



Complaints Policy & Procedure

Policy/Procedure Number: AC011

Date of Approval: 23rd March 2025

Effective Date: 1st April 2025

Review Date: 1st April 2026

Person Responsible: Chief Operating Officer

Approved By: Governing Board

For Information to: Area Pro Vice-Chancellors, Dept Managers, All Staff/Stakeholders/Students

INDEX

1. Introduction
2. Policy Statement
3. Definition of terms
4. Policy Reviews
5. Complaints Procedure (Non Academic)
6. Appeals
7. Other Course of Action
8. Complaints Procedure (Academic Matters)
9. Appendix A - Investigation Process
10. Appendix B - Guidance for Reporting Complaint Details

1. Introduction

ISBM University [India] London strives to meet and exceed expectations and seeks to continually improve the quality of its services. The University works to form good relationships with our student body, local communities, employers and stakeholders, enabling all parties to feel comfortable in communicating concerns or complaints.

This may be via email or a letter to the Executive Board.

We recognise that there is a difference between a concern and a complaint, and many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information. It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved at the informal stage.

A 'concern' may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be generally defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack of action'*.

The University will endeavour to positively respond to all written complaints where it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally.

The University strives to meet the needs of students in accordance with Government policy.

2. Policy Statement

A complaint will be taken to be any formal written expression of dissatisfaction with the University, its services, equipment or staff made by a member of the public, a student or their representative.

Formal complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the University procedures.

If a complaint concerns the well-being or safeguarding of a student, the University has a duty to report this to the Local Authority and any action taken will be in accordance with the University's Safeguarding Policy.

If it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are required to resolve an issue, the complainant will only be informed that action is being taken and the outcome of any such action. The complainant will not be entitled to participate, and the details of the proceedings will remain confidential to the Pro Vice-Chancellor and/or the individual's line manager.

For complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, the University requests that complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via all social media such as Facebook, "X" etc. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved and it is expected that complainants also observe confidentiality.

To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the University as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than six months after the event will not be considered. However, this may be extended in exceptional circumstances, such as the level of complexity of information needed to review the complaint or difficulties regarding individuals' availability. A mutually acceptable timeframe will then be agreed with all involved.

To ensure a fair and comprehensive process the University is not obligated to respond to anonymous complaints or complaints considered malicious.

3. Definition of Terms

Non-academic complaints may include, but shall not be limited to:

- The discharge of responsibility by the University's staff.
- The behaviour of students on campus and outside of the University environment.
- Finance - the provision of commercial services or the sale of goods.
- Policy issues where the substance of the complaint lies with a policy decision made by the University or an external organisation.

Academic matters complaints may include, but shall not be limited to:

- A member of staff (academic or support).
- Another student.
- Appeal against internal assessment/grading.
- Appeal against an exam-based decision.

4. Policy Review

The Executive Board shall:

- Publish annually, an internal review of complaints and their resolutions to inform the University of the views of the service. They shall also provide a report annually to the Governing Board.
- Ensure this Policy is reviewed every two years.
- Ensure access to the online complaints system will be restricted to relevant key staff.
- Ensure the use of personal data most efficiently and effectively to deliver better services, ensuring it is accurate and needed.
- Ensure information is not kept for longer than is necessary and securely destroy the online data which is no longer needed (after 6 years).
- Ensure that appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard information, including unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss or damage of data).
- Ensure that the rights of people about whom information is held can be fully exercised under the UK General Data Protection Regulations (or relevant subsequent legislation)

5. Complaints Procedure (Non Academic)

These procedures apply when it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally through line management response.

All formal complaints should be addressed in writing to the Vice Chancellor's Office at the University campus or the Vice Chancellor's email address, except for a complaint against the Vice Chancellor which should be addressed in writing to the Chair of the Governing Board.

Receipt of a letter/email of complaint will be acknowledged within three working days.

Formal Complaint Procedure

In all cases, a formal response will usually take place within ten working days of receipt of a complaint but there will be occasions when this could be extended due to the University's holidays, operational demands, staff availability or the need to secure additional information. If for any reason more time is required, this will be explained to the complainant.

The investigation will be carried out by the person/s outlined below.

Complaints about the discharge of responsibility by ISBM University staff:

- Staff at Senior Management level or below – Pro Vice-Chancellor of Area e.g. Operations, Academic, Quality & Standards, Registry will investigate the complaint
- Pro Vice-Chancellor – the Vice Chancellor will investigate the complaint.
- Vice Chancellor – the Chair of the Governing Board will investigate the complaint.

