

# Student Complaints Procedure 2021-22



Title	Student Complaints Procedure
Policy Owner	Director of Governance & Assurance
Policy Manager	Head of Student Casework
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of Approval	January 2021
Date for Review	July 2023
Head of Student Casework	

## 1 Our approach to complaints

Our core values lie in our wholehearted commitment to our staff, students and partners, and our constant efforts to improve in all we do.

Edge Hill University 'Vision and Values'

We aim to give you an outstanding student experience. We recognise that things can go wrong and that sometimes standards can fall short of what we expect. We take complaints seriously and will work with you to resolve your complaint. We want to learn from problems to make improvements for you and for all students.

We want to resolve your complaint quickly and informally so that we have the chance to put things right and so you are not distracted from your studies. Our experience shows the best way of achieving this is to start by talking to your tutor or other staff in the University department or service involved.

During the complaints process, we expect staff and students to be reasonable and act fairly showing respect for each other and the process.

## 2 About the Complaints Procedure

This Complaints Procedure is approved by the University's Academic Board and sets out:

- what we mean by a complaint;
- who can complain;
- the time limits for making and responding to a complaint;
- how we will deal with your complaint;
- how to make a complaint;
- where to get help, guidance and support to make a complaint; and
- whether you can complain to someone else if you are not satisfied at the end of the Procedure.

If you want to make a complaint, we advise you to contact the Edge Hill Students' Union (EHSU) which is independent from the University and provides free, independent advice, guidance and support. You can find additional information in our Student Guidance Notes.

If you have a disability and need support to help you make a complaint, or to discuss adjustments to usual procedures, contact [Student Services Inclusion Team](#).

## 3 How we will communicate with you

We prefer to meet with you in person to discuss your concerns so that we can resolve them quickly. We understand that this may not always be possible so we will discuss with you your preferred alternative means of communication, for example by telephone or Skype.

Our primary means of communicating with you is through your Edge Hill University e-mail account. Please check your e-mail account regularly to ensure you do not miss any important information. If you no longer have access to your University e-mail account, you will need to provide us with an alternative e-mail address.

If you prefer contact by letter, please advise us and correspondence will be sent to the term-time and / or home address we have recorded on our student record system, unless you tell us otherwise.

## **4 What is a complaint?**

We treat something as a complaint if you tell us you are not satisfied with the standard of service we provide or with something we have done or have not done.

This is not the same as telling us your views or giving us your opinions, good or not so good, which we describe as 'feedback'. Giving feedback to us is not the same as a making a complaint.

### **4.1 Feedback**

We encourage members of the Edge Hill University community to be open and honest about what is going well and what needs improvement. Throughout the year we will invite you to give us feedback on your programme and on your experience of being a student at our University.

You can give us feedback by:

- speaking informally to a member of staff;
- attending a Staff-Student Consultative Forum (SSCF);
- asking your student representative to give your view at the next Programme Board;
- taking part in surveys and/or course evaluations.

All of these processes help us gain valuable information which means we can identify where we can improve your student experience.

You do not have to wait for us to ask you for feedback. If you would like to provide informal feedback, it is best to go to your Module Leader first but you can also tell your Programme Leader. If your feedback is about any of our centrally provided services, contact that service's Helpdesk. If you are at all unsure about where to provide feedback [contact the Student Casework team](#) for advice.

### **4.2 Complaint or Academic Appeal?**

Sometimes your matter may not fall neatly into this Complaints Procedure and you might not be clear whether your situation is covered by this Procedure,

our Academic Appeals Procedure or another procedure. If you do not know which procedure to use, ask the Edge Hill Students' Union for advice or ask [the Student Casework team](#) for clarification.

If you submit an Academic Appeal, we will check whether it might be more appropriate to treat it as a complaint. It might be that you have an Academic Appeal **and** a complaint. We will discuss with you whether you want to make a complaint as well as, **or instead of**, an Academic Appeal. We are not able to deal with a complaint and an Academic Appeal using the same procedure because there are detailed regulations which apply to Academic Appeals.

