



MASTER THE GLOBAL
SPORTS INDUSTRY



UCFB|GIS*

Complaints Policy

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Version Number:	V2.0
Approval Date:	16 November 2022
Approved By:	Academic Board
Date of Commencement:	16 November 2022
Date of Last Review:	
Date for Next Review:	01 May 2023

*UCFB and GIS are trading names of University Campus of Football Business Limited

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document how UCFB|GIS responds to complaints against the services provided in the delivery of higher education and reflects the requirements of UEL and BNU in respect of the awards validated by those universities.
- 1.2. The activity referred to in this document relates to all students registered with UCFB and GIS.
- 1.3. Full details of the process relating to complaints by our validating partners Buckinghamshire New University (“BNU”) or the University of East London (“UEL”) are available at their relevant websites.
- 1.4. Students will not be disadvantaged because of the making of an academic appeal in good faith under this Policy and Procedure.
- 1.5. Whilst it is recognised that complaints raised by its students, will be the primary originator of complaints, the principles and steps presented below will also apply to complaints submitted by other stakeholders and interested parties.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. In this Policy the following definition applies:
 - 2.1.1. **Complaint:** “An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the standard of service provided by an institution, including dissatisfaction at actions or a lack of actions taken by the institution.” (based on The Good Practice Framework, OIAHE, 2016)

A complaint may relate to many areas of UCFB|GIS operation including: programme content and/or delivery, learning and teaching delivery (including resources) and/or quality, administrative services, public information, procedures and processes and/or the conduct of a member or members of staff or other students .
- 2.2. This is different from an academic appeal which covers decisions regarding progress, assessment and awards and related processes. Students who disagree with academic decisions must bring an academic appeal under UCFB’s Appeals Procedure. For information on this, please see the [UCFB Appeals Policy](#).
- 2.3. A reference to any post holder within UCFB|GIS in this Policy should also be taken as referring to any person (including any external party) to whom the responsibilities of that role may have been delegated.
- 2.4. A reference to this/the Policy refers to this document

3. Scope

- 3.1. This Policy applies to all students currently registered and studying at UCFB|GIS, both at Undergraduate or Postgraduate level, and attending any UCFB|GIS campus or via distance learning including those on interruption or suspension of studies or those who have been withdrawn or terminated their studies for any other reason or completed their studies as long as they have invoked this procedure within **1 month**

of the incident that the complaint relates to (and no later than 3 months for BNU registered students).

- 3.2. This Procedure applies to all concerns and complaints relating to the delivery of all educational and ancillary services to students at UCFB|GIS
- 3.3. This Policy reflects the detailed procedures of the [UEL general regulations](#), and also [BNU expectations](#), as applicable to UCFB|GIS students.
- 3.4. A student is entitled to be accompanied and supported by a member of UCFB|GIS through this Procedure including any attendance at meetings. Only in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement may a student be accompanied by someone external to UCFB|GIS. The role of the person supporting is to offer advice and not to formally represent the student or act as advocate unless specifically agreed as a reasonable adjustment under paragraph 4.
- 3.5. The UCFB Academic Quality Team can advise on the application and processing of any complaints at: quality@ucfb.com

4. Equality Issues and Reasonable Adjustments.

- 4.1. This policy is neutral in terms of equality-related issues.
- 4.2. Students may raise issues which may also be covered by different UCFB|GIS policies. UCFB|GIS have discretion to decide how to progress matters in the best interests of all parties including deciding which matter and procedure should take precedence or whether interlinked matters can be considered under one or more of its policies.
- 4.3. In the case of a student with additional needs, reasonable adjustments can be made in order to avoid them being treated less favourably. This may include holding meetings remotely. Any student who wishes to seek reasonable adjustments should discuss their needs with UCFB|GIS and it will seek to refer the student to appropriate support or put in place appropriate adjustments.

