



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Student Complaints

Procedure

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Student Complaints

The University College of Estate Management (UCEM) is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience through its programme provision and range of services. It encourages a positive environment in which informal contact and feedback from students is welcomed and where constructive complaints can be dealt with effectively. On the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), students will find a 'Have your Say' section, where they are encouraged to provide both compliments and suggestions on how UCEM can improve the quality of its service.

UCEM has an open, fair and accessible Student Complaints Procedure in order to encourage the prompt resolution of problems at the earliest stage possible.

In this guide, you will find information about making complaints.

The Procedure applies to all individuals who are applying to study or are studying on UCEM programmes. Former students may complain according to the timelines set out in this Procedure.

The following contact details are applicable to students on all programmes:

Complaints Officer,

University College of Estate Management,

Horizons,

60 Queens Road,

Reading,

RG1 4BS.

Email: complaints@ucem.ac.uk

Please ensure you read this guide, to familiarise yourself with the procedure.

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Student Complaints

1. Introduction

- 1.1 UCEM is committed to delivering a high quality service and maintaining effective procedures, whether students are studying in the UK or overseas, enabling students to bring forward complaints where there is cause for concern. It is UCEM's aim to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interests of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. UCEM is keen to ensure that the interests and wellbeing of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded.
- 1.2 UCEM aims to handle complaints in a manner which:
- encourages informal conciliation nearest to the source of the complaint;
 - is efficient and fair;
 - treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality;
 - facilitates early resolution;
 - where relevant, ensures that UCEM practice improves as a result.
- 1.3 The UK Quality Assurance Agency (UK Quality Code for Higher Education chapter B9 Academic appeals and student complaints, 2015) advises that dealing with a complaint fairly and justly should involve:
- dealing with the complaint in a way that is proportionate to the complexity of the issues and the resources of the parties involved;
 - making provision for opportunities for early or informal resolution;
 - ensuring, as far as possible, that the parties involved are on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in the proceedings, including assisting or otherwise facilitating the complainant in presentation of their case;
 - avoiding delay as far as is compatible with fairness and the proper consideration of the matter;
 - ensuring that where a complaint is upheld appropriate action is taken.
- 1.4 The procedures outlined below have been established with the aim, where possible, of resolving complaints informally and through negotiation between those individuals who are immediately concerned with the issue. UCEM recognises, however, that some complaints cannot be resolved by informal means alone and may require formal intervention. The formal procedure is therefore available to students in the event that informal pursuit of a complaint proves unsatisfactory.
- 1.5 If a complaint is deemed by UCEM to be of a particularly serious nature, UCEM reserves the right to move the complaint to formal investigation at the most appropriate stage of the procedures from the outset.

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- 1.6 UCEM believes that an open, fair and accessible complaints procedure is in everybody's interest, and indeed that its existence encourages the prompt resolution of problems at the earliest stage. UCEM is confident that the overwhelming majority of students will use this procedure in a positive spirit. However, it is possible that a very small minority may misuse the procedure. In exceptional circumstances, therefore, UCEM reserves the right to investigate complaints, and then to decline to consider any that are merely vexatious or abusive. UCEM will provide a brief response outlining the reasons for deciding not to investigate further but will not enter into lengthy correspondence about such cases. Making repeated and/or unfounded false, malicious and vexatious complaints may be considered misconduct and result in the application of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 1.7 Guidance provided by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in May 2007 states that monitoring complaints is an effective way of helping institutions to ensure that procedures are fair and are working as intended. Details of any complaints, including outcome, will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the UCEM Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees. The complaint log will be analysed for evidence of continuous improvement in processes and provision and ensure that trends in failure of provision or delivery have been identified and rectified. An anonymised summary of complaints on record and how they have been managed will also be reported annually to the Academic Board.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 A 'complaint' is defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about UCEM's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of UCEM*'.
- 2.2 An 'appeal' is '*a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions about students' progression, assessment, and awards*'. Procedures for appeals are dealt with through a different process, as detailed in the Student Appeals Guidance Notes on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A formal complaint cannot be raised whilst a matter is in the process of being considered as an appeal.
- 2.3 A person who makes a complaint is known as the 'complainant'.

