Emil Dale
ACADEMY

Student Complaint Policy

(3 Year Course and 1 Year Course Students)

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1. Introduction

1. Emil Dale Academy is committed to maintaining an effective procedure to allow legitimate complaints to be made about services which fail to deliver to EDA standards. This Policy provides details of EDA's Complaints Procedure for students who wish to make a Complaint.
2. EDA is committed to hearing, considering and investigating genuine complaints from registered students made about EDA, and by proxy University services which fail to deliver to standards set by EDA and the University.
3. All Complaints will be taken seriously, considered fairly in line with this policy and can be made without fear of penalty.
4. EDA is a diverse, outward looking and inclusive place to study and work. We are committed to promoting dignity, respect, tolerance and inclusion in all our activities and we work to sustain an equal and safe environment in a culture of prevention of discrimination of any kind.
5. No person (student, staff or visitor) shall be unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of their perceived race, colour, ethnic or natural origin or nationality, religious or political beliefs, age, gender, transgender status, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, offending background, other personal characteristic or for any other reason.
6. If a student contacts the Principal or Owner directly, without initially following the Complaints procedure, the Complaint will be referred to the student's Course Leader or Head of Department before escalating to Senior Management level.
7. The Owner of EDA will not be involved in any Student Complaints unless in exceptional circumstances.
8. This Policy provides details of EDA's three-stage complaints procedure for registered students who wish to make a Complaint.
9. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, EDA will consider any requested reasonable adjustments to this policy and process to take into account the needs of individual students.
10. This policy is available to access on EDA's website https://www.emildale.co.uk/eda/policies.php.

2. Scope

11. This policy applies to all students on the three year (degree) and 1 year (Cert-HE) course at Emil Dale Academy, in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire.

2.1 What is a Complaint?

12. This policy applies where a registered student wishes to express dissatisfaction, either about the EDA's action or lack of action in accordance with other regulations, policies and procedures, or the standard of service provided by or on behalf of EDA.
13. Examples include, but are not limited to, complaints relating to:
    a. provision or delivery of courses or parts of courses
    b. inadequate supervision on a research degree programme
    c. inadequate services or facilities of the Faculty and/or the University
    d. decisions, actions or perceived lack of action taken by a member of University staff (not relating to academic grades)
    e. decisions, actions or perceived lack of action taken by a central University service; or a member of staff acting on its behalf.
    f. complaints relating to staff conduct
14. The Student Complaints Policy and procedure has three stages (please see section 4 for more detail):
    a. Stage 1 - Local Resolution (see section 5.1)
    b. Stage 2 - Formal Investigation and Resolution (see section 5.2)
    c. Stage 3 - Complaint Review (see section 5.3)
15. The University of Bedfordshire has its own Complaints Policy, and some complaints may fall under the University policy: https://www.beds.ac.uk/media/u0lnnyhu/student-complaints-policy-july-2025.pdf. This policy includes all Faculties, Schools, and administrative offices.

2.2 What is Not a Complaint?

16. The Student Complaints Policy excludes certain Complaints where EDA has separate policies to deal with these circumstances, for example:
    a. Academic Appeals and Procedures – appealing against the outcome of an Examination Board decision – managed by Adjudication.
    b. Academic Integrity – relating to academic offences, for example cheating, collusion, plagiarism, work created by a third party. Students cannot raise a complaint regarding the outcome of the process but may submit a complaint if they consider there has been a procedural irregularity. Please see section 2.21 below.
    c. Student Code of Conduct (Disciplinary) - disciplinary offences including complaints by students about the behaviour of other students – managed by EDA and the Adjudication team at UOB.
    d. Mitigating Circumstances – relating to mitigation in relation to assessments – managed by the University's Student Engagement and Mitigation Team (SEAM).
    e. Harassment – complaints from students concerning harassment by staff members please see section 4.4.3 below.
    f. Whistleblowing - making disclosures in the public interest.
    g. Complaints concerning admissions.
    h. Complaints about General Data Protection Regulations, Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests.
17. This Complaints Policy cannot be used for any of the above purposes.
18. Students cannot use the Complaints Policy following an unsuccessful appeal under the regulations and policies listed above. Although in exceptional circumstances an Academic Appeal may follow a successful Complaint resolution.

2.2.1 Complaints about the Academic Integrity process

19. The Academic Integrity policy does not have a route of appeal. As such, upon completion of the Academic Integrity process, a student may be eligible to lodge a complaint under the Student Complaints Policy if they have evidence to show the Academic Integrity policy was not applied correctly to their case.

2.2.2. Academic Judgement

20. Students cannot use the Complaints Policy to complain about a grade or mark received for an academic piece of work as this would be challenging academic judgement. Academic judgement is a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential.

2.3 Who Can Make a Complaint?

21. The Complaints Policy covers all registered students on the One Year Course with CertHE Musical Theater Performance, and the Three Year Course with BA (Hons) Musical Theatre.
22. This policy is also applicable to students who were recently registered with the EDA and who raise a complaint within three months of leaving their course.