5. Group Complaints

- 5.1. If a number of students wish to submit a group complaint they will be required to nominate one student to act as a spokesperson and to lead any communication with UCFB|GIS under this Policy. The student complaint form must be completed and signed by that nominated student and a document attached containing the names, details and signatures of the other students who are seeking to support the complaint. The evidence submitted to support the complaint must be agreed by the group of students and provided with the complaint form. No additional evidence will be accepted after submission of the complaint form unless there are exceptional grounds.
- 5.2. In circumstances where UCFB|GIS receives multiple complaints from students affected by the same issue(s) and where there are common characteristics or similarities in the subject matter of the complaints then it has the discretion to combine those complaints and deal with as a group complaint.
- 5.3. UCFB|GIS will not accept an individual Complaint from a student about any matter where they are already a party to a group complaint.

6. Complaints against staff

- 6.1. Complaints by students about staff must be handled by an individual independent of the staff member involved, to avoid a conflict of interest.
- 6.2. UCFB|GIS have a duty to ensure all staff are treated fairly throughout this Procedure. Therefore, any staff member has the right to be supported through this policy, and to be advised of any complaint made against them at the outset and to have access to any evidence presented in support of any complaint as well as the right to reply to that complaint at any stage of this policy.
- 6.3. If a complaint made against a staff member under this policy is of a disciplinary nature or raises allegation which are better suited to a disciplinary investigation then UCFB|GIS may decide that this policy is suspended until the disciplinary matter has been concluded. If a case is considered sufficiently serious or is proven against a member of staff this will be referred to UCFB|GIS' human resources team to decide whether further investigation should take place under its human resources policies.
- 6.4. Where a complaint refers to a member of staff, the outcome of the complaint and its reasoning will be shared with all parties concerned and the line managers of the member of staff.

7. Complaints made by a third party on behalf of a student

- 7.1. UCFB|GIS would always encourage a student who wishes to make a complaint to do so directly with UCFB|GIS. UCFB|GIS cannot accept complaints made by a third party on behalf of a student unless a signed statement/consent is provided by the Student along with the complaint. This includes complaints made by a parent, spouse, guardian, or partner of a student.
- 7.2. UCFB|GIS will not accept a complaint made by a third party on behalf of a student where the student has already made a complaint on the same subject matter.

8. UCFB|GIS approach

- 8.1. UCFB|GIS is committed to providing our students with a high-quality educational experience and to ensuring that students have a full opportunity to raise, individually or collectively, matters of concern. Where matters of concern are raised, UCFB|GIS aims to respond proportionately, fairly and in a timely matter.
- 8.2. UCFB|GIS anticipate that general comments and concerns are raised and resolved at the point of issue where appropriate. Comments are also received, and responded to, via the student voice and feedback mechanisms.
- 8.3. UCFB|GIS reviews complaints made to it by students in order to support the ongoing enhancement of the student experience. Data relating to complaints made will be reviewed annually by Academic Board or one of its sub-committees. All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and will be properly investigated. The act of making a complaint will not be held against any student in respect of their progress, studies or their student experience.

- 8.4. This Procedure is intended to be clear, transparent accessible and fair to all parties. UFCB|GIS will ensure any students who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are not treated less favourably when accessing this Procedure.
- 8.5. Information regarding a complaint will only be released to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to a complaint. To ensure fairness, individuals named in a complaint will be made aware of the allegations to ensure they have a proper opportunity to respond.
- 8.6. In the event that the confidentiality of any claimant is breached by any member of staff or student UFCB|GIS reserves the right to initiate disciplinary action under its Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies.
- 8.7. UFCB|GIS will work to published deadlines and where this might not be possible a student will be kept informed and a revised deadline provided. The Procedure will normally be completed within the 90 days expected under the OIA Good Practice Framework.