### **4.3 Overlapping matters**

Your matter may fall within a number of procedures and, if you agree, we may decide to deal with it collaboratively across different departments. If you have more than one matter, tell the person who is dealing with your complaint so that we can discuss with you how best to deal with your situation. We will talk to you about the implications of following more than one procedure at the same time. It may be appropriate to suspend one procedure pending the completion of another.

If you would like the matter to be dealt with collaboratively across departments, and we agree it is appropriate, we will appoint a Lead Professional who will take overall responsibility for dealing with it. The Lead Professional will be your main point of contact and will inform you of the outcome of your complaint.

### **4.4 Matters not dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure**

Some matters are not suitable for resolution through this Procedure. The table below lists matters which cannot be considered using this Complaints Procedure and tells you where you can raise those matters.

If your complaint, or part of it, is about a member of staff then this aspect of your complaint may need to involve our Human Resources department using procedures owned and operated by them. Submit your complaint in the usual way, to [the Student Casework team](#) and we will advise you on how it will be dealt with and which Human Resources procedures may be triggered.

Disputes or appeals about your academic performance or results	You may be able to make an Academic Appeal. Contact: Student Casework team Read: Appeals Procedures
Disputes about the outcome of action taken against you for Academic Misconduct	You may be able to appeal against an academic decision made against you. Contact: Student Casework team Read: Appeals Procedures
Disputes regarding the outcome of disciplinary action taken against you.	You may be able to appeal against a decision made against you. Contact: Student Casework team Read: Student Regulations
Disputes about the outcome of a 'Fitness to Practise' Panel	You may be able to appeal against a Fitness to Practise decision made against you. Contact: Student Casework team Read: Appeals Procedure
Disputes about decisions made about your 'Fitness to Study'	You may be able to appeal against a Fitness to Study decision made against you. Contact: Student Services Read: Fitness to Study Procedures
Matters relating to the Student Loan Company or Student Finance England	These are independent organisations with their own complaints procedures. Contact: <a href="#">Student Loans Company</a>
Bullying and harassment by a member of staff	These complaints may involve procedures owned and operated by Human Resources. Submit your complaint in the usual way to the Student Casework team and we will advise you whether Human Resources procedures are involved.  Contact: <a href="#">Student Casework team</a>
Bullying and harassment by another student	You may be able make a complaint under our Bullying and Harassment Procedures. There are procedures covering allegations against staff or students. Contact: Student Services Read: Bullying and Harassment Procedure
Requests for new or different University services or provision	Make your request through your Programme Board or Staff Student Consultative Forum
Complaints about Edge Hill Students' Union (EHSU)	EHSU is an independent organisation which has its own Complaints Procedure.

## **5 Disability**

### **5.1 Disclosing a disability**

We recognise that the decision to disclose a disability is a personal one and something you may prefer to keep confidential. We encourage you to disclose any disability you may have when you make a complaint, even if you have not previously disclosed it to the University. We encourage this because we want to be able to ensure you can participate fully in the complaints process. We can discuss confidentiality with you if this is a concern and offer reassurances on the confidential nature of the process and how confidentiality is managed.

### **5.2 Reasonable Adjustments**

If you disclose a disability to us when making a complaint, we will discuss with you reasonable adjustments which can be made to remove any disadvantage that usual procedures might cause. Both you and the University can seek advice from the [Student Services Inclusion Team](#) on making reasonable adjustments.

Examples of some adjustments we can make are:

- extending deadlines if your condition has flared up preventing you from meeting a deadline;
- pausing the process and re-starting it when you are well; or
- providing documents to you in your preferred format.

You have the right to appoint a representative to act for you in making your complaint, this will usually be a member of the Edge Hill community or Edge Hill Students' Union. You also have the right to involve additional external support if required and there is a genuine need. For example, you may have a genuine need for additional external support from a family member or support worker.

We strongly recommend all students contact the Edge Hill University Students' Union as they are familiar with our processes and can advise and represent you.

