

Acceptable Behaviour Information for Students

1. Introduction

The University is committed to providing a positive experience for all students, where individuals are treated with courtesy and consideration, where difference is valued and diversity respected. As members of the University community, we expect the highest standards of behaviour from our staff and students, whether on University premises or elsewhere.

All members of the University should be aware of their own behaviour and how it impacts on others. All members of the University are expected to conduct themselves in a reasonable and acceptable manner. These guidelines set out what to do if you feel that a member of the University has behaved in an unacceptable manner, either on University premises or off.

2. Unacceptable behaviour

There are several options available when you experience behaviour that you find unacceptable

- Try to speak directly to the person responsible for the behaviour – they may genuinely not know that they are acting in a way that's unacceptable to you. (Only try this if you feel comfortable taking this step or if it is appropriate).
- Discuss the matter with family and friends. Do they agree that the behaviour is unacceptable?
- Go and talk to someone in your Students' Union. The [Just Ask Team](#) in the Students' Union building offers independent advice and support to students on these issues. Some forms of behaviour can be very subtle and it can often help to talk through your experiences with a third party. The Team can also refer to the University Mediation Service which helps people to communicate with each other when a dispute has arisen.
- Discuss the issue with your Personal Tutor, Supervisor, Senior Tutor, Warden (if the issue relates to behaviour in Halls) or other appropriate member of staff – basically anybody who you feel comfortable with – to discuss ways in which the situation can be resolved with their support and/or involvement.
- Online reporting tool – you can use this if you want the University to know about a certain behaviour, report behaviour you have observed or experienced and make the University aware without taking formal action.
- Submit a formal complaint under this policy (see section 3 below)

Confidentiality

If information is to be kept confidential, you must make this clear to the person to whom any complaint is made. You should understand that in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible for confidentiality to be respected, for instance where a criminal offence has been disclosed. You should also understand that in some circumstances a request/requirement for confidentiality may make it difficult for the University to assist you with your complaint.

Any allegations of criminal acts – such as physical assault, rape or sexual assault - should be reported to the police immediately. The University may report allegations of criminal activity to the police.

3. Making a formal complaint

You can complete the appropriate Student Complaint Form (see Annex B) or put your complaint in writing and submit it electronically by email to the Student Complaints Officer (SCO), student-complaints@bristol.ac.uk. The SCO is based in the University Secretary's Office and will determine how your complaint will be progressed. The SCO will contact you as soon as possible, normally within ten working days of receiving your complaint.

It may not be possible to deal with allegations against individuals who are not students or staff at the University under this policy – for example, agency or contract workers - as they are not subject to the University's internal procedures. In these circumstances, you will be advised of other possible ways to pursue your complaint. University services such as the Just Ask Team or the Student Wellbeing Service can provide advice and support to students in such circumstances. The [Student Counselling Service](#) can also offer support to students experiencing difficulties as a result of such behaviour.

4. What happens next? – See flowchart Annex A

If you have complained about the behaviour of a student

The SCO will consider if reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the issue informally. In some cases, the SCO might find a way to resolve the complaint through informal means that have not yet been explored or through mediation, involving other members of staff as appropriate.