9. Stages in raising a complaint

- 9.1. Before making a complaint a student is expected to take all reasonable steps to address their concerns informally before submitting a complaint. Where problems arise, all parties are encouraged to seek a resolution as soon as possible, for example, directly raising any dissatisfaction with the relevant staff member or course representative. In the event that their concerns cannot be resolved all BNU and UEL registered students are able to engage with the Stage One – Early Resolution process.
- 9.2. **Stage One – Early Resolution (Informal Complaint)**
 - 9.2.1. Complaints should normally be raised within **one calendar month** of the event (or final event) which has given rise to the complaint. (Note that BNU permits informal complaints to be raised within **three months** of the incident).
 - 9.2.2. The first stage in raising a complaint is an informal discussion of the matter. The complainant should discuss the issue with the persons/s concerned as soon as possible. Alternatively, they should seek to speak to the Resolutions Officer to support them with early resolution. The Resolutions Officer can be contacted via: Complaints@ucfb.com. In both instances, UFCB|GIS staff will keep a record of all communications. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, then the matter can be raised with the relevant Dean/Director of Service by the complainant, keeping the Resolutions Officer informed. An informal mediation meeting may be convened by the Resolutions Officer to resolve the matter.
 - 9.2.3. When raising a complaint a student should be specific about the issue or concern, describe the issue or concern sufficiently, provide supporting documentary evidence where available and state the preferred outcome sought. The outcome sought should be clear and realistic.
 - 9.2.4. Potential outcomes at Stage One may include: a solution to the student's issue or concern, an explanation why the desired outcome cannot be achieved, an apology where appropriate, a notification that UFCB|GIS do not consider the matter appropriate for informal resolution and a recommendation that the student submit their complaint to Stage Two applicable to that student.

- 9.2.5. Reasons why a complaint may be unsuitable for Stage One may include the detail of investigation required, that a financial remedy is sought and/or the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature.
- 9.2.6. If there is no early resolution, or the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the early resolution stage, OR if the matters raised are particularly complex, the case may be progressed to Stage Two of the Formal Complaint process.
- 9.3. **Stage Two - Formal Complaint for students studying for an award of Buckinghamshire New University (BNU):**
- 9.3.1. The student should submit their formal complaint in writing on a [Notification of formal complaint form](#) and send it to resolution@bnu.ac.uk. Full details of the procedure can be found at [BNU webpages](#)
- 9.3.2. Complaints must be submitted within **three months** of the issue arising, regardless of whether or not it is first considered under the Early Resolution stage.
- 9.3.3. On completion of the Formal Complaint process, BNU Resolutions team will write to the student with the outcome.
- 9.3.4. The student may confirm in writing if they wish to accept the recommendations and the suggested remedy, in this case the formal complaints procedure is then closed.
- 9.3.5. Alternatively, the student may confirm in writing they wish to decline the proposed resolution and the suggested remedy. The student must then decide whether to pursue the matter, or not. If not, no further action is required. If they do wish to progress to the next stage, they should go to Stage 3 - Review (Section 6.4)
- 9.3.6. If a response is not received from the student **within 10 days**, it will be assumed that the student has accepted the outcome and no further action is required. A Completions of Procedures (CoP) letter will subsequently be issued by BNU.
- 9.4. **Stage Three - Review for students studying for an award of Buckinghamshire New University (BNU):**
- 9.4.1. Requests for review will only be accepted on the following grounds:
- The procedures during the formal stage were not followed properly
 - The outcome was not reasonable given the circumstances presented
 - There is new evidence which was unable to be provided earlier in the process, for valid reasons, and which would have had a significant ('material') effect on the decision
- 9.4.2. The student should submit their request for review of formal complaint outcome in writing on a [Request for Review Form](#) and send it to resolution@bnu.ac.uk. Full details of the procedure can be found at [BNU webpages](#).
- 9.4.3. Request for Review must be submitted within **10 working days** of the notification of the Stage Two Outcome.
- 9.4.4. It is expected that Reviews will be completed within **10 working days** of receipt of request from the complainant.

9.4.5. On completion of the Review process, the BNU Resolutions team will write to the student with the outcome and a Completions of Procedures (CoP) letter issued

9.5. **Stage Two - Formal Complaint for students studying for an award of the University of East London (UEL):**

9.5.1. This stage of the process will be dealt with at UCFB|GIS through the following steps:

9.5.1.1. Stage Two of the Complaint process must commence within **one month** of the written response following the local resolution stage.

9.5.1.2. The complainant must make a formal submission on the Student Formal Complaint Form to the UCFB Resolutions Officer (complaints@ucfb.com) detailing the complaint, actions from early resolution attempts, as well as providing any supporting evidence.

