



Complaints Procedure

(Aligned with BNU's Student Complaints Procedure)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair, transparent and timely process for students and staff of RHCast to raise complaints about academic services, facilities, or other aspects of the student experience or staff services. It complements and aligns with the BNU Student Complaints Procedure. [Buckinghamshire New University+2Buckinghamshire New University+2](#)

The policy applies to all RHCast students enrolled on BNU-validated programmes and to staff services directly provided by RHCast.

The aim is to:

- ensure complaints are handled consistently and impartially,
- uphold the learning, teaching and professional environment in our performing arts college,
- facilitate improvement of services and provide redress where appropriate.

Scope

This policy covers complaints relating to RHCast's services, facilities, staff or partners where those services are within RHCast's direct responsibility.

Examples include:

- dissatisfaction with teaching, learning or supervision,
- administrative or support services (e.g., library, IT, student support) provided by RHCast,
- facilities or resources at RHCast (studios, rehearsal spaces, performance equipment),

- actions or lack of action by RHCast staff that adversely affect a student's experience.
It does *not* cover:
- academic judgement (e.g., assessment outcomes) — this is covered under the academic appeals process. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)
- disciplinary matters about staff or students — these are covered under disciplinary or conduct procedures. [Buckinghamshire New University](#) or the RHCast disciplinary procedure
- non-RHCast or non-BNU services (unless responsibility is jointly held) — in which case referral to the responsible body may occur.

3. Guiding Principles

RHCast commits to the following principles when handling complaints:

- **Accessibility:** Students and staff are informed about how to raise a complaint and offered support.
- **Fairness:** Complaints will be handled impartially, with no disadvantage to the complainant for raising a concern in good faith. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)
- **Confidentiality:** Details will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.
- **Timeliness:** The process will move through stages as promptly as possible, with communication to the complainant at key points.
- **Transparency:** Complainants will be informed of the process, outcome and any redress.
- **Review and improvement:** Outcomes will inform continuous improvements to RHCast's services and partnership with BNU.

4. Who May Complain & Time Limits

- Any current student of RHCast on a BNU-validated programme may submit a complaint.
- A former student or someone who has recently withdrawn may submit a complaint, provided it is received within **three months** of their last engagement date.
- Complaints made by third parties (e.g., parents) will be accepted only where the student gives written consent.
- Anonymous complaints will *normally* not be accepted, as the college cannot properly investigate without knowing the complainant.
- Malicious or vexatious complaints may be rejected, with reasons given.

5. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

This policy adopts a three-stage model, consistent with BNU's procedure. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)

Stage 1 – Informal / Early Resolution

- Wherever possible, students or staff should first raise their concern informally with the relevant RHCast Tutor, Course Leader or Vice Principal
- The aim is to address the issue quickly, with minimal formality.
- If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage, or the complainant wishes to proceed formally, Stage 2 may be initiated.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

- The complainant submits a written complaint (via RHCast's Complaint Form) to the Vice Principal at RHCast.
- The complaint should:
 - include clear details of the issue(s), timeline, and any supporting evidence (emails, screenshots, dates of meetings, etc.).
 - indicate what outcome or remedy is sought.
- On receipt, RHCast will acknowledge the complaint, check admissibility, and then appoint an investigator.
- The investigation may involve gathering statements, reviewing documents, interviewing relevant staff or students.
- The complainant will receive a written outcome setting out: findings, any remedy or action to be taken, and the timescale for that action.

Stage 3 – Review / Escalation to BNU

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 2, they may request a Review of the outcome: this must be made in writing within 10 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter.
- Because RHCast's programmes are validated by BNU, where the complaint relates to the awarding-body's services or to RHCast's programmes under BNU's aegis, the complainant may submit a "Request for Review" to BNU. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)
- The Review stage will be conducted by a senior BNU representative not previously involved.

- Alongside internal review, the complainant retains the right to refer matters to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) in accordance with higher education regulations.

Outcomes & Redress

If a complaint is upheld, possible outcomes may include (but are not limited to):

- An apology.
- Remedial action (e.g., repeating a part of a programme under improved conditions, additional support, review of service).
- Change or improvement to RHCast's processes or services.
- Partial or full refund of fees in limited cases (linked to services/facilities failure) in line with BNU's policy. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)
- No action (if complaint unsubstantiated).
The outcome letter will clearly state what redress (if any) is offered and any actions for the college to take.

Support for Complainants & Respondents

- RHCast will ensure that both complainants and the individuals against whom complaints are made are treated fairly, with access to appropriate support (e.g., student support, counselling, staff HR or mentoring whichever is relevant).
- Complainants will not be disadvantaged because they raise a complaint in good faith. [Buckinghamshire New University](#)
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for students or staff with disabilities or requiring additional support during the process.

Record-Keeping, Confidentiality & Data Protection

- All complaint records will be retained securely, in accordance with data-protection legislation and RHCast/BNU record-retention policies.
- Investigations and outcomes will be treated confidentially. The identity of individuals may be anonymised where possible, though those named in complaints will be informed and given the opportunity to respond.
- Complaints may feed into RHCast's quality-assurance and continuous-improvement reporting, maintaining anonymity.

Monitoring & Review

- RHCast will monitor complaint trends, timescales, outcomes and remedial actions, and report these (anonymised) to senior leadership and to BNU as required.
- This policy and the associated procedures will be reviewed at least every two years (or earlier if legislation or partner framework changes) to ensure continuing alignment with BNU and regulatory guidance.

Relationship with BNU Policy

- As a partner of BNU, RHCast's complaints policy sits within the broader BNU framework. Where complaints concern the services or processes of BNU (rather than RHCast), students may be directed to BNU's procedure. [Buckinghamshire New University+1](#)
- RHCast retains responsibility for matters within its direct control, but will cooperate fully with BNU where necessary.
- The final appeal route (OIA) sits beyond RHCast and BNU once internal procedures are completed.

Communication

- This policy will be published on RHCast's website, student/staff handbooks and induction materials.
- A complaints form (or online equivalent) will be accessible to students and staff.
- Training will be provided for designated complaints officers and relevant staff to ensure consistent implementation.