### **5.3 Disability support.**

Our definition of a complaint is broad, however we want to be clear that you can use this procedure if you are receiving support for a disability and you are dissatisfied with the level of support or arrangements in place.

If you have reached the maximum amount of Disabled Students' Allowances available to assist you, and you cannot agree with us about any additional support you may need, you can use this procedure to complain. In these circumstances we may work with you to make an interim application to Student Finance England through their Exceptional Case process.

## 6 Who can complain?

You can make a complaint under this Procedure if:

- you are enrolled on a course at Edge Hill University as a student ; or
- you have recently left the University, provided you complain within **one month** of leaving.

You can make an individual complaint about something which directly affects your interests. Alternatively, you can be part of a group complaint if a number of students are affected.

### 6.1 Group Complaints

Where the subject matter of your complaint affects a number of students, you can make a 'group complaint'.

**It is essential that staff and students are completely clear who is involved in the group complaint.**

In order to manage a group complaint efficiently, the group must appoint a **Lead Student** to act as a representative for the group. The arrangements for dealing with a group complaint are as follows:

- at the start of your complaint the Lead Student **must** confirm who is part of the group complaint by completing the Group Complaint Form and giving it to the person dealing with the complaint;
- once the Group Complaint Form is submitted we will not normally allow other students to join the group complaint at a later date;
- we will usually only communicate with the Lead Student and will send all correspondence and documents to the Lead Student;
- usually only the Lead Student can attend meetings about the complaint; and
- the Lead Student must liaise with all the other students in the group complaint, collecting evidence and providing regular feedback.

### 6.2 Anonymous Complaints

We will not usually accept an anonymous complaint. This is because it is difficult for us to investigate it properly, and for us to report the outcome to you, when we do not know your identity. We may consider an anonymous complaint but **only if** you make a compelling case why it should be investigated anonymously. You must also provide evidence to support your request for anonymity.

You should feel confident that your position will be protected if you make a complaint. We will not penalise you or treat you any differently because you have made a complaint.

## 7 Time Limits

### 7.1 Your time limits

There is a time limit for making a complaint under this Procedure. You must make sure we receive your complaint within **three months** of the date the subject matter affected you. For example:

Date the matter affected you	Time limit starts	Time limit expires
12 September 2020	13 September 2020	13 December 2020

Sometimes, a matter may have a long-term or continuing effect on you. When this is the case, we treat the time limit as starting to run from the date you were first affected by the matter.

There are other time limits which apply at different stages of the Procedure. These time limits are linked to the three stages of the Complaints Procedure and are explained at the relevant point in this document.

### 7.2 Extending time limits

We do not routinely extend time limits for making complaints. If you have exceptional reasons for making a late complaint we may use our discretion to accept it outside normal time limits. You must have evidence to support your reasons for making a late complaint. The Student Guidance Notes provide more information on extending time limits.

If you have disability which may impair your ability to engage with the complaints process or meet usual deadlines, we will adopt a flexible approach. We will make reasonable adjustments to usual procedures to remove any disadvantage that might otherwise be caused.

### 7.3 Our time limits

We work to the following time limits:

- Stage 1 Early Resolution - we aim to complete this stage and notify you of the outcome within **28 calendar days** of receiving your complaint by e-mail.
- Stage 2 Formal Investigation - we aim to complete this stage and notify you of the outcome within **36 calendar days** of the date we received your completed Complaint Form.

- Stage 3 Review Stage – we aim to complete the review and notify you of the outcome within **28 calendar days** of receiving your request for a review.

We want to resolve complaints quickly but this is not always possible and sometimes we may be unable to complete our investigations in time. Where there is a delay, we will write to you to inform you of the delay and we will keep you regularly informed of progress.

#### **7.4 Overall time limits to complete Stage 2 and Stage 3**

If your complaint is considered at both Stage 2 and Stage 3, we will aim to complete both stages within **90 calendar days**. This time limit starts on the date we receive your completed Complaint Form requesting we deal with your complaint at Stage 2.

