



Complaints Policy

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For Information To: Staff and Students

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1. Introduction

ISBM University [India] London aims to deliver high-quality services and continually improve them. We work to build strong relationships with students, local communities, employers, and other stakeholders, encouraging open communication about any concerns or complaints. These may be shared by email or in writing to the Executive Board.

We understand the difference between a *concern* and a *complaint*.

- A concern is a worry or doubt about an important issue, usually resolved through clarification or information.
- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action taken or not taken by the University.

Most concerns are expected to be resolved informally. When an issue cannot be resolved this way, the University will respond formally to any written complaints. Our goal is to meet student needs in line with Government policy.

2. Policy Statement

A complaint is any formal written statement of dissatisfaction about the University, its services, equipment, or staff, made by a student, a representative, or a member of the public. All formal complaints will be handled according to the University's procedures.

If a complaint involves a student's safety or well-being, the University must report it to the Local Authority and follow its Safeguarding Policy.

If the issue leads to staff disciplinary or capability actions, the complainant will only be informed that action is being taken and told the final outcome. They will not be involved in the process, and the details will remain confidential to the Pro Vice-Chancellor or the staff member's line manager.

To help resolve complaints quickly and fairly, the University asks complainants not to discuss their concerns publicly on social media. Complaints are treated confidentially, and complainants are expected to maintain that confidentiality.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible. Usually, concerns reported more than six months after the event will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such cases, a new reasonable timeframe will be agreed with everyone involved. The University may choose not to respond to anonymous or malicious complaints.

3. Policy Review

The Executive Board will:

- Publish an annual internal review of complaints and resolutions to inform the University, and provide a report to the Governing Board.
- Review this Policy every two years.
- Restrict access to the online complaints system to key staff only.
- Use personal data efficiently and accurately to improve services, keeping only what is necessary.
- Securely delete online data that is no longer needed after six years.
- Apply appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect information from unauthorized access, loss, or damage.
- Ensure individuals can exercise their rights under the UK General Data Protection Regulations (or any updated legislation).

4. Submission Process Flow

Stage 1	Concern emerges	Informal discussion
Stage 2	If unresolved and too serious	Submission of formal complaint (in writing) to correct office.
	Acknowledgment receipt	Within 3 working days.
Stage 3	Investigation begins	a) Contact complainant (within 5 working days). b) Contact respondent within a further (5 working days). c) Record findings and decide on actions.
	Formal written outcome to complainant	Within 10 working days.
Stage 4	If dissatisfied	Appeal (in writing) to senior officer investigation response (within 3 working weeks).
Stage 5	If still dissatisfied	Escalation to Chair of Governing Board response (within 12 working weeks).

Complaints will be addressed informally or formally through a five-stages process.

Stage 1.

Raise concern informally (where appropriate).

- A student or stakeholder who has a "*concern*" (rather than a formal complaint) — defined in the policy as "expression of worry or doubt ... for which reassurance is sought" — should initially seek informal resolution.
- They should approach the relevant staff member (e.g. their Programme Leader, Department Manager, Support Staff) for discussion or clarification of the issue.
- If the concern is resolved satisfactorily at this stage, no formal complaint is needed.

Note: This helps prevent escalation of minor misunderstandings, internal policy expects most concerns to be resolved informally.

Stage 2.

Submit a formal complaint (if informal resolution fails / is not appropriate)

If informal resolution does not resolve the issue, or if the matter is serious / complex, the complainant should proceed to a formal complaint.

a) How to submit:

Complaints must be in writing (letter or email) addressed to the appropriate office:

- For non-academic complaints: send to the office of the Chief Operating Officer (or, if complaint is about the Chief Operating Officer, to the Chair of the Governing Board).
- For academic-related complaints: send to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academics.

The written complaint must include detailed information: See **Appendix A**.

b) Submission channels:

Email or letter to the relevant office.

c) Acknowledgement of complaint

Upon receipt, the University should send an acknowledgement to the complainant (**within 3 working days**).

- The acknowledgement should confirm receipt, indicate the assigned Investigating Officer (or the person responsible for investigating), and outline the next expected steps, including approximate timescale.

