situation or offending background. No person shall be discriminated against or adversely affected for making a complaint.

1.2 Scope

The Student Complaints Procedure can be used by all Students of the University. Students on courses leading to awards of Bangor University but who are based at the campus of a partner organisation, must first complete the Student Complaint procedure for that organisation.

For the purposes of this procedure, a student is defined as anyone who has accepted a place at the University, is currently enrolled at the University, or is a past student of the University having completed or left a programme within 12 months of the complaint being submitted.

All complaints must normally be raised within three months of the concern arising. However, late complaints may be accepted where there is a good reason.

Former students may use the Student Complaints Procedure to raise a complaint about a matter that arose while they were a student, provided the complaint is normally submitted within three months of the matter arising.

What will not be dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure

Academic appeals or other matters that relate to Examination Board decisions. Appeals against Examination Board decisions are managed by the Student Casework Team and are dealt with under the Academic Appeals Procedure. Any complaint made under the Student Complaints Procedure which appears to be an academic appeal will be referred to the Student Casework Team for consideration. If you require further information about the procedure for academic appeals, please contact studentcases@bangor.ac.uk and the team will assist you.

A challenge to an admissions decision. This should be raised under Code 09: Policy and Code of Practice for Student Recruitment and Admissions (Admissions Policy) to headofadmissions@bangor.ac.uk.

Complaints about University Policies will not be accepted unless there are one or more elements to the policy that are evidently detrimental to many Students. Feedback on policies is welcome and should be sent to studentcases@bangor.ac.uk in the first instance. Feedback will be taken into account at the next policy review point.

Complaints about matters which have already or are under consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), a court or tribunal.

1.3 Definitions

Term	Meaning in this procedure
Complaint	A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more Students about something a provider has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.
Complainant	Complainant refers to the student (or group of students) who has raised a concern or complaint under this Procedure.
Early Resolution	Early resolution refers to the initial stage of the process where concerns are addressed promptly, informally, and locally, without the need for a formal investigation.
Formal Complaint	Formal Complaint refers to a complaint that has progressed beyond Early Resolution and requires a structured investigation under this procedure.
Review (of a decision)	Review refers to the consideration of whether a decision made under a procedure was reached in

Term	Meaning in this procedure
	accordance with the relevant regulations, policies and processes, and whether it was reasonable in light of the available evidence. A Review is not a rehearing of the original case, but an assessment of the decision-making process and outcome against the grounds for review, as set out in this procedure.
Completion of Procedures Letter	A Completion of Procedures letter is a formal letter issued by the University confirming either that the internal process has concluded or, where a student chooses not to pursue an available review, that the University's internal procedures were not completed. It provides information about the student's right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
Student	Student refers to any individual who has accepted an offer of a place, is currently enrolled, or has recently completed or withdrawn from a programme of study, as defined within the scope of this procedure.
Student Casework Team	Student Casework Team refers to the University team responsible for overseeing and administering this procedure and ensuring that it is applied consistently and fairly.
Investigating Officer / Student Casework Officer	Investigating Officer (or Student Casework Officer) refers to the member of staff responsible for investigating the case and making findings based on the available evidence.
Procedural defect / irregularity	Procedural defect / irregularity refers to a failure by the University to follow its own regulations, policies, or procedures, which may have had a material impact on the outcome.
Mediation	Mediation refers to a voluntary, facilitated process in which the parties involved seek to resolve a concern through structured discussion, supported by an impartial third party.
Group Complaint	Group Complaint refers to a complaint submitted collectively by more than one student in relation to

Term	Meaning in this procedure
	the same issue, where the group nominates a representative to act on their behalf.
Anonymous Complaint	Anonymous Complaint refers to a complaint submitted without the identity of the student being disclosed to the University.

2. General principles

2.1 Procedural fairness

All stages of this procedure will comply with the principles of natural justice:

- No decision-maker will have had prior involvement in investigating the case or have a conflict of interest.
- The Complainant will have a fair opportunity to present evidence and respond to the University's findings.
- The burden of proof rests with the Complainant.
- The University will reach its decision on the basis of a fair and impartial assessment of the available evidence.
- The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities; that is, whether it is more likely than not that the issues raised in the complaint are substantiated.
- Clear written reasons will be given for every decision, including any outcome.
- Where a complaint is upheld, the University will consider an appropriate and proportionate remedy.

