



## **Complaints Policy**

### **1. Purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out the formal processes through which students may raise complaints relating to the provision of higher education at IBS Training and Development ("the College"). It ensures that complaints are handled fairly, transparently, promptly, and consistently, and that students have access to appropriate routes of escalation depending on their status and the nature of their complaint.

The policy supports compliance with the expectations of the Office for Students (OfS), the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, consumer protection legislation, and the requirements of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

### **2. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to complaints relating to the College's higher education provision, including concerns about: - Teaching, learning, and academic support - Assessment processes (excluding academic judgment) - Learning resources, facilities, and infrastructure - Student services and administrative support - Fees, charges, and financial matters - Behaviour or conduct of staff

This policy does not apply to: - Academic judgment (see Academic Appeals Policy) - Disciplinary matters (see Student Disciplinary Policy) - Safeguarding or serious misconduct concerns (see Safeguarding Policy) - Whistleblowing disclosures (see Whistleblowing Policy)

### **3. Principles Governing Complaints Handling**

The College is committed to ensuring that complaints handling is: - Accessible – students are provided with clear and timely information on how to complain - Fair and impartial – complaints are investigated objectively and without bias - Timely – complaints are handled within published timescales - Transparent – outcomes and reasons are communicated clearly - Proportionate – responses reflect the nature and seriousness of the complaint - Non-retaliatory – students will not be treated less favourably for raising a complaint

### **4. Categories of Student and Applicable Complaint Processes**

The College recognises that different categories of student require distinct complaints routes. The applicable process depends on the student's status at the time the issue arises.

#### 4.1 Applicants and Prospective Students

Applicants and prospective students may submit complaints relating to: - Admissions processes or decisions - Information provided prior to enrolment - Administrative delays or errors

**Process:**

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the Admissions Office. The complaint will be considered by a senior member of staff not previously involved in the matter. A written response will normally be issued within 20 working days.

#### 4.2 Currently Enrolled Higher Education Students

*Stage 1: Informal Resolution*

Students are encouraged to raise concerns promptly with the relevant tutor, module leader, programme leader, or professional service team. Many issues can be resolved quickly and informally at this stage.

*Stage 2: Formal Complaint*

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, students may submit a formal complaint using the College's published complaints form. The complaint will be investigated by a member of staff independent of the matter complained about. A written outcome will normally be provided within 20 working days.

*Stage 3: Review*

Where a student remains dissatisfied, they may request a review of the outcome on one or more of the following grounds: - Procedural irregularity - New material evidence not previously available - An unreasonable outcome

The review will be conducted by a senior officer not previously involved in the case.

#### 4.3 Students Studying Through Partner Institutions

Students registered on programmes delivered through validation, franchise, or other partnership arrangements may be subject to joint complaints procedures.

**Process:** - Complaints relating to teaching, learning, or student support should normally be raised with the College in the first instance - Complaints relating to the responsibilities of the validating or awarding body may be referred onward in accordance with partnership agreements

Students will be provided with clear guidance on the appropriate route and supported throughout the process.

#### 4.4 Former Students

Former students may submit complaints relating to matters that occurred during their period of study, normally within 12 months of completion, withdrawal, or interruption.

Complaints will be considered where evidence remains available and the matter falls within the scope of this policy.

#### 4.5 Apprentices and Employer-Sponsored Students

Where students are enrolled on apprenticeship or employer-sponsored programmes: - Complaints relating to academic delivery or assessment will be handled under this policy - Complaints relating to employment matters fall outside the scope of this policy - Where appropriate, joint resolution mechanisms involving employers may be applied

#### 5. Timescales

The College aims to: - Acknowledge complaints within 5 working days - Provide a substantive written response within 20 working days - Inform students promptly where an extension to timescales is required

#### 6. Outcomes and Remedies

Outcomes of a complaint may include: - Explanation or clarification - Apology - Corrective or remedial action - Review of policies or procedures - Recommendations for service improvement

#### 7. Completion of Procedures and External Escalation

Once the College's internal complaints process has been completed, students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

Eligible students may then refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) within the required timeframe.

#### 8. Record-Keeping, Monitoring, and Enhancement

The College will: - Maintain appropriate records of complaints and outcomes - Monitor complaint themes and trends - Use complaints data to inform quality enhancement and risk management - Report complaints data to governance committees as appropriate

#### 9. Accessibility and Student Support

Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities or additional needs. Students may be supported by a representative where appropriate.

## 10. Governance and Responsibility

Responsibility for this policy rests with the Board of Governors. Operational responsibility lies with the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board.

## 11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective, current, and compliant with regulatory expectations.

## 12. Policy Approval and Review Record

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Review Date
1.0	November 2025	Academic Board	November 2026