Stage 3.

Investigation & Formal Response

- The University aims to issue a formal response (**within 10 working days**) from receipt of complaint.
- If more time is needed (e.g. due to holidays, staff availability, need for further information), the complainant should be informed of the delay and given a revised timeframe.
- The complaint will be investigated by the designated person(s), depending on the nature of complaint (non-academic / academic / who is involved): See **Appendix B**.
- The investigation should follow these steps:
 - a) Meet / contact complainant (**within 5 working days**) in person or by email/phone, record date, details of complaint, outcome sought.
 - b) **Within 5 working days** after that meeting, meet / contact the person against whom complaint is made (staff/student), discuss the complaint, identify which issues (if any) are justified, decide and record (in writing) the actions to address the complaint.
- The Investigating Officer writes to both parties and to the Chief Operating Officer with the outcome.
- The formal written response to complainant must include:
 - a) What was investigated/reviewed
 - b) Decision/findings
 - c) Any actions taken (or to be taken)
 - d) Rationale (where appropriate)
 - e) Information on how to appeal, if complainant is dissatisfied (next step).

Stage 4.

Appeal (internal)

- If complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a written appeal to the relevant senior investigating officer, within the timescale specified in the policy (or within a reasonable time).
- The senior investigating officer should respond within **3 working weeks**. If more time is needed, they must explain and provide revised timeframe.
- In some cases (especially for academic matters), appeal may trigger a *second investigation* involving separate meetings - one with complainant, one with the respondent (staff/student) - followed by written outcome to both parties and the Chief Operating Officer.

- If a staff member is found at fault, internal procedures (e.g. Disciplinary Policy) may apply - but the complainant is only informed of outcome, not details of the disciplinary proceedings.

Stage 5.

Final internal review (if needed) / escalation

- If after appeal to Pro Vice-Chancellor / Accountable Officer the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can forward details to the Chair of the Governing Board.
- The Chair will only consider complaints that have already gone through full internal process, aim for response **(within 12 working weeks)**.

External redress – Independent Adjudicator

Complainants should be informed (in the final communications) that if they remain unsatisfied after the internal process, they may pursue their complaint with the external independent body [Office of Independent Adjudicator](#). This aligns with government guidance that the provider complaints procedure must be exhausted first.

5. Data Protection and Confidentiality

1. All complaint records should be stored securely with access restricted to relevant staff.
2. Personal data should not be retained longer than necessary.
3. Anonymous complaints - the University is under no obligation to respond, and may choose not to, especially if complaint is considered malicious.
4. Complainants should be warned not to discuss the complaint publicly (social media etc.), to protect confidentiality for all involved.

6. Appendix A – Guidance for Reporting Complaint Details

Complainant's name and contact details.
Student name and number (if complaint concerns a student), and relationship to complainant (if applicable).
Clear description of the complaint: what happened, when, where, who was involved, and what was the outcome sought.
What (if any) steps the complainant already took to resolve the issue who they spoke to, what response they got.
What the complainant wants to happen now (proposed resolution).
Any supporting evidence (e.g. documents, emails, names of witnesses, dates/times) and indicate attachments or enclosure.

7. Appendix B - Types of complaint and Investigating Officer

Type of Complaint	Investigating Officer
Non-academic - staff (senior management level or below)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (appropriate area)
Non-academic - Pro Vice-Chancellor	Accountable Officer
Non-academic - Accountable Officer	Chair of Governing Board
Non-academic - student behaviour (named student) *	Programme Leader
Non-academic - student behaviour (general)**	Academic Dean
Non-academic - finance (commercial services / sale of goods)	Senior Staff Member nominated by Chief Operating Officer (not within area under complaint)
Non-academic - Governing Board member	Chair of Governing Board
Academic matters - staff (academic or support)	Line Manager of staff (Investigating Officer)
Academic matters - results/ assessments /course	Programme Leader

*This applies when the complaint is about one specific, identifiable student.

**This applies when the complaint is about a group of students or students in general, and no specific individual is named.