2.2 Support and Representation

Students may seek support and guidance at any stage of the complaints process from the Students' Union which can provide independent advice and, where appropriate, support the Complainant throughout the formal complaints process.

Both the Complainant and any other students involved will be made aware of relevant internal and external support services. This includes consideration of potential barriers to engagement and the provision of reasonable adjustments at every stage of the process.

Complainants are entitled, at any meeting held as part of the complaints procedure, to be accompanied by one of the following:

- A friend or relative who has had no prior involvement in the matter under consideration. Their role is to provide moral support; they do not have an automatic right to speak on the student's behalf. Any such participation will be at the

University's discretion, having regard to factors such as proportionality, seriousness of the issue, and impact on the student.

- A representative of the Students' Union, who may support the student and, where appropriate, speak on their behalf with the student's consent.

This is in addition to any health professional or support worker who would normally accompany the student or who may attend, at the University's discretion, as part of reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and advice may be sought from the Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service where necessary.

The University does not normally permit legal representation within the complaints procedure. Any request for legal representation will be considered at the University's discretion.

2.3 Timeliness

The University acknowledges that the student complaints process can be very stressful for students and is committed to concluding complaints promptly. Target timescales are:

- **Stage 1 Early Resolution** and **Stage 2 Formal combined**: within 40 working days of the complaint being received.
- **Stage 3 Internal Review**: consideration within 20 working days of the student submitting a request for review.
- **Completion of Procedures letter**: within 20 working days after the final internal decision.

The University aims to complete the formal and review stages within the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's good practice benchmark of 90 calendar days.

Where a matter is complex, or there are changes in workload for either party that could not have previously been foreseen, timescales may be extended with the agreement of all parties.

International Students must make themselves aware of immigration implications should consideration of their complaint extend beyond their permission to stay. A Student would not typically be required to be physically present at the University for a complaint to be investigated, though participation in an investigatory online interview or other means may be necessary.

2.4 Reasonable adjustments

The University will make reasonable adjustments to any stage of this procedure to accommodate students with disabilities or other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Students who believe they need an adjustment should contact the Student Casework Team at the earliest opportunity. The University will make every effort

to accommodate the specific requirements of any student. A record of adjustments made will be kept.

As a general principle, casework meetings conducted under University procedures should not be audio or video recorded by students, staff, representatives, or attendees unless expressly authorised by the University in advance. This applies to both overt and covert recording. Full guidance around responding to requests to record a meeting, including the decision-making process, can be found in the Guidance for Recording of Student Casework Meetings, obtained from the Student Casework Team.

2.5 Welsh language

Cymraeg / Welsh
Gall unrhyw fyfyriwr ofyn am gynnal unrhyw gyfarfod, gwrandawiad, neu ohebiaeth o dan y weithdrefn hon yn gyfan gwbl neu'n rhannol yn y Gymraeg. Trefnir gwasanaethau cyfieithu gan Dîm Gwaith Achos Myfyrwyr y Brify
gol a byddant yn cael eu darparu am ddim. Dylai myfyrwyr hysbysu'r Tîm Gwaith Achos Myfyrwyr o leiaf 5 diwrnod gwaith cyn gwrandawiad wedi'i drefnu.

Any student may request that any meeting, hearing, or correspondence under this procedure be conducted wholly or partly in Welsh. Translation services will be arranged by the University's Student Casework Team and will be provided free of charge. Students should notify the Student Casework Team at least 5 working days before a scheduled hearing.

2.6 Confidentiality and data protection

Information about student complaints will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need it for the purpose of investigating the complaint. The University will process personal data in accordance with the UK GDPR and its Data Protection Policy. This may include making a confidential note of the matter on MyBangor.

Details of a complaint may be shared with individuals who need the information to administer, investigate, review, or respond to the complaint, including staff, students, witnesses, and third parties where appropriate.

Please refer to the University's Privacy Notices to understand how we process personal data, and our legal basis for doing so.