Investigators and reviewers aim to provide a response to you within the 90-day time limit stated. There will occasionally be circumstances when this is not possible. In those cases we will notify you of the reason for the delay and advise you of the date when we expect a response will be sent. For details please see our Student Guidance Notes.

#### **7.5 Complaints requiring a swift response**

Sometimes a complaint might need to be dealt with quickly because your matter has become urgent.

Examples of when a complaint might need a swift response include complaints:

- involving a threat of serious harm;
- where the impact of issues raised might harm your health;
- where you are experiencing significant distress;
- relating to disability support; or
- issues of a highly sensitive nature.

When you first inform us of your complaint, make it clear that the matter is urgent and give clear reasons why you need us to deal with it more quickly.

## **8 Dealing with your complaint**

There are a number of overriding principles which inform how we deal with your complaint.

### **8.1 Confidentiality**

We will manage your complaint confidentially. This means that we will only involve people in your complaint who need to be included.

If you give us documents in support of your complaint we will only show them to people who need to know the details of your complaint. If you submit sensitive personal information as part of your complaint, and would like to limit who sees it, discuss this with the person considering your complaint. We may be able to limit who sees the sensitive information as long as it does not affect the fairness of the Procedure.

Confidentiality is a mutual obligation. We expect everyone involved in your complaint to act respectfully and keep matters confidential. This includes witnesses and people providing evidence, support or advice. Remember that any person named in your complaint has a right to put their side of the case.

## **8.2 Conciliation or mediation**

At any stage in the Complaints Procedure, we may suggest the complaint is resolved through conciliation or mediation.

This allows for an independent person to help us try to resolve the complaint. You do not have to agree to conciliation or mediation, it is voluntary and confidential. The conciliator or mediator is impartial, will not take sides and will not impose a solution.

## **8.3 Fairness**

We expect staff and students to be reasonable and act fairly showing respect for each other and the process.

We will give you a fair and equal opportunity to state your case and we will give you clear reasons for the decision we reach.

We will make sure you are not disadvantaged because you have made a complaint. If you believe you have you can make a further complaint.

## **8.4 Independence**

We will make sure that decisions about your complaint are taken by people who are independent of the situation. Sometimes this might mean asking someone from a different department or faculty to deal with your complaint.

## **8.5 Standard of proof**

When we are making a decision based on evidence we will make a decision using the balance of probability. For example, when deciding whether something happened, we will consider the evidence then decide whether it is more likely than not that it happened.

## 8.6 Record Keeping

We will keep a record of your complaint throughout the process and we advise you to do the same.

## 9 The three-stage Complaints Procedure

To register your complaint with the University please [contact the Student Casework team](#).

There are three stages in the complaints procedure:

- Stage 1 – Early Resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal Investigation
- Stage 3 – Review

## 10 Stage 1 – Early Resolution

Early resolution is intended to allow you to resolve your complaint quickly and locally, by which we mean with the staff in the programme or service involved. It is very important to us that good staff/student relationships are maintained.

We strongly encourage you to start your complaint at Stage 1 as experience shows it is the quickest and easiest way of reaching a resolution, but you can request your complaint is started at Stage 2, the formal stage.

We may decide your complaint is too serious or complex to be dealt with by early resolution and we may choose to start your complaint at Stage 2. We will inform you of our decision to treat your complaint this way.

### 10.1 Starting your complaint at Stage 1 Early Resolution

Identify a member of staff to direct your complaint to. This will usually be:

- your Course Tutor;
- your Module Leader;
- your Programme Leader;
- the Faculty Administration Manager; or
- a manager in the University service involved.

If there is another person you think is more appropriate to deal with your complaint, or if you are not sure who to direct your complaint to, contact the EHSU for advice. Alternatively, e-mail [the Student Casework team](#)

You can start your complaint by sending an e-mail to the member of staff stating you wish to make a complaint and asking to arrange an appointment to discuss it. You should include an overview of your complaint in the body of your e-mail or as an attachment. It helps us to deal with your complaint

efficiently if you write the word 'Complaint' in the subject line of your e-mail. This makes it completely clear that you wish to make a complaint rather than provide feedback to us.