Complaints about the behaviour of students on campus and outside of the University's environment:

- If a named student – their respective Programme Leader will investigate the complaint.
- If students in general – the Academic Dean will investigate the complaint.

Finance and the provision of commercial services or sale of goods:

- The Chief Operating Officer will nominate a Senior Staff Member (whose own responsibility does not lie within the area to be investigated) to investigate the complaint.

A member of the Governing Board:

- The Chair of the Governing Board will investigate the complaint.

Chair of the Governing Board

- The Governing Board will liaise with the Vice Chancellor who will investigate the complaint.

Complaint about a person not directly employed by the University

- The matter will be referred to the relevant agency, which will investigate the complaint in accordance with their policy and procedures.

6. Appeals

If it is felt that the University has not dealt with a complaint satisfactorily then an appeal may be made, in writing, to the relevant senior investigating officer (as detailed above) who will respond within three working weeks. There may be occasions when this could be extended due to the University's holidays, operational demands, staff availability or the need to secure additional information.

If for any reason more time is required, this will be explained to the complainant.

7. Other Course of Action

If following a written appeal to the Pro Vice-Chancellor & Vice Chancellor's office a complainant is still not satisfied that a complaint has been dealt with appropriately, then the details can be forwarded to the:

- Chair of the Governing Board

The Chair will not consider complaints unless they have already been fully considered by the University; a response from the Chair of the Governing Board can be expected within 12 working weeks.

8. Complaints Procedure (Academic Matters)

These procedures apply when it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally through line management response.

All formal written complaints from students or their representatives should be addressed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academics at the ISBM University Campus or emailed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academics.

Receipt of a letter of complaint will be acknowledged within three working days.

Formal Complaint Procedure

In all cases, a formal written response will usually take place within ten working days of receipt of a request but there will be occasions when this could be extended due to the University's holidays, operational demands, staff availability or the need to secure additional information. If for any reason more time is required, this will be explained to the complainant.

The investigation will be carried out by the person outlined below:

Complaints about a member of staff (academic or support)

The complaint will be investigated by the member of staff's Line Manager (Investigating Officer).

Complaints about a student

The complaint will be investigated by the Student's Programme Leader (Investigating Officer).

Appeal against internal assessment/grading.

Please refer to the Assessment, Malpractice and Internal Verification Policies

9. Appendix A - Investigation Process

The Investigating Officer will meet/talk with or email the complainant within five working days, recording in writing the following:

- The date of the meeting.
- Details of the complaint.
- The outcome sought.

Within five working days of meeting the complainant, the Investigating Officer will meet the staff member or student about whom the complaint has been made to:

- Discuss the details of the complaint.
- Identify which issues (if any) are justified.
- Agree and record in writing, which action should be taken to overcome the issue.

NB – Response times may vary due to the University's holidays, operational demands, staff availability or the need to secure additional information. If for any reason more time is required, this will be explained to the complainant.

The Investigating Officer will write to both parties and the Chief Operating Officer notifying them of the outcome of the complaint and then informally monitor the situation to ensure implementation of the agreed actions and progress towards them.

Appeal

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation they should appeal in writing to:

- In the case of a complaint against a staff member – the Investigating Officer's Line Manager.
- In the case of a complaint against a student – the student's Dean of Faculty.

A further investigation will be undertaken within ten working days, which will involve two separate meetings, one with the complainant and one with the staff member or student about whom the complaint has been made. Both parties and the Chief Operating Officer will be written to notify them of the outcome of the appeal.

Where a member of staff is found to be at fault, the issue may be resolved by involving either the Capability Policy or the Disciplinary Policy. However, the details will remain a private internal matter for the University.

10. Appendix B - Guidance for Reporting Complaint Details

A complaint should include all details, which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents (see list below).

It is very important that a clear statement of the actions that the complainant would like the University to take to resolve the concern is included in the written detail.

- Complainants Name.
- Student Name (where applicable) and number.
- Relationship to student (if applicable) – if the complainant has no formal relationship with the student we cannot investigate. If the student is complaining and they are over 18 years or over 25 years old (if they have learning difficulties or disabilities) then they must make the complaint themselves.
- Preferred contact information (phone/letter/email).
- Details of the complaint.
- What action, if any, has the complainant already taken to try to resolve their complaint.
- Who did they speak to and what was the response.
- What actions do they feel might resolve the problem at this stage.
- Are they attaching any supporting paperwork/evidence? If so, please give details.