3. Responsibilities

It is important that students understand their role within this process, including the actions required of them, the expectations placed upon them, and the support available when preparing and submitting a review request.

3.1 Senate

The Senate is responsible for ensuring the Student Complaints Procedure is in line with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) Good Practice Framework.

3.2 Managers

PVC/Deans, Heads of School, Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers and Line Managers have a day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring all students and recent students of the University are supported in raising complaints about something the University has or has not done.

3.3 Students

Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and raising complaints in a timely manner and supported by appropriate evidence.

3.4 Consequences of Non-compliance

Failure to act in accordance with this policy or to comply with any arrangements put in place to receive, investigate, monitor and respond to a Student complaint will be considered a serious matter, and shall be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure for students and staff.

If a student has any concerns about a potential breach of this policy, a report of their concerns should be submitted initially and without delay to the Deputy Academic Registrar: Quality and Standards, who will allocate it to an appropriate member of staff, their line manager or Dean or Director, to investigate.

4. Types of Complaint

4.1 Where a complaint falls into one or more policy

If a Student raises a complaint or appeal which does not fall neatly into the category of either a complaint or an appeal, or if the concern contains issues of complaint and an appeal, the Student Casework Team will advise the Student which issues will be looked at under which procedure and in which order they will be considered. This will be irrespective of which procedure the Student has used to formally raise their concern.

A Student's concern may be managed under an alternative procedure if that is appropriate. The University may decide to consider all matters together particularly if, for example, the findings of a complaint are likely to influence an appeal decision. The Student will be advised of any implications of following two procedures at once, and the University may suspend one procedure pending the outcome of the other.

4.2 Where multiple complaints are received from an individual student

Where a Student raises multiple complaints which are linked by topic, or due to the complaints being submitted over a narrow period of time, the University may decide to consider all matters together.

The Complainant will be advised of any decision to consolidate complaints.

4.3 Third Party Complaints

The University expects Students to engage directly with the University when raising complaints. Complaints made by third parties on behalf of a Student will not usually be accepted unless there are valid reasons why a Student is not able to engage themselves.

4.4 Anonymous and confidential complaints

The Student Casework Officer (or their nominee) will not respond to anonymous complaints, but issues raised in anonymous complaints may be investigated if, in the University's reasonable view, having regard to factors such as proportionality, seriousness of the issue, and impact on the student, it is felt that such investigations would be justified. Factors considered include the seriousness, evidence available and safeguarding considerations. The University may also use anonymous complaints to help inform its practice. The University does however recognise that Students may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In such cases the Student Casework Officer (or their nominee) will try to resolve the issue without disclosing the Student's identity. It must be borne in mind that:

- It may be difficult to investigate complaints without revealing the identity of the Complainant.
- It may be possible to make preliminary investigations without revealing the identity of the Complainant but, if the issues raised are serious or the case is complex, the Complainant may need to be identified if the case is to be pursued further. In such instances the Student Casework Officer (or their nominee) will discuss the situation with the Complainant before the case proceeds.
- The person or department which is the subject of a complaint may recognise the Complainant because of the issues raised.

Students may also raise concerns internally about malpractice through the University's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

4.5 Group Complaints

Should a group of Students have a complaint, the Students can submit a collective complaint and nominate one Student as their representative in pursuing the complaint, provided that all Students provide their personal consent under the requirements of the Data Protection Act and confirm the accuracy of any evidence and information submitted to support their complaint. If a Student does not provide personal consent, they will not be included in the collective complaint investigation or resolution. When a complaint is submitted and investigated collectively, the group will receive a collective response. Outcomes for group complaints cannot be tailored for individual Students. Where appropriate, individual circumstances may be considered alongside collective outcomes. If a Student seeks an individual outcome, an individual complaint must be submitted.

In line with guidance from the OIA, the University does not accept petitions or complaints posted on social media as complaints under the Student Complaint Procedure. All concerns

must be submitted via the complaints process as outlined in this procedure. See the University's Student Social Media Policy for guidelines on sharing views on social media.

When investigating certain types of complaints, it may be that investigation can only be progressed if the Student or Students, and not solely their representative, participate in an investigatory meeting.