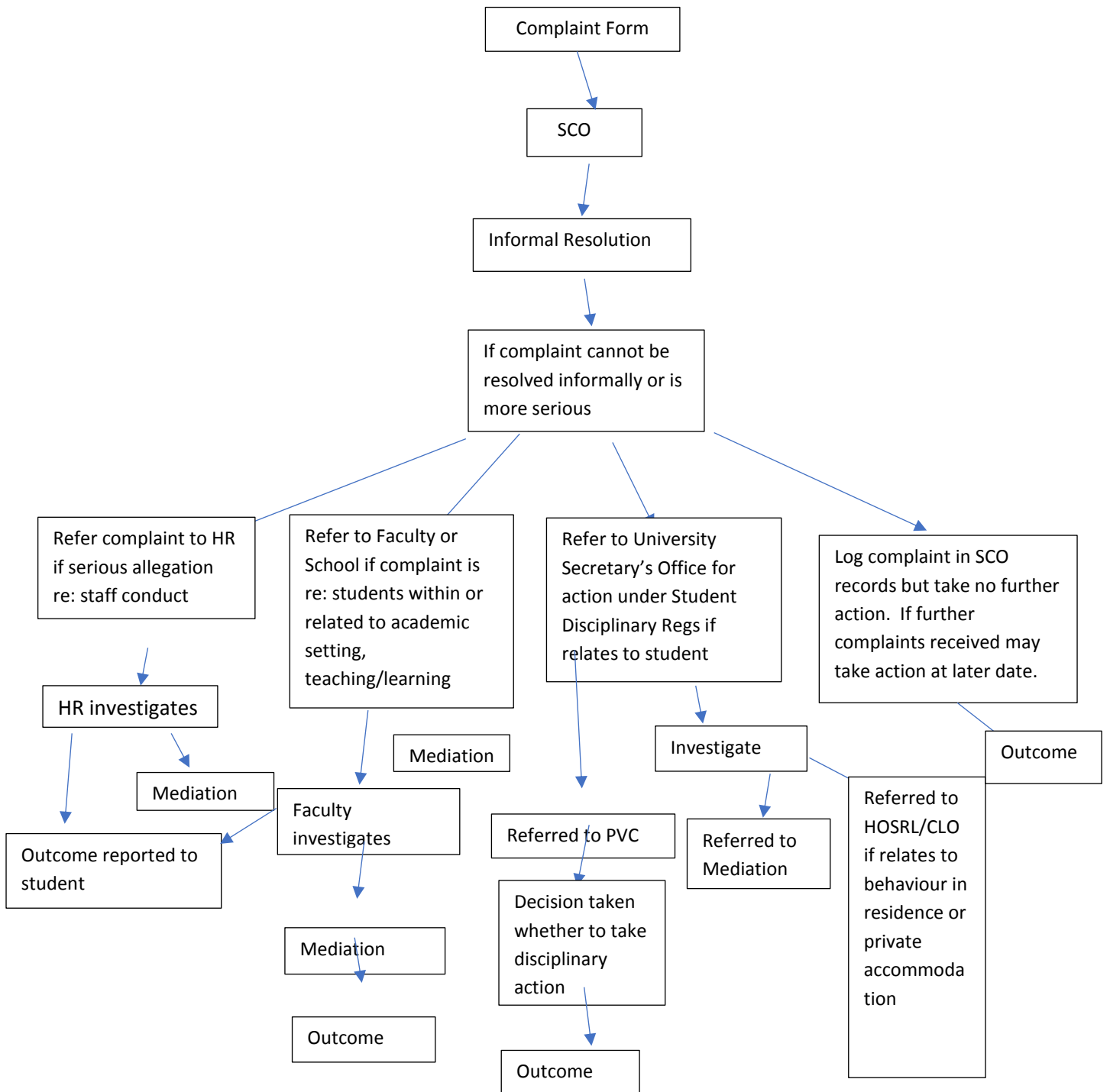
Where informal resolution is not possible or where the matter is deemed more serious, the complaint will be referred for consideration under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#).

If you have complained about the behaviour of a member of staff

Allegations made against members of staff will normally be passed to the relevant HR Team under the [Conduct Procedure for Members of Staff \(Ordinance 28\)](#). The HR team will explore whether the matter can be resolved by informal means, such as mediation before taking formal action. Any action taken under this procedure is subject to a high standard of confidentiality as set out in the Procedure itself. However, this does not prevent information about the outcome of any action taken under this Procedure being given to any person where this is appropriate.

You should be aware that legitimate and constructive criticism of a student's performance or behaviour, or reasonable requests made of students by members of staff will not constitute unacceptable behaviour under this guidance.

Annex A – Formal Complaint.



ANNEX B

STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM: ALLEGATION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Please note – this form will be available to download from the [student forms web page](#) and on the web as an Annex to this Guidance.

You can also submit details of your complaint by email to the Student Complaints Officer

Student-Complaints@bristol.ac.uk

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name:

Student ID No:

Programme and Year of Study:

Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint*:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email address:

**In the case of a Group Complaint, please attach a list of complainants and their details on a separate sheet of paper*

The University will communicate with you about your complaint by email (current students will normally be contacted through their University email address only) or by post to the address you have given above. It is important that you keep your contact details up to date and notify the Student Complaints Officer of any changes.

2. NATURE OF COMPLAINT

Are your allegations being made against:

- A member of staff
- A student
- Other (please state)

3. DETAILS **

3.1 Please provide details of your complaint, providing as much information as possible relating to the allegations you are making in terms of dates, specific incidents, and any supporting evidence as appropriate. As far as possible, present the events leading up to the incident(s) in chronological order. This will help the person reading your complaint to understand the history and context of the issue.

3.2 Please set out the steps you have taken to address the matter through informal means, including who you have approached to resolve your complaint. If you have been unable to take steps to address the matter please say why this has not been possible.

3.3 Please indicate what outcome or further action you are seeking.

4. DECLARATION

I declare that the information provided in this form is to the best of my knowledge true, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed:

Date:

**** Factors to consider when providing details under Section 3:**

- ✓ *Do not assume that the reader of the complaint will be familiar with the situation you are describing, or the people involved. Make sure that somebody reading it for the first time can immediately understand the issues and when and where they arose. For example, instead of saying 'my tutor', name the individual you are referring to.*
- ✓ *Be specific: if an incident has occurred, try and detail the exact date(s) on which it happened. If an incident has arisen that made you feel uncomfortable or harassed, you should try and describe exactly what happened and why it made you feel that way. It's important to spell out as clearly as possible how you have been affected by the incident(s).*
- ✓ *Provide documentary evidence wherever possible. This can be in the form of copies of emails, written correspondence you have received, screen shots or print outs of comments/messages posted on social media – basically anything that supports the allegations you are making.*
- ✓ *Provide details of any action you have taken to try to resolve the situation yourself through personal action – for example, making the person aware of the impact their behaviour is having on you – and why this was unsuccessful. If you have been unable to take steps yourself to resolve the situation, ensure that you provide details as to why this is the case.*

Once completed, please return your form to Student-Complaints@bristol.ac.uk