2.3.1 Complaints via a third party

23. If a third party is making a Complaint on behalf of a student, they will need written consent from the student and a valid reason as to why the student is unable to raise a Complaint themselves.
24. Under the UK's Data Protection law, without a student's consent, EDA will not be able confirm whether that person is, or was, a student at EDA or investigate the Complaint.

2.3.2 Anonymous complaints

25. EDA does not accept anonymous Complaints, unless the student can provide a valid reason for wanting to remain anonymous.

26. Anonymous allegations are less easy to investigate and it will be at the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with the Senior Management, to determine whether the Complaint will be considered anonymously, taking into account:
    a. the seriousness of the issues raised;
    b. the credibility of the report;
    c. the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.
27. If a student does not wish their identity to be disclosed to the department or staff member about whom they are complaining, EDA will endeavour to keep their identity confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any Investigation.
28. However, the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence gathering process, and, whilst any written reports will be redacted, their identity may be revealed or implied as part of the Investigation process.
29. Where a student does not give permission for disclosure of their identity, this may result in the case being closed as it may be impossible to investigate the case without disclosing or alluding to their identity.

2.3.3 Vexatious complaints

30. A vexatious complaint is one that is deliberately intended to cause annoyance and/or frustration.
31. If a student makes an allegation that they believe to be true, which is not supported by evidence nor found to be true by a subsequent Investigation, no further action will be taken and the case will be filed as having no case to answer.
32. EDA will not consider unsubstantiated reports that it regards as vexatious or malicious.
33. If, however, on the balance of probabilities, it is determined that a student knowingly raised false or untrue allegations, then EDA may consider disciplinary action against the student themselves under the Student Code of Conduct (Disciplinary Policy).

2.3.4 Frivolous complaints

34. A frivolous complaint is one that is considered to not have any serious purpose or value
35. EDA will not formally investigate complaints which appear in nature to be frivolous insofar as they lack merit, appear to be minor, lacking in factual basis or evidence, and which would be disproportionate to investigate.
36. Students can use the Student Council to raise minor concerns or provide feedback on such matters.

2.3.5 Group complaints

37. A group of students may use this procedure to make a collective Complaint. A group representative must be identified with whom EDA will liaise. All students must give their written consent by email to the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager for this nominated person to act on their behalf.

2.4 Who Cannot Make a Complaint?

38. Complaints relating directly to University of Bedfordshire services must go through University Complaints procedure. This may include registration process, BREO, university finance, UOB Student Union, University library services and other such services provided by UoB as part of the student's registration as a UoB student. EDA will be able to give clarity on that should a complaint arise that is not for EDA to investigate/ resolve.
39. Any Complaint relating to services offered at the University which are provided by external contractors – such as complaints relating to on-campus accommodation, security, or catering - should be directed to the contracted company and not the University in the first instance.
40. Complaints relating to the activities of another student (including, but not limited to, bullying, harassment and discrimination by another student) where they meet a threshold of providing sufficient information to make a meaningful investigation, will be investigated as allegations of student misconduct under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

3. Advice and Guidance

3.1 Advice and Support

41. Authoritative guidance on the application and operation of EDA Complaints Policy may be sought from the Head of Student Experience, Course Leaders or a member of the Senior Management Team.
42. Students are encouraged to seek impartial advice concerning their complaint.
43. If a student is dissatisfied with he outcome of EDA's complaint procedure, they can take their complaint to the University of Bedfordshire's Adjudication Team who may review the case and investigate the stages of complaint followed by EDA, and produce their own outcome. Note, they will only investigate on the basis that the complaint has an impact on the student that relates to the University delivery also. Some Private Sector classes and administration does not fall under the university's remit.

3.2 Monitoring and Reporting

44. Staff or students wanting to comment or make a suggestion about improving one of EDA's services can do so by contacting the Student Council. Such suggestions will be considered carefully, and EDA will provide general information and feedback to the Student Council.
45. For general course or department comments, students may raise these directly with the Course Leader or Head of Department.
46. EDA will prepare a report annually to the adjudication team at the university covering the operation of this policy.
47. EDA constantly seeks to improve its services. The Senior Management, Course Leaders and Heads of Department monitor the complaints received, and the effectiveness of these procedures in addressing them.

4. Policy

4.1 Underlying Principles

48. EDA strongly encourages the local resolution of complaints at the earliest opportunity, before the Stage 2 process under this Policy is required.
49. The underlying principles of EDA's Student Complaints Policy, which should be respected by all those involved, are that:
    a. Complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, as quickly as possible and in a consistent fashion;
    b. Complaints will be treated in a rigorous and fair manner with sensitivity and consideration for all parties concerned;
    c. Confidentiality will be respected throughout;
    d. Submission of a Complaint will not lead to recrimination or adversely affect academic progression provided it is made in good faith and not maliciously or vexatiously;
    e. There is a right for any decision to be subject to further review, including at the final stage, and referral to the University of Bedfordshire;
    f. The use of the Student Complaints Policy does not affect a student's right to pursue legal remedies outside of EDA.