## **10.2 Time Limits**

You must make sure we receive your complaint within **three months** of the date the subject matter affected you. If the matter is a continuing one, the three-month period starts to run when you were first affected by it.

We aim to complete the Early Resolution stage, and provide a response to you, within **28 calendar days**. Day one is the date you notified us of your complaint by e-mail.

## **10.3 How we will deal with Early Resolution**

Early Resolution is an informal way of resolving your complaint by meeting with you to discuss the issues you have raised. We will discuss the outcome with you and we will inform you by e-mail of the date this stage has been completed. The date of this e-mail is important as it triggers the time limit for taking your complaint to the next stage.

## **10.4 Possible outcomes**

The person dealing with your complaint has discretion to consider any reasonable option to resolve your complaint.

Experience shows that the majority of complaints are resolved at this stage without the need for you to take your complaint to the next stage. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Early Resolution you can ask for your complaint to move to Stage 2 Formal Investigation.

# **11 Stage 2 - Formal Investigation**

There are two ways you can use Stage 2 to resolve your complaint:

- by starting your complaint at this stage; or
- to take your Stage 1 complaint further.

## **11.1 Starting or continuing your complaint at Stage 2 Formal Investigation**

You need to complete a Complaint Form and send it to [the Student Casework team](#) along with copies of any documents which support your complaint. Our Student Guidance Notes contain more information about the type of documents which you can use as evidence. If you would like help to complete the Complaint Form, contact Edge Hill Students' Union.

If you do not have digital copies of supporting documents, you can send hard copies to:

Head of Student Casework  
Edge Hill University  
St Helens Road  
Ormskirk  
L39 4QP

## 11.2 Time Limits

If you are starting your complaint at Stage 2 you must make sure we receive your completed Complaint Form within **three months** of the date the subject matter first affected you.

If your complaint is at Stage 2 because you want to take your Stage 1 complaint further, the time limits are shorter. You must make sure we receive your completed Complaint Form within **14 calendar days** of the date we notified you of the outcome of your Stage 1 complaint. You will find this date on the e-mail we sent telling you Stage 1 was complete.

We aim to complete the formal investigation stage and notify you of the outcome within **36 calendar days**.

## 11.3 How we will deal with your Formal Complaint

Once we have received your Complaint Form we will:

- check you have submitted your complaint using the correct procedure;
- check you have submitted your complaint within the time limits;
- acknowledge receipt of your form by e-mail;
- inform the department or faculty of your complaint; and
- provide them with a copy of your Complaint Form and supporting documents.

If you have named a member of staff, or other person, in your Complaint Form we will inform that person and send them a copy of your form and supporting documents.

We will appoint a member of staff to investigate your complaint and we will tell you who that person is. Complaints vary and because of this, the way we investigate them might vary but the investigator will usually:

- meet with you;
- gather information about the issues by talking to you and other people;
- consider the documents you have provided; and
- consider other documents discovered as part of their investigation.

## 11.4 Possible Outcomes

The investigator has the authority and discretion to consider any reasonable option to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you can request a review of the Stage 2 decision.

## 12 Stage 3 Review

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 Formal Investigation, you can request a review but only on certain grounds. The review will not usually consider your complaint afresh, nor involve a further investigation. The focus of the review is on how your complaint has been dealt with.

Reviews are carried out by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) or other designated senior manager.

### 12.1 Making a request for review

To request a review you must complete the Review Request Form and you must state which grounds for review you think apply in your case. More information on the grounds for requesting a review are at 11.3 below.

Send your completed Review Request Form and any supporting documents by e-mail to the [Student Casework team](#). It helps us deal with your request more efficiently if you use the phrase 'Request for Review' in the subject line of your e-mail.

Alternatively you can send hard copies to:

Head of Student Casework Edge Hill University  
St Helens Road  
Ormskirk  
L39 4QP

### 12.2 Time limits

You must make sure your request for a review reaches us within **14 calendar days** of the date we advised you of the outcome of Stage 2.