3. Guide to Making a Complaint

3.1 Why should I complain?

- 3.1.1 No service is perfect: mistakes can happen, things could be arranged better. Students are encouraged to let us know if things could be improved. If we are not aware that there is a problem, we cannot put it right. Alerting us to problems can also help other students and future students to get a better service. By raising a complaint where you feel there is real justification you are helping yourself, helping other students and helping UCEM.

3.2 What is the timescale for making a complaint?

- 3.2.1 The complaint must be raised informally (Stage 1) normally within 20 working days of the cause for complaint. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 the complainant must raise the complaint to Stage 2, normally within 20 working days of receipt of the outcome of Stage 1.

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- 3.2.2 If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 2 the complainant must raise the complaint to Stage 3, normally within 20 working days of the outcome of Stage 2.
- 3.2.3 Please see sections 4.4 to 6 for particular provisions for those studying on a programme validated by, or delivered in conjunction with, partner institutions.
- 3.2.4 If the complainant at the end of the UCEM process is still not satisfied and wishes to raise the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) this must occur within twelve months of receipt of the 'Completion of Procedures letter'.
- 3.2.5 Only in exceptional circumstances will UCEM consider a complaint outside of these timescales, where there is medical evidence, such as mental health issues which has prevented submission. Requests will be considered in consultation with the Disability and Wellbeing Adviser, to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 Can someone make a complaint on my behalf?

- 3.3.1 A student should submit their own complaint. In exceptional circumstances, a complaint may be submitted on behalf of a student by a third party who has a personal connection with the student. Such a complaint must include signed written authorisation by the student. This procedure accords with the UK Data Protection Act and with practice across the UK higher education sector. In dealing with the complaint, UCEM may still wish to have direct contact with the student during the investigation process.
- 3.3.2 Please note that there is a separate process for complaints for employers of apprenticeship students (please see the UCEM Complaints Policy and Procedure for Employers of Apprentices).

3.4 Can a group of students make a complaint together?

- 3.4.1 If a group of students are dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint, a group complaint may be submitted, following the usual complaints process. However, a spokesperson should be nominated from the group, who will be the contact person with UCEM. It will be the responsibility of the contact person to liaise with the other students who are part of the group complaint.

3.5 Can I make an anonymous complaint?

- 3.5.1 Only in exceptional circumstances can an anonymous complaint be made, and there must be exceptional reasons why the complaint has to be anonymous. These should be discussed with the Complaints Officer in the first instance.

3.6 What if I don't want to complain because it might affect my assessment?

- 3.6.1 UCEM has made a commitment that no student will be penalised for complaining, and guidance has been given to academic staff to this effect. Members of staff involved in handling the various stages of a particular complaint are obliged to ensure that such a complaint does not influence the assessment of the complainant's academic work, or the way in which the student is treated.

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3.7 Will the person I complain about find out?

- 3.7.1 Individuals who are the subject of a complaint are entitled to know who is complaining and the nature of the complaint. If you are at all concerned about this, you should get advice from the Complaints Officer. If, in exceptional circumstances and for justifiable documented reasons, a complainant wishes to remain anonymous (see 3.5), this may be considered, for example in the initial stages of harassment procedures. However, the Complaints Officer will normally wish to undertake confidential discussions in person with the complainant.

3.8 How will the complaint be resolved?

- 3.8.1 When making any sort of complaint, it is always worth the complainant thinking about how the complaint can be resolved and what UCEM can do to address the problem. This can help the complainant when formulating the complaint and makes it clear to the person addressing the complaint what outcome is desired.
- 3.8.2 UCEM will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that where a complaint is upheld, appropriate remedial action is taken. Any resulting restitution could include reasonable and proportionate expenses necessarily incurred by a successful complainant.