9.5.1.3. The Resolutions Officer will review the information provided and may also seek to interview any of the parties involved, to seek further information. At such an interview, the parties may choose to be accompanied by a family member, friend or colleague, but not by a legal representative.

9.5.1.4. The Resolutions Officer will aim to formally respond to the complainant on behalf of UCFB|GIS with a decision on the complaint **within twenty working days**, however, this may take longer during busier periods, and/or depending on staff availability.

9.5.1.5. The decision of the Resolutions Officer will be as follows:

- (i) Complaint dismissed
- (ii) Complaint upheld
- (iii) Complaint partially upheld.

9.5.2. Following the decision of the Resolutions Officer and if a response is not received from the student **within 10 days**, it will be assumed that the student has accepted the outcome and no further action is required. A Completions of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued.

9.5.2.1. The Resolutions Officer is responsible for monitoring any actions to be taken by UCFB|GIS in response to (ii) or (iii) are taken within a reasonable timeframe.

9.6. **Stage Three - Review for students studying for an award of University of East London (UEL):**

9.6.1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage Two outcome, they may request a review of the complaint by UEL **within ten calendar days** of the Stage Two outcome. Full details of the procedure can be found at [Part 14 UEL Regulations](#)

9.6.2. The student should address the request to complaints@uel.ac.uk outlining why the outcome is not satisfactory.

9.6.3. A request for a review can only be considered in the following circumstances:

- 9.6.3.1. there has been a material procedural irregularity which has demonstrably affected the outcome of the claim to the detriment of the student; or
 - 9.6.3.2. there is new evidence that would have significantly affected the outcome and could not reasonably have been made available when the complaint was made; or
 - 9.6.3.3. that there is evidence that all of the relevant information was not considered at Stage Two; or
 - 9.6.3.4. that the decision is perverse given the facts of the case; or
 - 9.6.3.5. that the complaint was upheld but the proposed remedy was inappropriate.
- 9.6.4. The UEL Complaints and Appeal Team will communicate with the student relating to the process of this stage.
- 9.6.5. On completion of the Review process, the UEL Complaints and Appeal Team will communicate to the student with the outcome and a Completions of Procedures (CoP) letter issued.
- 9.6.6. The UCFB Resolutions Officer will provide all details pertinent to the complaint and investigation as requested by relevant UEL teams.

10. Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

- 10.1. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the final outcome after the University's internal procedures have been completed, they may lodge an external review directly with the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education** (OIA).
- 10.2. Any request for review to the OIA must be submitted **within 12 months** of the Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter being received by the student. The OIA will not usually review complaints which have not been considered by the University.
- 10.3. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education may be contacted via:

Tel: 0118 959 9813

Email: enquiries@oiahe.org

Website: www.oiahe.org.uk/students/

Postal address: Office of the Independent Adjudicator Second Floor Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road Reading RG1 3AB

11. Reporting and Monitoring

- 11.1. Records will be maintained of all complaints that are submitted for monitoring and improvement. An annual report will be prepared for the Education and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board. This will detail any potential areas for enhancement or lessons learned. The annual report will also be shared with the relevant validating body.

12. Behaviour during the complaints process

12.1. UCFB|GIS has zero tolerance towards those whose behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and inconsistent with its Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies and will take action in this respect. Unacceptable behaviour includes communicating with UCFB|GIS in an unreasonably demanding, malicious, vexatious or aggressive manner for example:

- Making frivolous claims, or multiple claims regarding the same subject.
- Acting with unreasonable persistence or in a harassing or threatening manner either verbally, through an e-mail or by letter.
- Making claims that are knowingly false, malicious or unfounded or unreasonable.

12.2. If the behaviour of any staff or student is unacceptable, UCFB|GIS will normally tell them why their behaviour is considered unacceptable and give them an opportunity to amend it. If the behaviour continues, UCFB|GIS reserves the right to place restrictions on the conduct of a party or their representative and/or will take action as defined in the [UCFB|GIS Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies](#).

13. Updates

13.1. This Policy will be reviewed and updated by UCFB|GIS on a regular basis as directed by our Policy review schedule.