4.2 Expected Behaviours

50. EDA expects students, their representatives and staff members to conduct themselves in a reasonable and polite manner and to treat the complaint process itself with respect when engaging with the Student Complaints Policy and process.
51. If a student, who is pursuing a complaint under any stage of the Student Complaint Policy, behaves in a manner which causes a negative impact on EDA's staff during the complaint process, the student may be referred to the Student Code of Conduct policy and access to the Student Complaint Policy and process may be restricted if necessary.

4.3 Timeframes for making a complaint

4.3.1 Stage 1 – Local Resolution

52. Students should raise an informal Stage 1 complaint with the relevant department to seek a local resolution as soon as they are aware of an issue which needs addressing and within 1 month of the issue arising.

4.3.2 Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

53. Students should raise a Formal Stage 2 complaint within 3 months of the issues arising.
54. A Stage 2 Complaint will not normally be formally investigated if a period of 3 months has elapsed since the alleged action that is the basis of the Complaint. The Principal may exceptionally waive this timeframe, but the student will need to provide a valid reason, with formal evidence, for not being able to raise the Complaint within the relevant timeframe.

4.3.3. Stage 3 – Complaint Review

55. A Stage 3 complaint review can only be submitted to the Senior Management team after Stage 2 has been completed and within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome letter. The Principal may exceptionally waive this timeframe, but the student will need to provide a valid reason, with formal evidence, for not being able to raise the Complaint within the relevant timeframe.
56. A student cannot escalate a Complaint to Stage 3 without completion of Stage 2.

4.4 Complaints against Staff

57. Emil Dale Academy has two categories of people working for them:
    a. PAYE Staff - Staff who are contracted through an employment contract and paid through PAYE
    b. Freelancers – A service agreement is in place, and the person(s) are not on payroll, and therefore are not eligible under the same employment laws
58. Any investigation that is conducted under Stage 2 of the Student Complaints Policy, and where an allegation against a member of staff or freelancer is involved, must be conducted in accordance with principles that ensure a balance between the interests of the student and those of the member of staff involved.
59. These principles include the expectation that there will be:
    a. an assumption of no fault until the balance of evidence from the investigation demonstrates otherwise;
    b. respect for the dignity of the individuals involved;
    c. the right of the member of staff to be told of the Complaint and to know of the evidence presented by the student;
    d. the right of the member of staff to respond to the Complaint and the evidence and to be accompanied by a colleague staff member in any Investigatory meetings or at any stage of the process;
    e. the right of the member of staff to know the outcome;
    f. the right of the member of staff to have confidentiality preserved where there is any consequential action involving the employee.
60. While the investigation is ongoing neither party should contact the other, as this could be perceived as interfering or prejudicing the investigation.
61. Any complaint relating to alleged sexual misconduct or harassment against a member of staff will be referred to the Senior Management team.
62. Where a Complaint involving an allegation of misconduct by a member of staff is upheld this may form the basis of further action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure (either Freelance procedure or PAYE staff procedure).
63. Whilst the student has the right to be told that the appropriate course of action has been followed, details of the outcome will be only disclosed as deemed appropriate and relevant.

4.4.1 Clarity of Complaints raised against "Freelancers"

If a complaint is raised against a Freelancer, the following applies:

64. Any Investigation is conducted by Senior Management, however employment rights do not apply in these circumstances due to the nature of the working agreement with that person(s).
65. Nonetheless, the following principles apply:
    a. an assumption of no fault until the balance of evidence from the Investigation demonstrates otherwise;
    b. respect for the dignity of the individuals involved;
    c. the right of the Freelancer to be told of the Complaint and to know of the evidence presented by the Complainant;
    d. the right of the Freelancer to respond to the Complaint and the evidence and to be accompanied by a colleague or fellow Freelancer in any Investigatory meetings or at any stage of the process;
    e. the right of the Freelancer to know the outcome;
    f. the right of the Freelancer to have confidentiality preserved where there is any consequential action involving the employee.
66. However, the outcomes or consequences for the Freelancer will be determined by Senior Management's investigation and summary of risk. They cannot be subject to a disciplinary process due to the nature of their working agreement, and as such sanctions are navigated under their Freelance agreement principles as opposed to relating to employment law principles. For the avoidance of doubt, a Freelancer is not subject to the same Staff Disciplinary Procedure as a PAYE member of staff.
67. Any Investigation that is conducted under the Formal stages of the Student Complaints Policy, and where an allegation against a member of staff or Freelancer is involved, must be conducted in accordance with principles that ensure a balance between the interests of the Complainant and those of the member of staff or Freelancer involved.

4.5 Student Engagement with the Process and Record Keeping

4.5.1 Stage 1

68. The student should contact the relevant member of staff or department to raise their concerns either in writing or as part of a verbal discussion, making clear the matter that they wish to discuss and the nature of the Complaint that they wish to raise.