3.9 What support can I expect during the complaints process?

- 3.9.1 The Complaints Officer is there to provide advice and guidance throughout the complaints process. The Complaints Officer can help determine whether your case is best dealt with as an appeal, complaint or complaint about staff conduct, and will also guide you through the various stages of the complaints process. Students can also seek support from the Lead Student Representative throughout the complaints process. If you are an apprenticeship student, your Apprenticeship Officer can also provide advice and guidance. Where appropriate you will also be invited to attend mediation to support the resolution of the complaint.

3.10 Who will respond to my complaint?

- 3.10.1 The respondent to your complaint will depend on which stage of the complaints process you are at. At the informal stages, the respondent will be the person you have addressed the complaint to, such as the Programme Leader, Module/Unit Tutor or a member of the Student Services Team or Apprenticeship Team. Complaints at Stage 2 are submitted to the Complaints Officer, who will request that your complaint is investigated and responded to by the appropriate senior member of staff. Complaints at Stage 3 will be responded to in writing by the Complaints Officer, following external review.

3.11 How will personal information be dealt with?

- 3.11.1 UCEM will treat students' personal information gathered on complaints confidentially, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Relevant case information will only be disclosed to those who need to investigate the complaint and provide a response.

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- 3.11.2 Student information on complaints will be retained for a minimum of 15 months from the date of completion of the complaints process. Completion may occur at stage 1, 2, or 3 (see section below), depending on whether you have decided to progress your complaint or not.
- 3.11.3 In order to preserve the confidentiality of others, you are asked not to include unnecessary personal information about third parties such as family members when submitting a complaint. Under the GDPR, UCEM is required to notify third parties if it is processing their information, so please think carefully before submitting personal information about yourselves or others. You may wish to seek advice from UCEM's Data Protection Officer or Complaints Officer.

4. Stages of Procedure

- 4.1 If a student wishes to make a complaint, the steps that should be taken are detailed below. Before making a complaint, it is recommended that students seek advice and guidance from a trusted source, such as the Lead Student Representative, Student Support, the Apprenticeship Team or their tutor. The Complaints Officer will be pleased to provide impartial advice regarding the Student Complaints Procedure.

4.1 Stage 1: informal direct complaint at source

- 4.1.1 Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant department at the source of the complaint. The complainant may wish to raise the matter in the first instance with the Programme Leader, Module/Unit Tutor or a Student Adviser via Student Central. The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. An initial acknowledgement should be sent to the student within two working days. It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner. Where appropriate, a mediator may be invited to be part of the informal process to resolve the complaint.
- 4.1.2 Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a full response to the student. If the response is verbal, or provided via a discussion forum or other media, a summary of the response, including the outcome, should be provided by the member of staff dealing with the complaint via email to the Complaints Officer. If the response is via an e-mail to the student, this should be forwarded to the Complaints Officer. The e-mail address for the Complaints Officer is complaints@ucem.ac.uk. If the complainant is an apprenticeship student, the Director of Apprenticeships should be copied in to the e-mail(s). The outcome should be provided within 20 working days of receipt of the informal complaint. The Complaints Officer will record all Stage 1 complaints, so trends can be identified and acted on to improve UCEM's service.
- 4.1.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the action taken at this level, he/she may choose to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure. If the complainant wishes to proceed to Stage 2, they must notify UCEM, normally within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 1.
- 4.1.4 If a complainant feels unable to approach the relevant department, Programme Leader or Student Adviser, or is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, the complainant should make a formal complaint (see Stage 2 below).

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4.2 Stage 2: formal complaint to the Complaints Officer