4.6 Complaints relating to behaviour by staff and students

Allegations that Students are in breach of the General Regulations for All Students, the Student Code of Conduct or the Dignity at Work and Study Policy will be referred to the Student Casework Team who shall proceed in line with the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Concerns around a staff member's behaviour should be raised promptly with an appropriate staff member within the School/Directorate (i.e. a Personal Tutor) to support, where possible and appropriate, an informal resolution. Where this is not appropriate and/or a Student remains dissatisfied with the informal resolution, they may raise a formal complaint by contacting the Student Casework Team at studentcases@bangor.ac.uk.

The complaint will be shared with Human Resources and the relevant Senior Manager in the School and/or Directorate with responsibility for responding to the complaint. The relevant Senior Manager will review and undertake any necessary investigations, with support from the University's Human Resources department, before providing a written outcome to the complaint. (Students should be aware that there is a separate Dignity at Work and Study Policy in place for staff. The professional expectations outlined within this policy do mirror those outlined in the Student Dignity and Respect policy.)

A complaint about an allegation of sexual misconduct and harassment by a student will be received in accordance with the Student Sexual and Domestic Violence Policy and/or the Student Harassment Policy. These complaints will be considered under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Further support for students involved in reporting or witnessing misconduct by staff or other students is available through the University's Sexual Misconduct Violence & Harassment Response Service. Managed by the Student Casework Team, the Service offers an initial response and signposts students to appropriate internal and external sources of support, while maintaining an impartial role.

4.7 Complaints about the Students' Union

Complaints relating to the Students' Union services, facilities, societies and staff should be raised with Bangor University's Students' Union, Undeb Bangor in the first instance; details of the Students' Union Complaint Procedure can be found on the Undeb Bangor website.

Once a complaint investigation has been concluded by the Students' Union, if a Student believes that the Students' Union has not followed its own procedures or acted within its agreed policies they may escalate the complaint to the University within 20 working days of receiving the written outcome from Undeb Bangor by sending an email to

studentcases@bangor.ac.uk. A complaint will be accepted if it meets the grounds and will be allocated to a Casework Manager to carry out a review.

4.8 Frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints

The University reserves the right, having regard to factors such as proportionality, seriousness of the issue, and impact on the student, to decline to investigate a complaint at any stage of the procedure if it considers that the complaint is being presented in an unreasonable or unfair way or is having a negative impact on University staff. The Student Casework Officer may ask the student to present their complaint, and engage in the process, in a more reasonable manner.

Should the Student Casework Officer (or their nominee) determine that a complaint is something that a fair minded person would consider to be trivial, if it is being pursued in such a way that it is having a seriously negative effect on staff or the University, or if the Student is seeking a remedy that lacks any serious purpose or value the complaint will be closed and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken if the Student is found to have breached the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

5. Complaints Process

5.1 Overview

The Student Complaints Procedure is intended to provide a streamlined process with a focus on local resolution. Students will normally be expected to complete each internal stage before progressing to the next, where they have grounds. The University's Student Complaints Procedure has three internal stages:

- Early Resolution
- Formal
- Internal Review

Early Resolution is the stage where most concerns should be resolved swiftly and effectively, at the point at which a complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible. Early Resolution can be used for difficult interpersonal matters where early resolution strategies such as mediation may be beneficial.

Formal Complaints are investigated by a Student Casework Officer when a Student wishes to escalate their complaint.

A Complainant may request a review of the finding reached at Stage 2. Stage 3 is conducted under the University's Review of Decisions of the University Procedure and is the final internal challenge stage for complaints; it is not an additional fourth stage. Once that internal review is complete, a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued and a dissatisfied Complainant may refer the matter to the OIA.

5.2 Stage 1 Early Resolution

The University actively encourages Students to raise any low level concerns initially by talking to a member of the University community. That could be their Programme team, Personal Tutor or another appropriate member of staff, or the Student Course Representative or they may seek independent advice from the Students' Union by email at academicadvice@undebbangor.com. Low level concerns could be, but are not limited to:

- Access to a workspace
- Confirmation of deadlines
- Options available in the University eateries
- Securing letters for Council Tax purposes

More serious concerns should be discussed in the first instance with the member of staff who is associated with delivering the service (e.g. Programme Lead, Module Organiser, Head of School, or other service). Alternatively, the concerns can be discussed with the Personal Tutor or Senior Tutor who can signpost to the relevant member of staff. The concerns should be reported in writing as soon as possible. It is expected that the person receiving the complaint will respond within 10 working days, where practicably possible. Information on making a complaint can be accessed through contacting the Student Casework Team.