4.5.2 Stage 2

69. For a formal investigation, the Investigator may need to conduct a meeting with the student, in which case notes of the meeting discussion will be taken and the student will have the right to be accompanied by a friend, family member or member of the SU for support. See section 4.6 for more detail.

4.5.3.

70. Any Investigation that is conducted under Stage 2 of the Student Complaints Policy, and where an allegation against a member of staff is involved, must be conducted in accordance with principles that ensure a balance between the interests of the student and those of the member of staff involved (see section 4.4 above).

4.5.4 Stage 3

71. The Stage 3 Review will be carried out by a senior member of staff with no prior knowledge of, or involvement in, the case.
72. The Review is a desk-based exercise, in which the appointed member of staff will consider the evidence available, and the previous Stage 2 outcome. They will provide a judgement on whether the original decision was reasonable or not.

4.6.5.

73. Students are expected to engage with the complaint process either on campus or through video-conferencing.
74. It is expected that all cameras will be switched on during an Investigation Interview unless there is a technical reason why this is not possible. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where necessary.

4.5.6.

75. EDA recognises that students have academic and external commitments and will aim to take reasonable account of the personal circumstances of students in arranging interviews and meetings but it is likely that meetings will occur during normal office hours.
76. Students shall be given at least 2 clear working days' notice of an investigation meeting.
77. In the event of a student being unable to attend an interview or meeting, they must contact the Investigator or Senior Management Team before the proposed time in order to seek a deferral. EDA will normally permit one such deferral at the request of a student.
78. Where a student fails to attend an Interview or seeks to defer the meeting unreasonably, EDA may proceed in their absence.

4.5.7.

79. A written record will be made of all Interviews described in this Policy.
80. Where a Stage 1 informal discussion or Stage 2 Investigation meeting takes place, the staff member should keep a written record of the meeting and/or written correspondence and the Faculty is responsible for providing administrative support for these meetings.

4.5.8.

81. At the conclusion of Stage 3, the Reviewer will provide their decision in writing to the Senior Management team. The outcome of the Review will be notified in writing to all concerned by the EA to the Senior Management Team, normally within 10 working days.

4.5.9.

82. Following the Review process all documentation must be returned to the note taker and a single master set of documentation will be retained by the Senior Management Team under safe and secure conditions.

4.7 Support during the process

83. In conducting the Stage 2 Investigation, the Investigator may invite the student to meet with them to discuss the scope and detail of the complaint.
84. At all such meetings, the student can be accompanied by a friend: for example, a fellow student, a member of academic staff, or a contact from outside EDA, such as a member of the family.
85. EDA must be notified of the name and affiliation of the person concerned in advance of the meeting.
86. If the student intends on bringing someone from outside the University to meetings, they must seek approval from EDA in advance. It is not normally necessary to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, but if the student wishes to do this, they must first seek approval and, if so, EDA reserves the right to include a legally qualified colleague to also participate in the meeting.
87. Any accompanying person will not be permitted to present the case on behalf of the student, but will be in attendance to support and to clarify issues as appropriate.

4.8 Witness & Staff Engagement

88. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that any witnesses (students or staff) whom they wish to call in support of their Complaint are available for the Stage 2 investigator to contact.
89. It is the expectation of EDA that members of EDA will support the operation of this Policy. Therefore, staff members who are contacted as part of the Stage 2 investigation process are required to co-operate fully with the process whether called on behalf of EDA or by the person making the Complaint.
90. In exceptional circumstances a staff member may request permission to be excluded from a Stage 2 Investigation. Where it is the view of the Stage 2 investigator that the evidence that can be provided by the staff member is more important to the resolution of the Complaint than the objections of the staff member, then the staff member will be required to participate in this process. Failure to do so may constitute a disciplinary offence.
91. It is the responsibility of the EA to the Senior Management Team, through the Senior Management Team and Complaint Investigator, to ensure that those witnesses whom EDA wishes to call in support of its decision on the Complaint are available for the investigation and are briefed as to the arrangements.

4.9 Mediation

92. At any point prior to the completion of a Stage 3 Review, a request for mediation can be made by either party which the complaint relates to.
93. Mediation will only occur with the agreement of all parties involved, and the formal Complaints Procedure will be suspended while mediation takes place.
94. The purpose of mediation is to provide a forum for reaching a decision on, or solution to, a student's Complaint.
95. The mediation forum consists of the student raising the complaint, the person the complaint relates to and an independent mediator. Both parties will have an individual meeting with the mediator at the beginning, and then both parties will join the mediator for a final discussion to reach an agreed conclusion on how to move forward. The mediation process is confidential.
96. The mediation procedure may be invoked or rejected by either party which the complaint relates to.
97. The key features of the mediation procedure are that it provides a forum for the discussion of key issues contributing to the case, and that members agree at the outset to abide by the outcomes of the discussion.
98. The successful outcome of the mediation forum concludes the complaints process. If an agreement is not reached the student can pursue the complaint further under Stage 1 or Stage 2 of this complaint process.