- 4.2.1 Formal complaints to the Complaints Officer should be submitted in writing. Complainants should use the standard form, which can be obtained by contacting:
- Address: The Complaints Officer, University College of Estate Management, Horizons, 60 Queen's Road, Reading, RG1 4BS;
 - Email: complaints@ucem.ac.uk;
 - or by going to the Student Services section of the VLE.
- 4.2.2 Completed forms should be submitted, with any supporting documentation, directly to the Complaints Officer. If the complaint is from an apprenticeship student, the Complaints Officer should inform the Apprenticeship Team (via the Director of Apprenticeships).
- 4.2.3 The complainant should include, with the Complaints Form, any relevant evidence to support the complaint. This may include medical evidence, communication on the VLE and copies of relevant correspondence. All evidence received will be confidential, and only those who need to review the evidence as part of the complaints process will have access to the information.
- 4.2.4 The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days of its receipt. After a brief investigation into the problem, the complainant will be contacted again to be advised of the timescale of the inquiry into the complaint. The Complaints Officer will allocate the complaint to an 'Investigating Officer' who has not been previously involved with the complaint. The 'Investigating Officer' will be a senior member of UCEM staff, usually the Vice Principal Student Experience, or the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching.
- 4.2.5 The Investigating Officer will review all papers submitted and meet with relevant members of staff to review the complaint. The Investigating Officer will also speak with the complainant to clarify facts, where required. As part of the process, mediation may be offered to resolve the complaint. If mediation is offered, revised timescales for the resolution of the complaint will be agreed in writing between UCEM and the complainant.
- 4.2.6 A written response relating to the findings of the inquiry will be issued by the Investigating Officer within a maximum of 20 working days from the date of receipt of the original complaint.
- 4.2.7 If the complainant is not satisfied with the action taken at this level, he/she may choose to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure. If the complainant wishes to proceed to Stage 3 they must notify UCEM, normally within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2.

4.3 Stage 3: review

- 4.3.1 If the complainant wishes to proceed to stage 3, they should write to the Complaints Officer, and request for the case to be referred for review, normally within 20 working days of the receipt of the Stage 2 outcome. Stage 3 is undertaken by an external independent reviewer. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed by UCEM, and the outcome is reasonable. The reviewer will not re-investigate the complaint unless new evidence has been presented.

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- 4.3.2 The external reviewer's role is to ensure that the appropriate procedures were followed, and the decision made was reasonable, as well as to consider any new evidence submitted. The reviewer will not re-investigate the complaint unless new evidence has been presented.
- 4.3.3 The Complaints Officer will issue a response within 20 working days of receipt of the request by the complainant for a review.
- 4.3.4 This is the final stage of the complaints process for complainants studying on a UCEM validated award and for those who are not part of an apprenticeship programme. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued detailing UCEM's final response to the complaint. The Completion of Procedures letter is a requirement of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and confirms that the complainant has reached the end of the UCEM complaints procedure.
- 4.3.5 If the complainant is an apprenticeship student (via Rathbone, Eastleigh College or on the Facilities Management Supervisor Apprenticeship) or part of a programme validated by the University of Reading, there are other options available before the OIA or Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) are contacted (see section 4.4 below)
- 4.3.6 Finally, if the complainant is not satisfied with the response and action taken, the only right of recourse remaining is to refer the complaint to either:
- I. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)
The OIA is the final arbitrator for complaints for students on Higher Education (HE) programmes only (i.e. programmes at level 4 to 7, including apprenticeships). Any complaints referred to the OIA must be sent within 12 months of the student being issued with a completion of procedures letter.
 - II. Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
The ESFA is the final arbitrator for complaints from students on Level 3 Further Education (FE) programmes. Any complaints should be referred to the ESFA within 12 months of the issue arising.

4.4 Further options

- 4.4.1 This stage applies only to complaints on programmes validated by partner institutions.

4.4.1 University of Reading Programmes

- 4.4.1.1 For University of Reading validated courses complaints should be sent to:

Director of Student, Learning and Teaching Services,
Carrington Building,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights,
RG6 6AH.

- 4.4.1.2 On receipt of the complaint, the Director of Student, Learning and Teaching Services will consult as appropriate with a view to resolving the issue. In the event of resolution not being achieved, the Director of Student, Learning and Teaching Services shall submit a report to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor may make such further investigations or enquiries, if any, as he or she deems necessary, and then come to a conclusion on the matter.

