



## Report + Support a Complaint

*We are committed to maintaining an open, inclusive, and respectful environment for both work and study. We encourage any member of our community who experiences or witnesses' behaviour that contradicts these values to report the incident.*

*This guidance is intended for individuals in our School who are either reporting an incident or assisting with the filing of a complaint.*

### CRISIS SUPPORT

In the case of an accident or emergency please see below:

- Guidance available at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/staff/health-safety/accidents-and-emergencies>.
- First Aiders, available by building, can be found at <https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/CSEFirstAid>
- Local Mental Health First can be found at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/mental-physical-health-at-work/mental-health-portal/mental-health-first-aiders>.

If in doubt, contact security (extension 2222 or 0131 650 2257) or reach out to the emergency services (999) or NHS24 (111).

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The University defines complaints as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning our actions or inaction, or regarding the quality of service delivered by us or on our behalf. When reporting a complaint, there are two stages involved: a frontline response and an investigation.

#### Frontline Response

It benefits all parties if issues can be settled before escalating to formal procedures. Whenever possible, complaints should initially be addressed directly with the concerned party or individual, or through an intermediary like your line-manager, Student Advisor, Supervisor, or Postgraduate/Postdoctoral Advisor, Programme Director, Head of Institute, etc.

When filing a complaint, it is helpful to specify what an acceptable resolution would look like for you. This could range from an immediate apology and explanation to swift actions to rectify the issue.

#### Investigation

Where a frontline response has not been possible, you have the option of raising a formal complaint through [Human Resources](#) or the University [students' complaints team](#).

Both [staff](#) and [student](#) routes include a time limit to the individual submitting a complaint and for the University to respond. Formal complaints will receive a confirmation of receipt within 5 working days, and an outcome expected within 20 working days.

Complaints will be screened and processed by an investigating officer outside of the School.



## ANONYMITY

As a School we recognise the potential power imbalances that can exist between different roles or between staff and students. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to submit an anonymous report we have a School Report + Support [route](#).

This route builds on the pre-existing [University Report + Support system for students](#).

However, by using the local School process, our management team are able to more proactively combat concerns raised from both staff and students. When submitting a complaint, you also have the option to include the contact details of an 'advocate.'

In cases where concerns are brought forward, a supporting staff member—likely someone in a support role, such as a Postdoctoral Advisor—can provide their contact details. This arrangement allows the individual lodging the complaint to remain anonymous if they choose not to disclose personal details but receive feedback on actions the School is taking and provide further clarification if needed.

Complaints submitted through the School Report + Support route will be reviewed by the Head of School and Director of Professional Services alongside an appropriate third party, such as the Director of Graduate School in the case of a research student complaint.

Please note, where there is potential conflict when responding to a particular complaint, the review panel be altered.

## TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Training will be provided by the School on an annual basis to likely advocates, i.e. those in frontline or leadership roles, covering the staff and student complaint routes.

Further support can be accessed from:

- <https://human-resources.ed.ac.uk/learning-development/courses> such as Active Listening, Handling Difficult Conversations and Psychological Safety.
- <https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/learning> covering staff and student EDI learning, including resources to support [disclosures of gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#)
- [Student support resources](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Toolkit](#)

## RELEVANT POLICIES

EDI-related policies such as those below can be found on the [EDI website](#):

- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Trans Policy
- Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy
- Support for Study Policy

Students should be aware of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The staff complaints route and related policy documents can be found on the [HR website](#). In particular please review:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy



Guidance regarding the student complaints route can be found on the [University Secretary's Group website](#).

## FURTHER SUPPORT

Support can be requested for individuals submitting complaints and those being investigated. Please reach out to:

- [School Key Contacts](#) such as Heads of Institute, Head of School and Directors.
- [School Postdoctoral Advisors](#)
- The [Helping Distressed Students guide](#) alongside local contacts for:
  - [Supporting taught students](#)
  - [Supporting research students](#) and [SBS.PGRStudentAdvisor@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SBS.PGRStudentAdvisor@ed.ac.uk)
- College of Science and Engineering HR Partners  
([CSEHRAdvisors@ed.ac.uk](mailto:CSEHRAdvisors@ed.ac.uk); [Jennifer.Syme@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Syme@ed.ac.uk); [sara.murphy@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sara.murphy@ed.ac.uk))
- [Equally Safe Team](#)
- [Intercultural & Anti-Discrimination Team](#)
- [Wellbeing Services](#)
- [EUSA Advice Place](#)
- Counselling Services [for students](#) and [staff](#)

## UNSATISFIED?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been handled after submitting it formally through the student or staff complaints route, we recommend reaching out to:

- The [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman \(SPSO\)](#), who are the final stage for complaints about universities in Scotland.
- Crimestoppers, anonymous reporting to the government (0800 555 111)
- Police Scotland (101 for non-urgent and 999 for urgent issues)