5. Process

5.1 Stage 1 – Local Resolution

5.1.1 When to raise a Stage 1 complaint?

99. Stage 1 of the complaint process requires students to raise issues directly with the relevant department.
100. Students should raise issues with the relevant department as soon as they're aware that something isn't right.
101. This allows the issue to be considered and resolved quickly so that the student doesn't need to raise a formal complaint.
102. This will enable the department to address the issue quickly to minimise any impact on the student experience and studies.
103. Students are not required to provide substantial evidence when raising a complaint with the department at Stage 1, but if they have documents to support the point being made it can be helpful to show this.

5.1.2 Who to contact for a Stage 1 complaint?

104. Students should contact a relevant member of staff in the appropriate department that the issue relates to:
    a. A general concern/comment or feedback? – Contact a Student Council representative
    b. An issue with your course? – speak to your Course Leader or Head of Department.
    c. An issue with your course registration? – Speak to The University of Bedfordshire registration team or the Admissions Team at EDA
    d. An issue with the Library? – speak to Head of Library Services at the University or the Degree Course Leader
    e. An issue with your tuition fee? – speak to the relevant Student Finance Faculty Office or Credit Services teams at the University, or the accounts department at EDA by emailing accounts@emildale.co.uk

5.1.3. Stage 1 Outcomes – Putting Things Right, Remedies and Resolutions

105. Once an issue has been raised informally at Stage 1 with the right staff member in the relevant department, the staff member should take reasonable steps to put things right with a relevant practical remedy if required.

5.1.4. What to do if you're dissatisfied with your Stage 1 outcome?

106. If you have raised the issue with the relevant member of staff in the appropriate department, and you believe the actions taken to remedy the issue were not satisfactory, you may be able to submit a Stage 2 Formal Complaint to the Senior Management team (see section 5.2 below).

5.2 Stage 2 - The Formal Complaint Investigation Process

5.2a Stage 2 - Submitting a Stage 2 Complaint

5.2.1. When to raise a Stage 2 complaint?

107. Students should raise a Stage 2 complaint within 10 working days of receiving the response to Stage 1 of the process, and within 3 months of the last action related to the issue which is the basis of the complaint.

5.2.2 How to make a Stage 2 complaint?

108. Students can raise a Stage 2 complaint by submitting a fully completed Stage 2 Formal Complaint form, with relevant evidence, to the Senior Management team by email at accounts@emildale.co.uk

5.2.3. Raising a Stage 2 complaint after raising the same complaint at Stage 1

109. Students should always attempt to raise a complaint at Stage 1 where possible. If you have received a response to your complaint at Stage 1 and you remain dissatisfied, you may be able to raise a complaint at Stage 2. You will need to state why you remain dissatisfied and provide supporting evidence.

5.2.4. Evidence in support of your complaint – the burden of proof

110. When making a Stage 2 Formal complaint or Stage 3 Review request, it is for the student to show how the circumstances of which they have complained have affected them and their studies.
111. Students are required to submit supporting evidence alongside the Stage 2 complaint form in order to substantiate the issue raised in the complaint form.
112. Types of evidence could include, but are not limited to:
    a. Email trails regarding the issue, showing names, dates and times of emails sent
    b. Names of students or staff who have witnessed an issue or incident
    c. Statements from students or staff who have witnessed an issue or incident
    d. Copies of assignment briefs
113. All evidence submitted will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team team for its relevance to the complaint being raised.

5.2.5 After you submit your Stage 2 complaint to the Senior Management Team

114. Upon submitting the Stage 2 complaint form and evidence to the Senior Management team, a member of the team will review the information provided in the complaint form along with the evidence provided by the student, and will establish if it meets the grounds for investigation in accordance with section 2.5 above.
115. If after carrying out the above checks the team member is content that the threshold for a formal investigation has been met, the Advisor will contact the relevant Head of Department to request a suitably independent and senior member of staff is appointed to investigate the complaint.

5.2.6. Flexibility and adjustments

116. If a student requires reasonable adjustments to enable them to access the Student Complaint process EDA will endeavor to be flexible where possible whilst maintaining the integrity of the complaint investigation process.
117. Students will be able to notify the Senior Management team of any adjustments they require either via the Stage 2 Formal Complaint form, or via email to accounts@emildale.co.uk

5.2.7. Confidentiality

118. We are here to support Complainants and if there is a particularly sensitive issue to raise, the Complainant can approach a member of the EDA team for help. We will endeavour to make sure that any such Complaint is known to the smallest number of staff necessary to undertake a thorough investigation and that staff deal with the Complaint on a confidential basis. Please also see section 2.3.2 – Anonymous Complaints

5.2b Stage 2 - Investigating a Stage 2 Complaint

5.2.8 Role of the investigator

119. The Stage 2 Formal complaint investigator's role is to establish the facts of the issues raised in the student's complaint, and to establish if there is evidence to support the issues raised.
120. The investigator will interview the student who has raised the complaint to gain a thorough understanding of the issues at the center of the complaint.
121. The investigator can also interview any witnesses named by the student, if the investigator deems this to be necessary.
122. The investigator will also make enquiries internally within EDA to gain a full understanding of the events that have taken place in order to make an informed decision based on the evidence available.
123. Once the investigator has all the information and evidence available, they will consider the facts and write up an investigation report which will be sent to the Senior Management Team before being sent to the student.