Students are encouraged to resolve their concerns independently utilising the support services that the University offers.

Students will be expected to engage personally with the University when raising a complaint using their University email account. If a student raises a complaint after they have left the University, they will be required to verify their identity.

Early Resolution is designed to address concerns informally, locally and expediently. The Student may be contacted to determine more details about their case or may ask a relevant member of staff to work with the Student directly.

The response to the Student must be supported by a written outcome which will be sent by email. If mediation is required, appropriate and available at the Early Resolution stage, this may be explored in liaison with the Student Casework Team.

The aim at the Early Resolution stage is to reach a mutually agreeable outcome before the concern escalates to the Formal stage. Examples of how the University may deal with Student concerns at Early Resolution could be:

- Being empathetic and understanding
- Apologising where it is appropriate to do so
- Actively listening to the Student voice
- Clarifying reasons why decisions have been made
- Suggesting solutions
- Consideration of mediation where appropriate

In exceptional circumstances, complaints may be dealt with at the Formal Complaint stage without going through Early Resolution. A University Deputy Academic Registrar will decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to start a complaint at the Formal Complaint stage. This decision is final.

The University is committed to trying to resolve concerns to a mutually beneficial outcome. The University acknowledges that sometimes the outcome for the Student may not always be the outcome anticipated but the University will endeavour to provide a rationale for its decision-making. A Student may progress their complaint to the Formal Stage if they believe:

- the Early Resolution process has not been followed correctly
- there is evidence now available that was not available previously; or
- if they are not satisfied with the internal/early resolution response.

Students can escalate the complaint to a Formal Complaint through the Student Casework Helpdesk.

5.3 Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process in which an impartial, trained mediator helps those involved in a complaint to understand each other's perspectives and to try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution. The parties to the dispute, not the mediator, decide whether the matter can be resolved and on what terms.

Mediation may be requested by the student or proposed by the University at any stage, either before a complaint is submitted or during any stage of this Procedure. It will only proceed where all parties agree to take part, and any party may decline to enter into, or withdraw from, mediation at any time without this counting against them in the handling of the complaint. Mediation will not be appropriate in all cases; for example, it will not normally be suitable for reports of harassment or of student-on-student or staff-on-student misconduct, which will be handled under the relevant procedure.

Mediators will be impartial and appropriately trained or accredited, and may be drawn from a pool of trained internal mediators or, where the circumstances make it appropriate, an external independent mediator.

Where mediation is entered into during the formal stages of this Procedure, the relevant timescales will be suspended for the period of the mediation and revised timescales will be agreed with the parties. The progress of the complaint will resume once the mediation has concluded.

Mediation is confidential. Discussions held during mediation will not be disclosed outside the process or relied upon in any subsequent stage of this Procedure, and no record of the content of the mediation will be held on the Student's file. This does not affect the University's obligations where safeguarding, legal, or regulatory duties require disclosure.

Any resolution reached through mediation is reached by agreement of the parties and is not imposed by the mediator. Where a proposed resolution requires approval, the Student Casework Team will refer it to the relevant Officer for approval on behalf of the University and to the student for agreement. The Student should confirm their agreement within 10 working days; if no response is received within this period, it will be taken that the proposed resolution is not agreed.

Where mediation does not result in an agreed resolution, or either party withdraws, the complaint will continue to be considered under the relevant stage of this Procedure. Entering into mediation does not remove the Student's right to pursue their complaint through the formal and review stages, nor their right, following the final internal decision, to receive a Completion of Procedures letter, which the University aims to issue within 20 working days, and to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). A student who chooses not to pursue an available review (or does not meet the requirements for one) may request a CoP letter; the letter will explain that the University's internal procedures were not exhausted but are deemed completed.

