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GBS Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Related GBS policies

- GBS Student Charter
- GBS Student Code of Conduct
- GBS Academic Appeals Policy
- GBS Student Protection Plan
- GBS Student Disciplinary Policy
- GBS Equality and Diversity Policy
- GBS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy - Students
- GBS Staff Disciplinary Policy
- GBS Reasonable Adjustment Policy

External Reference Points

1. Information Commissioner's Office, Accessed online at: <https://ico.org.uk/>
2. UK Public General Acts, *Data Protection Act 2018*, Accessed online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>
3. UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024)
4. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [OIA Good Practice Framework](#), Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals.

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1. What is the purpose of the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure?

1.1. At Global Banking School (GBS) we aim to provide a student experience that changes the lives of all our students, fosters a culture of positive wellbeing and values their voices. However, we recognise that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time. The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') sets out how to raise complaints as well as the process through which they are considered.

2. Who can make a complaint?

2.1. Students who are registered with GBS or those who have recently finished their studies can make a complaint under this Policy, provided that complaints are raised within the timeframe stipulated in the Policy.

3. What is a complaint?

3.1. GBS defines a student complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about something GBS has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of GBS.

3.2. Examples of matters considered under this Policy include:

- Student experience e.g. GBS services, conduct of GBS staff etc;
- Teaching and learning experience e.g. quality of teaching, teaching facilities;
- Failure on the part of GBS to meet stated obligations;
- Academic services e.g. library services, online resources;
- Administrative services e.g. Registry, Finance, etc.

3.3. If your concern is of a general nature, it may be more appropriate for you to raise the matter via the Student Representative Committee for your programme or with the relevant member of staff, e.g. your programme leader.

4. What is not covered by this Policy?

4.1. **Academic Appeals:** appeals against the decision of an assessment board fall under the Academic Appeal Policy. Where a complaint contains an element of an academic appeal, you must submit a separate academic appeal in line with the GBS Academic Appeals Policy.

4.2. **Bullying or harassment:** allegations of bullying or harassment by a student fall under the GBS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure for Staff and Students. If you believe you are being bullied or harassed, you should first consult the Dean of Students for advice.

4.3. **Whistleblowing:** Matters of public interest should be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy.

4.4. **Data Protection:** requests for a copy of personal data, or to amend or delete it should be referred to the Data Protection Officer: dpa@globalbanking.ac.uk

4.5. **Complaints on withdrawal decisions:** Complaints about withdrawal decisions are covered by the GBS Student Engagement, Attendance and Withdrawals Policy. If a student has valid reasons, supported by evidence, for why they should not be withdrawn, they should submit an appeal to the Academic Registrar, as per the procedures and deadlines set out in that policy and the relevant withdrawal email.

4.6. **Complaints on admission decisions:** Complaints about admissions decisions are covered by the GBS Admissions Policy. If a student has valid reasons, supported by evidence against an admission decision, they should submit an appeal to the Director of UK Admissions as per the procedures and deadlines set out in that policy.

4.7. **Legal Proceedings:** a matter that has been subject to legal proceedings in a court or tribunal unless those proceedings have been put on hold.

5. General Principles

5.1 Timely and transparent procedures

All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and through processes which are clear, straightforward, and transparent.

5.2 Anonymity or third-party complaints

Complaints require investigation to enable resolution. For practical reasons therefore, no action will be taken in the event of complaints made anonymously.

Complaints made by a third party (including parents, family or friends of registered students) can only be dealt with if you provide permission in writing for the third party to make the complaint on your behalf.

5.3. Submission in good faith

GBS presumes that all complaints are submitted in good faith. You will not be disadvantaged for making a complaint. Complaints that GBS considers to be unreasonably persistent or made falsely will not be considered and could result in action through GBS Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

5.4. Impartiality in investigation

All complaints will be investigated by staff who have no connection to the complaint.

5.5. Privacy

Staff investigating complaints respect the privacy of all parties. Information about the complaint is provided only to those immediately involved and/or those whose participation is necessary to resolve it.

5.6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be respected throughout the complaint process. However, any student or member of staff about whom a complaint is made has the right to be informed of the complaint and its nature, and to access any relevant evidence.

If you request that your identity be kept confidential, this is respected up to the point where disclosure is necessary to progress or resolve the issue, in which case you will be informed in advance that this information is going to be disclosed.

GBS will not disclose any information to third parties regarding investigations and outcomes from student complaint cases unless legal exceptions under the [Data Protection Act](#) apply.

5.7. Members of staff named in complaints

At all times following the submission of a complaint, a member of GBS staff who is named in the complaint or whose conduct is called into question by the complaint has the right to be accompanied by a friend or supporter, who shall normally be another member of staff of GBS.