5.2.9. Who will investigate the complaint?

124. A member of the Senior Management Team will nominate a suitably independent and senior member of staff to investigate the complaint. In sensitive cases or in instances where an independent member of staff cannot be found from within the college, an investigator may be appointed from another partner to ensure impartiality.

5.2.10. Timeframe for investigating a Formal complaint

125. The investigator will aim to complete the investigation within two months from the point the Senior Management Team confirms the Stage 2 complaint meets the threshold for investigation and it being allocated to an investigator.

5.2.11. How the outcome decision is made – the Standard of Proof for decision making

126. When deciding on the outcome of a Stage 2 Formal complaint, the standard of proof applied is that of the balance of probability; that on the evidence put forward, it is more likely than not that something was or was not the case.

5.2c Stage 2 - Complaint Outcomes Resolutions, Putting Things Right, and Complaints which are Not Upheld

5.2.12. Complaints which are Upheld or Partially Upheld; Putting things right

127. After a Stage 2 Formal investigation has taken place, the investigator will indicate whether the complaint, or elements of the complaint, are upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.
128. If there are elements of a complaint which are upheld or partially upheld the relevant Department and Adjudication team will consider what it can do to put things right.
129. Usually, this would aim to return the student to the position they would have been in had the issue not occurred. We will always try to implement an academic remedy where possible.
130. Consideration will also be given to the desired outcome stated by the student on the Stage 2 Formal Complaint form, however, it is not always possible.

5.2.13. What to do if you're dissatisfied with your Stage 2 resolution?

131. If some, or all of the student complaint, is upheld and a reasonable resolution is offered to the student, it is up to the student to decide if they wish to accept or reject the resolution.
132. If the student wishes to reject the resolution they can email accounts@emildale.co.uk within 10 working days of the date of their Stage 2 outcome, explaining their reasons why they believe the proposed resolution is inadequate. This will then be forwarded on to the adjudication team at the University of Bedfordshire.
133. The Head of Adjudication and Academic Integrity may give consideration to the reasons for rejection and, in exceptional cases, may explore further settlement options with the student where appropriate.
134. If no further settlement can be reached the student will be issued with a Completion or Procedures letter concluding their case with the University and advising of their rights going forward.

5.2.14. Complaints which are Not Upheld; What to do if you don't get the Stage 2 outcome you want?

135. Students are entitled to seek a Stage 3 Review of the decision concerning their Stage 2 Complaint outcome if they meet the grounds for a Stage 3 Review (see section 5.3). Alternatively students can request a Completion of Procedures letter to take the complaint to the OIA if the case does not satisfy the grounds to request a Stage 3 Review.

5.3 Stage 3 - Review Process

136. If a Student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 Investigation, they may then choose to escalate their complaint to the University of Bedfordshire, and therefore must refer to the University of Bedfordshire Student Complaints Policy.

5.3a Stage 3 - Grounds for a Stage 3 Review

137. Where a Stage 2 complaint is found to be Not Upheld or Partially Upheld, a student can seek a Stage 3 Review of the decision concerning their Stage 2 Complaint outcome at a Stage 3 Complaint Review only where:
    a. there is evidence that the stage 2 Investigation did not include in its deliberations all relevant issues, and any relevant issues identified as not included during the Stage 2 Investigation are material to the decision and do not constitute a new basis for Complaint;
    b. there is evidence that the Stage 2 Investigation was not operated in accordance with policy.

5.3b Stage 3 - Applying for a Stage 3 Review?

138. Students should email the accounts@emildale.co.uk advising of their intention to seek a Stage 3 Review, normally within 10 working days of having received the outcome from Stage 2.
139. The student should include a copy of the original Stage 2 complaint form, accompanied by the Stage 3 form (Appendix 3) giving details of;
    a. what action has been taken to resolve the Complaint at previous stages
    b. what grounds they're lodging the Stage 3 Review request under (see section 5.3.1)
    c. what evidence they have to support their grounds
    d. why the student remains dissatisfied
    e. what they are trying to achieve by requesting review

140. The Stage 3 Review will be based on the evidence originally submitted by that Student at Stage 2 of the process. Students will not ordinarily be able to submit new evidence for the Stage 3 Review unless any new evidence provided is material to the decision and could not have been reasonably provided by the student at Stage 2 of the process.
141. If a student's request for a Stage 3 Review does not meet the grounds stated above, the EDA will provide them with a Completion of Procedures letter.