5.4 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

Any complaint escalated to the Formal stage will be initially assessed by the Student Casework Team. The initial assessment will involve checking that the complaint has been submitted within the published timelines, using the right procedure, in the correct format and with all stated evidence submitted. This initial assessment (triage) will result in one of the following outcomes being communicated to the student within 5 working days of receipt of a complaint for consideration at this stage:

- Referral to a different procedure (for example to the Academic Appeals process).
- Referral to Early Resolution (for example if this stage has not been attempted).
- Referral to mediation (for example where this will more likely result in swift and mutual agreement) and can be requested by the Student or the University.
- Referral to formal investigation by a Student Casework Officer (or their designated nominee).
- Rejection of the complaint (for example due to lateness of submission or the grounds for escalation have not been met).

The Stage 2 - Formal Complaint does not allow for additional complaints to be added that have not previously been raised at the Stage 1 - Early Resolution.

If the complaint is rejected, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter within 20 working days after the final internal decision and the matter will be deemed closed. The University will also give the Student information about the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

If a complaint is deemed to be eligible for further investigation as a Formal Complaint, it will be allocated to a Student Casework Officer (or nominee) who has had no previous

involvement in the matter to investigate. Where the Student Casework Team deems it appropriate, the University may elect an external expert to act as the Casework Officer.

The student will be told who the assigned Student Casework Officer is and how long the investigation is expected to take. The Formal Stage of the University's Student Complaints Procedure should be concluded within 20 working days of the complaint being deemed eligible for investigation.

The Student Casework Officer who has been allocated the complaint may contact the Student, either face to face or by telephone, MS Teams or other remote method, to confirm the purpose and scope of their investigation in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes. Following any communication, the allocated staff member will confirm the details of the discussion in a written communication to the Student.

The student will normally be offered the opportunity to meet with the Student Casework Officer to discuss their complaint. Participation in such a meeting is entirely optional, and the Student is not required to engage with the Investigating Officer in this way. Where a meeting is arranged, it may take place either in person or by virtual means (for example, via an online meeting platform), depending on the Student's preference and availability. The University will make reasonable efforts to accommodate the Student's preferred format wherever practicable.

The Student Casework Officer will consider the evidence provided by the Student and may also seek additional relevant information where necessary to ensure a fair and thorough investigation. This may include requesting information from relevant staff and/or other students, other relevant evidence and/or reviewing University records. When making a decision, the Student Casework Officer will look at any solutions suggested during Early Resolution and decide if they were reasonable given the situation.
The Investigating Officer will ensure that the decision is based on all relevant and available evidence.

Where particular details of the Formal Complaint remain unclear, the Student Casework Officer may ask the student to clarify further and/or produce additional evidence. The Student Casework Officer will recommend the outcome(s) of the Formal Complaint following their assessment of available evidence. Decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities, based on an impartial assessment of the available evidence, and with clear reasons provided to support the outcome.

The Student Casework Officer will write a report ('Report') with their findings and any recommendations for presentation to the Formal Complaints Panel.

5.4.1 Formal Complaints Panel

The Formal Complaints Panel considers complaints which have been escalated from or have exhausted the Early Resolution Stage. The purpose of the Formal Complaints Panel is to allow the formal investigation stage to be carried out by a specially constituted Panel

where appropriate. The main aim of this Panel is to resolve complaints quickly, where possible, if the Panel is of the view that an extended investigation is not necessary.

The Formal Complaints Panel is responsible for determining whether it has sufficient information to deal fairly, reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.

This Panel may be scheduled to meet ad hoc to review Formal Complaints. Meetings will normally take place online.

5.4.2 Responsibilities of the Formal Complaints Panel

Following investigation of a complaint by a Student Casework Officer, complaints case summaries and recommendations will be presented by members of the Student Casework Team to the Panel; this Panel will confirm and/or challenge these as appropriate.

The Panel will provide a decision, and the reasons for that decision, which will form the basis of the Student Casework Team's Outcome Report to the student.

Decisions of this Panel must be reached by majority. The quorum for the Panel is three members.