6. Advice and Guidance

If you are considering making a complaint, you are encouraged to consult the following staff members for advice:

- Dean of Students
- Student Success Tutors
- Deans, Associate Deans or Programme Leaders

7. Student Representation

You can be accompanied by a friend or supporter to any discussions or meetings, but not by a legal representative. At least 48 hours before the discussion or meeting, you should advise the relevant member of staff (e.g. meeting secretary) of the name and status of the person accompanying you.

8. Complaints against GBS staff

Where a complaint is against a member of GBS staff, the following principles apply:

- an assumption of no fault until the outcome of the investigation finds differently.
- the right of the member of staff to be informed of the complaint and have access to any relevant evidence presented.
- the right of the member of staff to be accompanied to any discussions or meetings by a colleague or supporter.
- the right of the member of staff to know the outcome of the complaint; and
- confidentiality of the process.

If a complaint involving an allegation of misconduct by a member of staff is upheld, it may form the basis of further action under the GBS Staff Disciplinary Policy.

9. Staff involvement in the Complaints Procedure

It may be appropriate for a member of staff to be called as a witness or provide information as part of a complaint investigation. In these circumstances it is expected that GBS staff will support the operation of the procedure.

10. GBS Complaints Procedure: Overview

There are three stages in the complaints procedure:

Stage 1: Informal Conciliation

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

Stage 3: Appeal

10.1 **Stage 1: Informal Conciliation**

If you wish to make a complaint, in the first instance, you should always try to resolve issues early and informally. This could be by either speaking to the member of staff involved or your Student Success Tutor. If you are not sure who the best person is to contact about a complaint, please get in touch with your Student Success Tutor.

If you want to make a complaint, you should contact the Dean of Students Office using the QR code that is available at all campuses on noticeboards and at the customer services desks, or via complaintsandconductoffice@globalbanking.ac.uk.

You should raise the complaint as soon as possible and normally no more than 10 working days after the issue arose. You will need to provide information about what has happened, as well as the action or outcome you are seeking.

If the complaint is more appropriately investigated through other procedures not covered by this policy (see section 4), then it will cease to be handled as a complaint within the policy and processed via the relevant policy and procedure.

If the complaint concerns a member of staff and/or concerns harassment or bullying matters, the Head of Human Resources is consulted by the Dean of Students regarding the appropriate procedure to be adopted before an investigation is conducted.

A member of staff from the Dean of Students Office will aim to resolve the complaint within 10 working days of receiving it. You will be informed of the outcome in writing.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for complaints to progress directly to Stage 2 of the Procedure without attempting conciliation at Stage 1. Examples include complex complaints that require detailed investigation.

Upon receipt of the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint, students will be informed of their right to escalate their complaint to Stage 2.

10.2. Escalation of Complaints

Requests for escalation of complaints to the formal stages (Stages 2 and 3) will be granted on limited grounds, namely:

- that there is new evidence that could not have been, or for good reason was not, made available at the time of the investigation, and that sufficient evidence remains to warrant further investigation.
- where an informal resolution has not been sought for valid reasons, or was sought but did not sufficiently address the complaint (before escalation to Stage 2).
- there was a procedural irregularity (e.g. there was a material failure by GBS to follow the complaints procedure, clear reasons were not provided for the decision, etc),
- that a formal complaint was upheld or partially upheld; however, the form of resolution offered did not sufficiently address the matter.

You should set out your concerns clearly and provide evidence in support (where possible). You must explain how your complaint falls within one or more of the grounds set out above and outline what we should do to resolve the complaint.

10.3. Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If your complaint falls under a ground for escalation, you can make a Stage 2 complaint using the Stage 2 Student Complaints Form.

You should submit the Stage 2 Complaint Form within ten working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 1. The completed form should be submitted to complaintsandconductoffice@globalbanking.ac.uk.

An extension of these time limits will only be possible in exceptional circumstances, such as illness or other matters that are beyond your control. In such circumstances, you should submit the Stage 2 Complaint form as soon as possible and explain in the form the reason for submitting it outside the normal time limit.

All Stage 2 complaints are processed by the Dean of Students Office.

10.4. Investigation of a Stage 2 Complaint

The Dean of Students or nominee will investigate the complaint. As a matter of principle, the investigator must have no connection to the complaint. Where appropriate, more than one investigator may be appointed.

The investigator(s) will:

- Collect and review evidence, including any relevant documentation and any correspondence;
- interview any relevant persons and, where appropriate, ask them for a written statement;
- keep all parties involved in the complaint informed on the progress of the investigation.

The investigator will submit a report to the Dean of Students within 15 working days of being appointed. The report summarises the evidence gathered on the complaint, addresses all complaint points, and clearly sets out the grounds for the proposed recommendation. The report makes one of three recommendations:

- to dismiss the complaint on the grounds that it is not eligible;
- to find the complaint not justified
- to find the complaint justified (or partly justified) and suggest recommendations on how to resolve the matter.