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- 4.4.1.3 If, in exceptional circumstances, the above does not result in resolution or the issue of a 'Completion of Procedures' letter, the complainant may request that the University Secretary convene a Complaints Committee. The decision of the Complaints Committee, which shall be reported to the Council, shall be final. Where appropriate, the Complaints Committee may make a recommendation as to the remedy. The complainant shall receive a statement, with reasons, of the Committee's decision.
- 4.4.1.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
- 4.4.1.5 Students studying with UCEM as part of an apprenticeship programme where UCEM is not the lead provider have the option of referring their complaint to the lead provider, once they have exhausted UCEM's complaints process.

4.4.2 Rathbone Apprenticeship Programmes

- 4.4.2.1 Where an apprentice is enrolled via Rathbone, i.e. where Rathbone is the Lead Provider, they may refer the matter to Rathbone's Partnership Manager in writing to:
- 4th Floor
Wellington House
39-41 Piccadilly
Manchester
M1 1LQ.

4.4.3 Eastleigh College Apprenticeship Programmes

- 4.4.3.1 Where an apprentice is enrolled via Eastleigh College, i.e. where Eastleigh College is the Lead Provider, students may submit their complaint in writing to:
- Deputy Chief Executive (Teaching & Learning),
Eastleigh College,
Chestnut Avenue,
Eastleigh,
SO50 5FS.

[Please see the Complaints Procedure on the Eastleigh College website for more details \(click here\).](#)

4.4.4 Facilities Management Supervisor Apprenticeship

- 4.4.4.1. For students on the Facilities Management Supervisor Apprenticeship, students may submit their complaint in writing to the Institute for Workplace and Facilities Management (IWFM) at:
- Head of Professional Development IWFM
1st Floor South
Charringtons House
The Causeway Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire CM23 2ER
Or email qualifications@iwfm.org.uk

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- 4.4.4.2. You should submit your complaint within one month of exhausting UCEM's internal procedures. In exceptional circumstances, where the student feels there was a significant breach by UCEM of IWFM procedures, then they can make a complaint without exhausting UCEM's own procedures.

4.5 Complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

- 4.5.1 For all Higher Education (HE) students: if on completion of the UCEM Complaints process the complainant is still not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with in an appropriate manner, they may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education within twelve months of being issued with a Completion of Procedures letter from UCEM or from a validating partner.

- 4.5.2 For further information about the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education and how to submit a complaint please visit their website ([click here](#)), or write to them at the following address:

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator,

Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57 – 75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

- 4.5.3 This is your final point of recourse, and the decision of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is final.

4.6 Complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

- 4.6.1 For Further Education (FE) students: if on completion of the UCEM complaints process the complainant is still not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with in an appropriate manner they may contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Please note that the ESFA will not usually investigate complaints more than 12 months after the original decision or action has been taken.

- 4.6.3 A complaint may be escalated to the ESFA via email to complaints.efsa@education.gov.uk or in writing to:

Customer Service Team,
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

- 4.6.4 See also: [the ESFA Procedure for dealing with complaints about providers \(click here\)](#).

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5. Student Complaints about UCEM Staff Conduct

- 5.1 This section sets out the process if the complaint is about the conduct of a member of UCEM staff. Complaints about staff conduct should be recorded on the complaints form.
- 5.2 Complaints about UCEM staff will be dealt with formally and investigated by the Head of Human Resources (HR) in accordance with the staff UCEM Disciplinary Procedure. The Head of HR will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and will provide an indication of how long it might be before an outcome of the investigation will be known.
- 5.3 The nature of employment-related investigations is such that whilst they can be short, they are often complex and sometimes lengthy, and UCEM is required to adhere to employment legislation and statutory guidance throughout the process. UCEM will aim to respond to the complainant as soon as reasonably possible.
- 5.4 Due to the confidential nature of employment investigations, UCEM may not be able to disclose the findings of the investigation, nor confirm what action has, may or may not be taken as a result of the outcome of the investigation. This includes whether UCEM will deal with the complaint on an informal or formal basis with the member of staff. It will, however, aim to respond to the complainant in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, to advise of UCEM's position.
- 5.5 Should the complainant feel dissatisfied with UCEM's response (in 5.4, above), the complainant should write formally, explaining why, to a member of the UCEM's Senior Leadership Team (please send this via the Head of HR). The original complaint may be attached. The Head of HR will acknowledge written notice and will advise of the name of the Senior Leadership Team member within 2 working days.
- 5.6 The Senior Leadership Team member will review the process undertaken by the Head of HR and, if necessary, instruct that a further investigation is carried out. In any event, UCEM will write to the complainant to advise of its position, within 20 working days (from the date written notice was received).