5.3c Stage 3 - The Review

142. EDA will record and acknowledge the request for a Review, normally within 5 working days of receipt, and will inform the University of Bedfordshire Adjudication team.
143. Where the Senior Management Team determines that there are grounds for a Stage 3 Review of the Stage 2 Formal Complaint, EDA will refer the case files to the University of Bedfordshire Adjudication team, with no prior involvement to undertake a Review of the Stage 2 complaint outcome and evidence.
144. Where the University determines there are no grounds for the Stage 3 review, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter and notified of their right to pursue the matter further with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
145. The purpose of the Stage 3 Review is not to re-investigate the matters raised, but to determine;
    a. whether the decision reached at Stage 2 was reasonable and appropriate in light of the evidence available
    b. whether the relevant procedures were followed during the investigation process, and whether any identified procedural errors had a material impact on the outcome (e.g. if the investigation took longer than stipulated in the policy).
    c. whether the student was given a clear reason for the complaint outcome at Stage 2
    d. and in exceptional circumstances, whether any new evidence provided by the Student at Stage 3 has a material impact on the outcome of the complaint and there is good reason to explain why it could not have been provided by the Student at Stage 2 of the process.

5.3d Stage 3 - Review Outcomes

146. At the conclusion of the Stage 3 Review, the University member of staff will set out their conclusions in writing to the EDA Senior Management Team. The Reviewer will state if the original decision should be upheld, or not, giving reasons for this decision.
147. If the Reviewer decides the original decision and/or recommendations should be overturned and/or amended, the Reviewer will confirm this in their outcome to the EDA Senior Management Team setting out their recommended changes.
148. Following the Review process all documentation must be returned to the note taker and a single master set of documentation will be retained by the EDA Senior Management Team under safe and secure conditions in accordance with retention policy.
149. The decision of the Stage 3 Review will be final and bring the Investigation of the Complaint to a close, and the student will receive a Completion of Procedures letter which will include the Stage 3 Review response.
150. If the student remains dissatisfied with the University's response, they have the right to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if the complaint is related to matters that directly involve the University.

6. Other linked policies

151. This policy should be read and its use considered with reference to:

EDA policies:

a. Student Code of Conduct (3 Year Course and 1 Year Course) - disciplinary offences including complaints by students about the behaviour of other students. Managed by Course Leaders or Senior Management

b. Degree and CertHE Academic Integrity Policy – links directly to UoB policy

c. Casting and Streaming Policy – casting or streaming decisions - complaints managed by Heads of Department

d. Staff and Students Relationship Policy – appropriate communication and relationship boundaries between staff/ freelancers/ contractors and students – managed by Senior Management

UOB Policies:

Academic Appeals: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/academic-appeals-policy/

Academic Misconduct: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/academic-misconduct/

Student Code of Conduct: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/student-code-ofconduct/

Mitigating Circumstances: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-support/mitigation/

Fitness to Practise: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/fitness-to-practise/ FtP contact for HSS Faculty: causeforconcern@beds.ac.uk

Fitness to Study: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-experience/academic-information/fitness-to-study/

Further advice and support can be received from: Student Engagement and Experience

https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-support/ https://www.beds.ac.uk/sid/

Support and Report: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-support/supportandreport/

BedsSU: https://bedssu.co.uk/

Contact: help@bedssu.co.uk

Safeguarding: https://www.beds.ac.uk/student-support/supportandreport/policies-and-processes/

Public Interest Disclosure – Whistleblowing: https://in.beds.ac.uk/media/odolo0as/whistleblowing-policy.pdf

GDPR: https://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-governance/public-information/gdpr/ Office of the Independent Adjudicator https://www.oiahe.org.uk/

Adjudication: adjudication@beds.ac.uk

Admissions: admission@beds.ac.uk

People and Culture: P&C@beds.ac.uk

Document Control

Version Number	Date of Issue	Review Date	Author	Changes Made/ detail
01	8th September 2023	July 2024	Sarah Moore	First issue
02	24th July 2024	July 2025	Sarah Moore	Reviewed and confirmed policy remains current, adding Cert-He (1 year course) references. Added numbering
03	22nd October 2025	Sept 2026	Sarah Moore	Updated in line with the university policy
04	11th November 2025	Sept 2026	Sarah Moore	Numbering corrected

Appendix 1: Stage Two – Formal Student Complaint Form

Please read the Student Complaints Policy before completing this form.

All sections of this form must be **completed in full** and **official supporting evidence** must be provided.

Please sign and date the form and include all evidence, and return to either the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager (sarah@emildale.co.uk) or the Principal (vicky@emildale.co.uk) - Please only send to ONE of these members of staff.

Your Complaint will be delayed if you do not complete this form in full.

Section A - Your Details

Student Name		**Email Address**	
Course Title/ Year Group		**Address for correspondence**	
Phone Number(s)			

Section B - Reasonable Adjustments

1. Do you require reasonable adjustments to be made to this process or correspondence to be sent to an authorised representative because of your disability? (If yes, please provide details of the adjustments or authorised representative and evidence of your disability where available).

Section C – Stage 1 Action that you have taken

1. **Please provide details of attempts you've made to resolve the complaint informally at Stage 1.**

• Name of the staff member you discussed the complaint with:

• Job title:

• Department/Service:

• Date discussed:

2. **Please state what the outcome was at Stage 1 and why you remain dissatisfied with response.**

3. **If you have not raised your complaint at Stage 1 with the relevant department, please explain why.**

Note: If you have not attempted to resolve your complaint with the relevant department at Stage 1 when you could reasonably do so, your Stage 2 complaint will be rejected and you will be referred to Stage 1 of the process.