After receiving the report, the Dean of Students will write to you within five working days with the outcome of the investigation, dealing with each point of complaint and including actions, as appropriate.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 but do not meet the grounds for a Stage 3 appeal, then the complaint will be closed, and you can request for a Completion of Procedures letter.

If your Stage 2 complaint is dismissed, and you do not request a Stage 3 appeal within the specified timelines, then you may request a Completion of Procedures letter.

10.5. Stage 3: Appeal

A student seeking consideration at Stage 3 should submit the Stage 3 form to complaintsandconductoffice@globalbanking.ac.uk within 10 working days of the date of the outcome letter at Stage 2.

Where the Provost (or nominee) upholds the appeal, a new investigation will be commissioned in line with the processes outlined in Stage 2. The outcome of this investigation report will be final, and Stage 3 of this policy will have been deemed complete. A Stage 2 investigation following the Stage 3 decision is to be conducted, and its outcomes are to be written to the student by a member of staff who has not previously been involved in the case.

Where the Provost (or nominee) does not uphold the appeal, the outcome of Stage 2 will stand and Stage 3 of this policy will have been deemed complete.

Students will normally receive the outcome of the Stage 3 appeal within a calendar month of the date the request for an appeal was submitted. Should the complexity of a case necessitate a response time exceeding the standard calendar month, you will be provided with updates throughout the process, outlining any reasons for a delay.

11. Awarding partner institution's complaints procedure

On completion of the GBS procedure, students taking programmes awarded by a partner institution may be able to make a complaint through the partner institution's

complaint process¹²³⁴⁵. For further information, please see the relevant awarding partner's complaints policy and procedure. If a student is able to make a complaint through the partner institution, the partner's procedure must be completed before the student can request an external review (see section 12).

12. Independent External Review

If you have exhausted the internal procedures of GBS, and, if applicable, those of the partner institution, and you are not satisfied with the outcome you can request that the case is reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA is a body independent of GBS, universities and other higher education institutions.

The OIA must receive a completed scheme application form within twelve months of the date of the completion of procedures letter. The grounds and eligibility for review shall be determined by the OIA. Further details can be found on the OIA website: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

13. Reporting to Academic Board

The Dean of Students reports annually to Academic Board on the Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints received. The report includes:

- The number of complaints considered at Stage 2 and their outcomes.

¹ Oxford Brookes University: If you wish to escalate complaints to Oxford Brookes University (OBU), your case needs to meet one of the grounds stated on [OBU's website](#). You also need to attach all the documentation from GBS as evidence. You will only be able to use the OBU complaints procedure if you have completed the GBS internal process as outlined in this GBS Complaints Policy and Procedure. For further information, please visit: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/sirt/student-complaints/student-complaints-procedure>

² Pearson: Once you have exhausted GBS's complaints procedure, there will only be certain matters Pearson can then assist with. For further information, please visit: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/feedback-and-complaints.html>

³ Bath Spa University: Bath Spa University should only be contacted if you are unable to resolve the matter directly. In such cases, you should use Bath Spa's Student Complaints Procedure and follow the Stage Two process as set out here: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/complaints-policy/>

⁴ University of Suffolk: Complaints may be escalated to the [Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct \(OSACC\)](#) at the University of Suffolk. For further information, please visit: <https://www.uos.ac.uk/about/our-university/office-for-student-appeals-complaints-and-conduct-osacc/>

⁵ Canterbury Christ Church University and Leeds Trinity University: Once you have exhausted GBS's complaints procedure, you can request that the case be reviewed by the OIA.

- The number of complaints considered at Stage 3 and their outcomes.
- The number of complaints considered by the OIA and their outcomes.
- Any recommendations for improvement to the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for the management and implementation of this policy and procedure lies with the Dean of Students, Provost/nominee, Academic Standards and Quality Office and appointed investigators. The Dean of Students' Office manages all stages of this process.

- 15.** Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and procedure and for acting in line with it. It is the responsibility of students to seek clarification from GBS staff if necessary.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy may be amended by GBS at any time. GBS will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to enable them to comply with this policy. GBS will regularly test our systems and processes to monitor compliance. Any issues related to the monitoring and review of this policy, please contact the Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.