The Formal Complaint Panel is comprised of the following members who have not been involved in any prior stage of this process:

- Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality and Standards) (Chair)
- Deputy Academic Registrar (Administration and Business Support) (Vice Chair)
- One other Registry Director
- A Director of Education and Student Experience
- Registry Manager: Student Casework
- Member of Student Casework Team (Minuting Secretary)

The Formal Complaints Panel may decide:

a. there is insufficient information on which to reach a decision, and to request additional information; or
b. the complaint is inappropriate for consideration by the Panel as it requires further investigation and therefore should be referred back for investigation by a Student Casework Officer (or delegate); or
c. the complaint has not been appropriately responded to at the informal stage and should be referred to the appropriate Head of Service for resolution; or
d. the complaint has already received an appropriate response, and no further action will be taken; or
e. whether the complaint should be upheld (in part or full) or rejected; and if so
f. what remedy is appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances of any aspect of the complaint that has been upheld.

This Panel ensures that accurate minutes of the meeting are taken. The Student Casework Team will be responsible for the dissemination of the minutes to Panel members, and for ensuring that any actions resulting from the meeting have been carried out.

The Student Casework Team will write to the Student with the outcome of the Formal Complaint, normally no later than 20 working days from receiving the complaint, explaining the reasons for the outcome and providing a summary of evidence used in the decision-making process.

Where a student has received an outcome at the Formal Complaint stage and is not eligible to request a Review, or chooses not to pursue an available Review within the specified timeframe, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. The University aims to issue the letter within 20 working days after the final internal decision. If the student chooses not to pursue an available Review, the letter will explain that the University's internal procedures were not completed. The letter will provide details of how to refer the matter to the OIA.

6. Stage 3 — Review

6.1 Grounds

A student may request a review of the outcome of a Stage 2 Investigation on the basis of one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity: the process described and applied to reach the original decision was not properly followed.
- Unreasonableness: the decision and/or the remedy was unreasonable or not supported by the facts of the case.
- New information or evidence: there is new material information or evidence that could make a difference to the outcome which could not have reasonably been made available at the time the original case was considered.

Dissatisfaction with the outcome alone, without an identified ground, is not sufficient for a review to proceed.

6.2 Submission

Students must submit a request for review of a decision taken under Stage 2 of this procedure to the Student Casework Team within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

The request will be considered under the University's Review of Decisions of the University Procedure. That process constitutes Stage 3 and the final internal challenge stage for complaints; it is not a separate appeal or an additional fourth stage.

7. Records, monitoring, and learning

7.1 Record-keeping

Records of complaints and their outcomes will be maintained securely by the Student Casework Team in accordance with the University's Record and Data Retention Schedule. Outcome records will normally be held on the Student's file for six years from the date of the final decision.

7.2 Monitoring and equality analysis

The University will monitor the operation of this procedure annually, disaggregating data by protected characteristics in accordance with its Public Sector Equality Duty obligations and Medr's equality of opportunity conditions. The results of monitoring will be reported to Academic Quality and Standards Committee, Education and Student Experience Committee, Senate, the Executive and University Council and used to identify any systemic issues or training needs.

7.3 Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least every three years, and in any event following:

- a change to Medr registration conditions (a review must be triggered by any update to Medr's registered provider conditions, with effect from 1 August 2026);
- a change in relevant legislation or OIA guidance;
- a significant pattern of cases indicating a systemic issue;
- any OIA decision that identifies a learning point for this procedure.

8. Related policies and procedures

Document	Relationship to this procedure
Academic Integrity Procedure	Governs academic misconduct.
Fitness to Practise Procedure	Applies to students on professionally regulated programmes; may follow or run alongside this procedure.
Harassment and Discrimination Policy	Conduct involving harassment or discrimination is managed under this procedure and informed by the Policy.
Staff Disciplinary Procedure	Applies where a member of staff is involved in alleged misconduct.

Student Disciplinary Procedure	Governs non-academic misconduct.
Support for Study Procedure	May be more appropriate than disciplinary action where conduct is linked to a health or disability issue.
Student Code of Conduct	Sets out expected standards of behaviour; must be read alongside this procedure.
Data Protection Policy	Governs the handling of personal data throughout the complaints process.
Welsh Language Policy	Underpins the language rights set out in section 2.5.