We aim to complete the review, and inform you of the outcome, within **28 calendar days** of receiving your request.

If your complaint is upheld, and we have offered to resolve it, the actions leading to a resolution may take longer than 28 calendar days to complete. We will advise you of how long we estimate a resolution may take and we will keep you informed of our progress.

If the process is delayed for any reason, we will contact you to explain why and to advise you of when the review will be completed.

### 12.3 Grounds for requesting a review

The grounds for requesting a review are:

- the investigation of the complaint was not conducted fairly;
- the investigation failed to take account of relevant material;
- new evidence has since come to light which, for valid reasons, you were unable to provide earlier in the complaints process and which would have materially affected the decision made at Stage 2; or
- that the decision reached was wholly unreasonable.

When you make your request for a review, you must explain why you think any or all of the grounds apply in your case.

### 12.4 The Review Process

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) may, at their discretion, delegate the review process to another senior manager employed by the University. This discretion is necessary in order to preserve the independence of the process.

At the review stage, we will consider **how** your complaint has been dealt with and whether the process has been fair and reasonable. We will not consider a new complaint, or a new aspect of the complaint, at this stage. The review will consider:

- all of the material gathered, and assessed by, the investigator at Stage 2;
- any supporting documentation you provide; and
- whether you have established any of the grounds for review.

The reviewer will send a written decision and reasons within **28 calendar days** of your request for a review. If it is not possible to give you the decision within this period of time the reviewer write to you with the reason why this is not possible and tell you when their decision is likely to be sent.

The reviewer may, at their discretion, call for additional information or request an interview with you.

### 12.5 Possible Outcomes

If any or all of the grounds for review are met, the reviewer may consider one or more of the following actions to resolve your complaint:

- refer the matter back to the Stage 2 investigator, with directions on how to deal with the ground(s) for review which have been established;
- instigate a fresh investigation using a different senior manager;
- refer the matter for informal resolution;
- conclude the matter by offering a resolution;
- refer the matter to mediation; or

- convene a Review Panel to consider the complaint.

## 12.6 Review Panel

If the reviewer decides to convene a Review Panel, the Panel has sole responsibility for resolving your complaint. It has the same powers as the reviewer to resolve your complaint.

We will exclude the following people from membership of the Review Panel:

- anyone who has a vested interest in your complaint; and
- anyone who has taken part in the investigation of your complaint at earlier stages of the Procedure.

The Review Panel will consist of four members in total:

- three Senior Managers from the University; and
- a member of the EHSU.

The reviewer will select one member of the Review Panel to act as the Chair.

## 12.7 Time Limits for Review Panels

We will usually hold a Review Panel within **14 calendar days** of the reviewer's decision to convene the Panel. We will advise you if it is likely to take longer than this. We will inform you of the reason for the delay and give you a projected time when the Panel meeting will take place.

We advise you to read the Student Guidance Notes for further details on how a Review Panel will be conducted. It may also help you to read the Staff Guidance Notes.

We will inform you of the Panel's decision and reasons within **28 calendar days** of the Panel meeting.

## 13 Complaints against partner institutions

We work with a number of partner organisations to provide learning opportunities for students. If you are studying on a course which is part of a partnership arrangement, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may need to complain to the partner institution first.

When we deliver learning in partnership with others we categorise complaints as being either **academic** or **non-academic**:

- academic complaints are about any academic matter relating to your course including about the quality or standard of your course;

- non-academic complaints are about matters unrelated to your course for example the provision of café facilities, cleanliness, availability of equipment or access to a building at our partner institution.

If a non-academic matter has an impact on your academic progress or results we may treat it as an academic matter. If you are at all unsure, please [contact the Student Casework team](#) for advice.

### 13.1 Further Education Colleges

If you are studying at a partner **Further Education College** you must use the College's complaints procedure for Stages 1 and 2. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint, then you can request a Stage 3 Review.

If your complaint is about an **academic** matter your Stage 3 Review will be carried out by Edge Hill University and is covered by this Student Complaints Procedure. You should submit your request for a Review to [the Student Casework team](#).