6. Student Complaints about other Students

- 6.1 This section sets out the process if the complaint is about the conduct of another student. Complaints about other students should be recorded on the Complaints Form.
- 6.2 The procedure for investigating a complaint against another student making an informal complaint is the same process as outlined in Stage 1.
- 6.3 If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 and the complainant wishes to proceed to Stage 2, an Investigating Officer will be appointed.
- 6.4 The student against whom the complaint has been made may be asked to attend a meeting, to which they may be accompanied by a Student Representative, or another student enrolled on the programme.
- 6.5 The Complaints Officer will liaise closely with both parties at each stage of the process, and the investigation will be confidential, and comply with data protection requirements.

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6.6 If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2, Stage 3 of the procedure applies.

7. Guidelines for Members of Staff

- 7.1 UCEM has established an open, fair and accessible Complaints Procedure in order to encourage the prompt resolution of problems at the earliest possible stage.
- 7.2 All members of staff must encourage a positive environment where contact with, and feedback from, students is welcomed, and constructive complaints can be dealt with effectively.
- 7.3 All members of staff must have a good working knowledge of this Complaints Procedure, and its underlying principles. UCEM will notify staff of where this procedure can be accessed and will advise of any updates.
- 7.4 Where possible, complaints should be dealt with as near to the source as possible, in a timely manner and progressed to the next stage of the complaints procedures as appropriate.
- 7.5 Clear written records of the various stages of the complaints procedure must be confidentially maintained on the student file, in accordance with data protection guidance, and with a note of decisions and actions taken (with dates) and a record of outcomes. The only exception to this is where the complaint relates to the conduct of a member of UCEM staff and any investigation related documents/notice of action taken will be retained by the Head of HR and, if required, retained on staff files.
- 7.6 The Complaints Officer must ensure that any members of staff involved in a student complaint are kept informed of the outcome of each stage of the process and of how the matter has been resolved, including the Apprenticeship Team for all complaints involving apprenticeship students ([via the Director of Apprenticeships](#)).
- 7.7 Members of staff involved in handling the various stages of complaints are obliged to ensure that the complainant is not disadvantaged either in manner of treatment or in discrimination in academic assessment as a result of raising the complaint.
- 7.8 The confidentiality of both the complainant and the subject of any complaint must be respected.