17. Data Protection and Confidentiality

GBS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a Data Controller. Details of the School's registration are published on the [Information Commissioners website](#). GBS as a Data Controller shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that processing of personal information is performed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

By submitting a complaint, you are agreeing that GBS can process, use, and share information it contains to enable the complaint to be considered. Information may be disclosed to any person who has a need to see it for the complaint to be fully investigated. Information may also be shared with relevant people after a complaint to

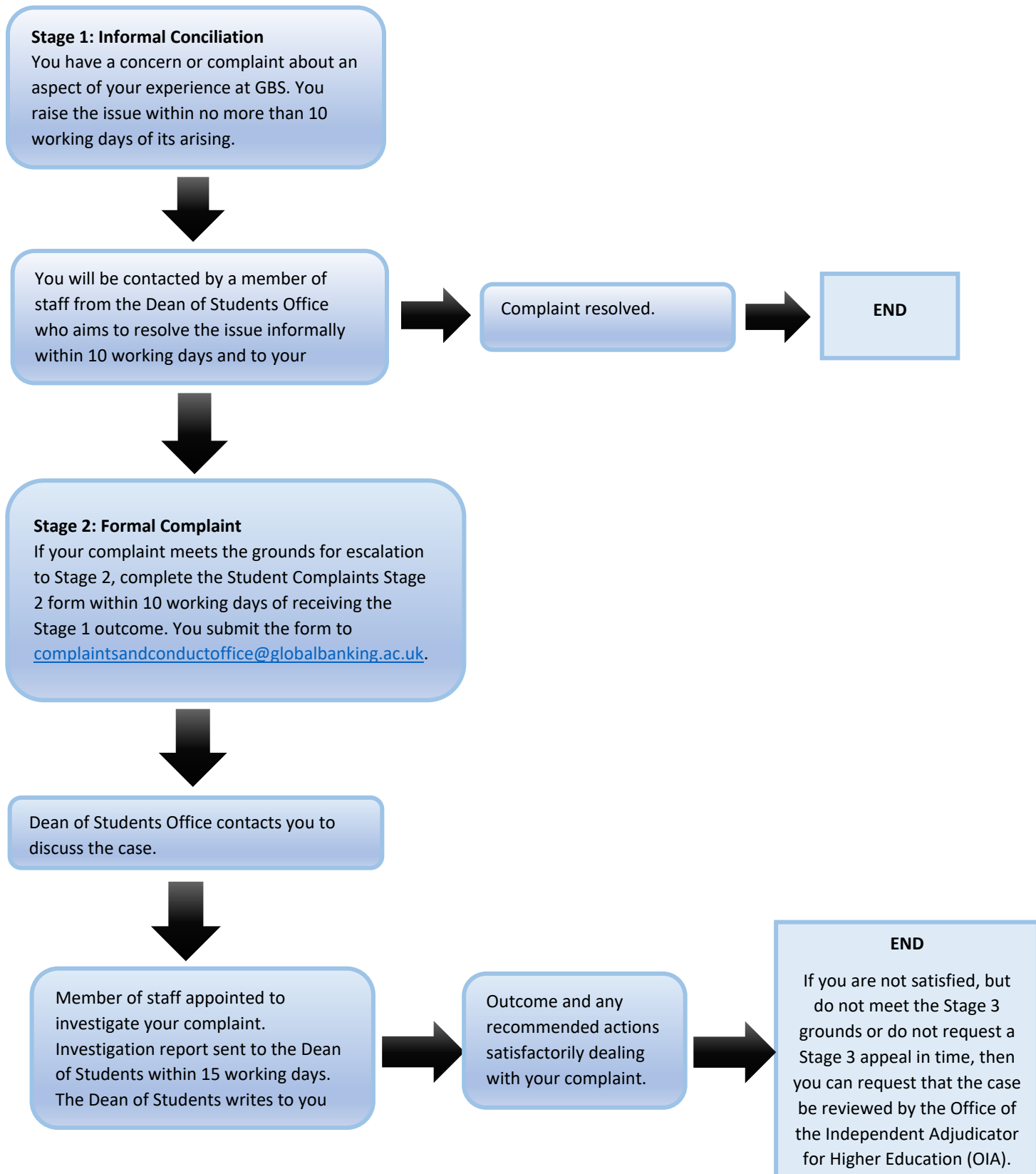
facilitate actions and recommendations after investigation. For Data Protection purposes and compliance matters, please contact dpa@globalbanking.ac.uk.

All documentation relating to complaints will be kept confidential and shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the complaints process, or as required by law.

18. Alternative Format

This policy can be provided in alternative formats (including large print, audio and electronic) upon request. For further information, or to make a request, please contact the Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.

Annex: GBS Student Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

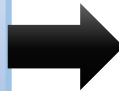


Stage 3: Appeal

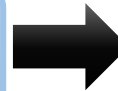
If your complaint meets the grounds for escalation to Stage 3, complete the Stage 3 form within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome. You should submit the form to complaintsandconductoffice@globalbanking.ac.uk.



The Provost or nominee decides the case within a calendar month. If the appeal is upheld, the case is referred back to Stage 2. If the case is dismissed, the procedure ends, and you will receive a completion of procedures letter from GBS.



You are satisfied with the outcome of the appeal.



END



Independent Review (External)

You are not satisfied with a dismissal of the appeal. You can request that the case is reviewed by the OIA.