If your complaint is about a **non-academic matter** you should use the College's complaints procedure to request a Stage 3 Review. When the College has completed its Stage 3 Review it will send you a Completion of Procedures Letter advising you of your right to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator to review the College's decision.

### 13.2 All other partners

Complaints about all other types of partnership provision are considered under Edge Hill University's Student Complaints Procedure.

If you are unclear about which procedure to use, or how to make a complaint, please [contact the Student Casework team](#).

## 14 Help, support and guidance

We advise you to read:

- relevant University regulations, policies and procedures, including the Student Charter;
- Student Guidance Notes;
- Staff Guidance Notes.

You can find all of these documents on our website.

We also advise you to seek early advice, guidance and support from Edge Hill Students' Union (EHSU) or its Advice and Representation Centre. You do not have to consult EHSU.

EHSU is independent from the University and provides free, independent help to students. You automatically became a member of EHSU when you

enrolled at the University. If you have opted out of membership of EHSU you are still entitled to seek help, support and guidance from them.

Submitting documents to EHSU or discussing your complaint with them, **is not making a complaint to the University under this Procedure**. Do not assume EHSU has made the complaint for you. Until you have submitted your complaint to with the University, this procedure has not started.

If you have a complaint about the EHSU you should contact them to make a complaint under its own complaints procedure.

#### **14.1 Can I be represented?**

You have the right to appoint a representative to act for you in making your complaint, this will usually be a member of the Edge Hill community or Edge Hill Students' Union. If you have a disability you have the right to involve additional external support if required and there is a genuine need.

You do not need to be legally represented; our Student Complaints Procedure is not a legal process.

## **15 Termination of the Procedure**

We may reject or terminate consideration of your complaint if, in the investigator's opinion, the complaint has no serious purpose, or is intended to cause disruption or annoyance, or if you are seeking an unrealistic remedy. We refer to these complaints as 'frivolous or vexatious'. Please see the Guide for Students for further information on how we characterise a complaint as frivolous or vexatious.

If the investigator decides that your complaint is frivolous or vexatious, we will write to you explaining that we are rejecting or terminating consideration of your complaint. We will give reasons for our decision.

If you wish us to reconsider our decision to reject or terminate consideration of your complaint you can do so by writing to [the Student Casework team](#), setting out the reasons why your complaint should be continued.

Your request for reconsideration will be sent to an independent senior manager who will consider the information we have on file for your complaint, including the representations you have made. The independent senior manager will decide whether to confirm the decision that your complaint is frivolous or vexatious, or to reopen your complaint.

The independent senior manager's decision will conclude the University's procedures. We will send you a Completion of Procedures Letter advising you of your right to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review our decision.

If you wish to request we consider our decision to reject or terminate your complaint, you must make your request in writing **within 14 calendar days** of the date we informed you of our decision to terminate consideration of your complaint. You can send your request by e-mail to [the Student Casework team](mailto:the Student Casework team).

Alternatively you can send your request by post to:

Head of Student Casework Edge Hill University  
St Helens Road  
Ormskirk  
L39 4QP  
[Complaints@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:Complaints@edgehill.ac.uk)

## 16 Completion of Procedures

If your complaint gets to the end of the Stage 3 Review and we do not uphold your complaint, or your complaint has been rejected or terminated, we will write to you confirming that you have reached the end of our Student Complaints Procedure. This letter is called the Completion of Procedures Letter and will advise you of your right to ask the OIA to review our decision.

## 17 Taking your complaint further

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is an independent body and its role is to review individual complaints by students.

Once you have received a Completion of Procedures Letter from us, you can refer your complaint to the OIA for review. You must use the [OIA's Complaint Form](#) which you will find on its [website](#). The OIA has its own rules about dealing with your complaint.

You have **one year** from the date of your Completion of Procedures letter to ask the OIA to look at your complaint. If you need advice, guidance or support to refer your complaint to the OIA, contact [Edge Hill Students' Union](#). You can find further information on the OIA's [website](#).