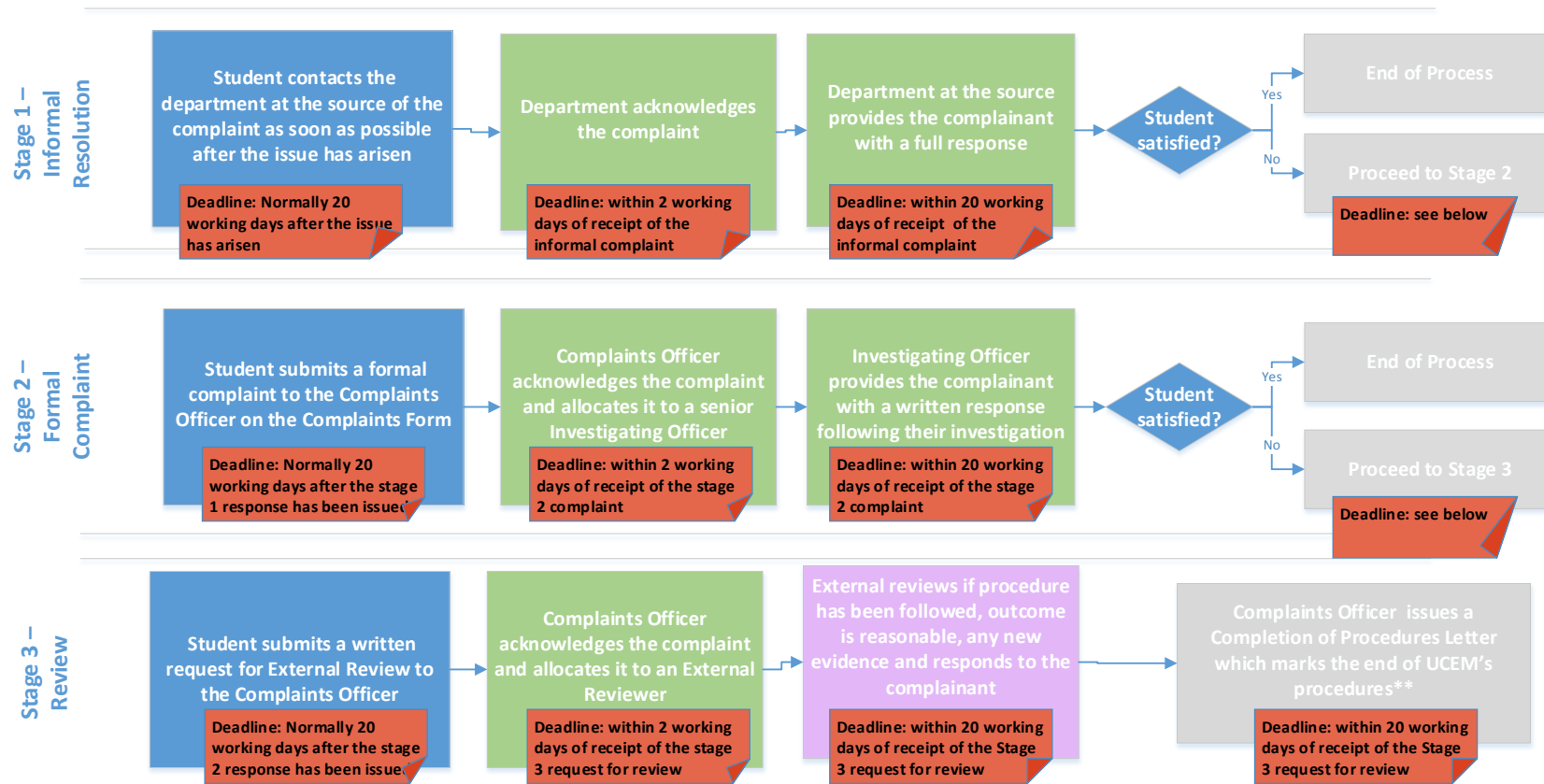
8. Stage of the Complaints Procedure

- 8.1 If you have an informal or formal complaint against UCEM, you should follow the stages of the complaints procedure as outlined in the appendices below. You will leave the complaints procedure at whichever stage you are satisfied that your complaint has been dealt with. The final stage of the complaints procedure is to refer the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) or to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as appropriate, after all other appropriate stages have occurred. If your complaint is connected to an academic decision such as a decision of the Board of Examiners, you should follow the appeals process, as detailed on the VLE. If you have any queries about this process, please contact the Complaints Officer.

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Appendix A: Overview of UCEM Complaints Procedure

UCEM Student Complaints Process



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**At the end of Stage 3 if you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint and are on a Higher Education programme validated by UCEM you may submit your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within 12 months of being issued a completion of procedures letter.

For students on programmes validated by the University of Reading you can refer your complaint to the University of Reading when you have completed Stage 3 of the UCEM Complaints process.

Those studying as part of an apprenticeship programme may submit their complaint to Rathbone, Eastleigh College or IWFM (as applicable), if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of the UCEM process (i.e. stage 3 completed).

The final arbitrator for complaints from Further Education students is the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Any complaints should be referred to the ESFA within 12 months of the issue arising.