Section D – Your Complaint and desired outcome

1. Please state clearly and concisely the nature and key points of your complaint. Describe what has happened to give rise to the complaint; include key events, dates and other details – a timeline of events can be helpful.

2. Please provide a list of all items of evidence that you have submitted to be considered as part of the complaint, including any witness statements. The evidence that you supply must be complete, relevant and proportionate.

Evidence	Date of Evidence	Relevance of Evidence

3. If your complaint is about a matter which took place over 3 months ago, or it has been over 10 working days since Stage 1 Local Resolution was attempted, please confirm your reason for lateness (you need to include evidence of your reason).

4. Please state what outcome you are hoping to obtain following your complaint.

DECLARATION
By submitting this form to the Senior Management Team I confirm that:

• I have read the Student Complaints Policy and understand that my Complaint will only be considered within the terms of this Policy and EDA and where necessary, the University Regulations.
• The information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge;
• I understand that if any information I have provided is found to be false I may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.
• I agree that information about my Complaint may be gathered from within EDA and the University by members of staff in EDA and the University. I agree that my name and other necessary information about the Complaint may be disclosed, this is in order to investigate my Complaint properly, and to balance fairness with the rights of the person/department about whom the Complaint is made.
• I also understand and accept that the outcome of Formal Complaints must be recorded for the purposes of monitoring and analysing Complaints generally. At the University, these will be used for reporting to Academic Board for monitoring and evaluation in terms of quality assurance as the University is required to under the section of the QAA Code of Practice on Appeals and Complaints.

Your Name (Block Capitals/ Typed)	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 2: Stage Three – Complaint Review Form

Please read the Student Complaints Policy before completing this form.
If you need help completing the form, you should contact a member of the EDA Faculty to assist you.

All sections of this form must be completed in full and official supporting evidence must be provided and should be submitted to the Senior Management Team along with a copy of the original Stage 2 form for consideration of a complaint at Stage 3.

Please sign and date the form and return to accounts@emildale.co.uk; this will be forwarded on to the University of Bedfordshire Adjudication Team.

Your Complaint will be delayed if you do not complete this form in full.

Section A - Your Details

Student Name		**Email Address**	
Course Title/ Year Group		**Address for correspondence**	
Phone Number(s)			

Section B - Reasonable Adjustments

1. Do you require reasonable adjustments to be made to this process or correspondence to be sent to an authorised representative because of your disability? (If yes, please provide details of the adjustments or authorised representative and evidence of your disability where available).

Section C – Stage 1 Action that you have taken

1. You must submit the Stage 3 review request within 10 working days of the date of your Stage 2 outcome, please provide the following information:

- **Date of the Stage 2 outcome:**
- **Outcome given:**
- **Resolutions proposed (if relevant):**

Please note if your complaint has not been investigated at Stage 2, you cannot request a Stage 3 review.

2. Please state under which grounds you are requesting a review of your Stage 2 complaint outcome (relevant excerpt from the policy below):

"The purpose of the Stage 3 Review is not to re-investigate the matters raised, but to determine; a) whether the decision reached at Stage 2 was reasonable and appropriate in light of the evidence available b) whether the relevant procedures were followed during the investigation process, and whether any identified procedural errors had a material impact on the outcome (e.g. if the investigation took longer than stipulated in the policy). c) whether the student was given a clear reason for the complaint outcome at Stage 2 d) and in exceptional circumstances, whether

any new evidence provided by the Student at Stage 3 has a material impact on the outcome of the complaint and there is good reason to explain why it could not have been provided by the Student at Stage 2 of the process"

3. Please state why you remain dissatisfied with the response to your stage 2 complaint?

Note: If you do not provide clear grounds in accordance with the Student Complaint Policy, with evidence in support of your request for a Stage 3 review of your complaint, your request will be rejected, and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter.

DECLARATION

By submitting this form to the Senior Management Team for review by the University of Bedfordshire, I confirm that:

- I have read the Student Complaints Policy and understand that my Complaint will only be considered within the terms of this Policy and the University Policy and Regulations.
- The information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand that if any information I have provided is found to be false I may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.
- I agree that information about my Complaint may be gathered from within the University by members of staff in the University as directed by the Adjudication Team. I agree that my name and other necessary information about the Complaint may be disclosed, this is in order to investigate my Complaint properly, and to balance fairness with the rights of the person/department about whom the Complaint is made.
- I also understand and accept that the outcome of Stage 2 Complaint must be recorded for the purposes of monitoring and analysing Complaints generally, and for reporting to Academic Board for monitoring and evaluation in terms of quality assurance as the University is required to under the section of the QAA Code of Practice on Appeals and Complaints.

Your Name (Block Capitals/ Typed)	
Signature	
Date	