

BRADFORD

BIRTH TO 19 

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BRADFORD BIRTH TO 19 SCITT Students Complaints Procedure

Date Approved:

Approved By:

Review date:

Publication: This Policy will be published on the SCITT Website. Trainees will be informed of their right to utilise this policy and process at their discretion.

Policy Statement

Bradford Birth to 19 SCITT prime focus is the Bradford and Keighley education community. The nature of any SCITT course is a focus on school based experience and skills development. Trainees are on school based placement every week of the course for at least 3 days and sometimes 5 days per week. The venues for the taught sessions are also currently within local schools.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this complaints policy is to provide clear procedures for dealing with complaints made by Trainees against Bradford Birth to 19 SCITT (BBt19 SCITT).

2. SCOPE

a. This policy can be used by anyone who is a current Trainee with BBt19 SCITT, or a Trainee

who completed their training with BBt19 SCITT within 12 calendar months of the date of initiating the complaint

b. This policy does not cover complaints or queries referred to below;

- Complaints related to judgments on Sheffield Hallam University's Assignments / PGCE accreditation
- Complaints related to Review judgements or decisions to terminate school placements are covered by BBt19 SCITT Appeals Policy
- Complaints related to inappropriate behaviour by members of BBt19 SCITT staff, staff in partner schools or other Trainees may be better dealt with using BBt19 SCITT's Anti-Bullying Policy

c. This policy has been produced following the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's "The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals" published in December 2016 (www.oiahe.org.uk).

3. DEFINITIONS and EXAMPLES

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as: "An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider" (OIA 2016)

Examples of complaints this Policy aims to help resolve include:

- failure by BB19 SCITT to meet obligations, including those outlined in handbooks and Partnership Agreement

- misleading or incorrect information on the BBt19 SCITT website, promotional or other material
- concerns about the delivery of the training programme, teaching or administration including elements provided by BBt19 SCITT partner schools
- poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by BBt19 SCITT
- complaints about partner schools or other organisations providing a service on behalf of BBt19 SCITT.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- BBt19 SCITT aims to provide an outstanding training programme for the Trainees it serves.
- BBt19 SCITT is committed to working in partnership with its' Trainees and partner schools, taking account of Trainee views in order to improve its service.
- BBt19 SCITT will seek to resolve complaints as informally and quickly as possible, including by mediation and conciliation where appropriate.
- BBt19 SCITT expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- BBt19 SCITT will work to ensure this policy is used fairly, proportionally and in a timely way.
- BBt19 SCITT will ensure that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest and that all involved will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality through the process, without causing disadvantage.
- Trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, family member, or representative from a Teaching Union or Students' Union.
- BBt19 SCITT will put all the outcomes of any investigation in writing for the Trainee.

5. STAGES IN THE PROCESS

There are four potential stages within this policy as follows:

1. Informal resolution
2. Formal stage
3. Review Stage
4. Independent external review (OIA)

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Trainees should initially email their tutor outlining their concerns. They will attempt to resolve the complaint quickly and informally and at a local level through, for example:

- a face-to-face meeting with the Trainee
- asking an appropriate colleague to resolve the complaint
- providing background information or an explanation relevant to the issue
- suggesting solutions
- giving an apology where appropriate.

Stage 2: Formal Stage

This stage should be used when:

- a Trainee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the early resolution process or
- a Trainee declines to engage with early resolution
- early resolution is not possible or suitable due to the complexity, character or seriousness of the case

To trigger this stage, a Trainee should use the Complaint Recording Form included as Appendix A. This should will help Trainees set out their complaint in a clear and succinct way, referring to evidence relevant to the complaint.

On receipt of this form, BBt19 SCITT staff who have not previously been involved in the case (usually the Head of ITT) will:

- conduct an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is being dealt with under the right procedures
- determine the scope and purpose of an investigation
- conduct an investigation, which will be proportionate to the complexity and seriousness of the complaint, interviewing the Trainee and other relevant parties where appropriate
- produce a report based on these investigations which outline;
 - the process followed
 - the information gathered
 - the conclusions drawn
 - any recommendations which will lead to improved provision and/or reduce the chance of similar complaints occurring
 - ensure the Trainee (and his/her representative where appropriate) receive a copy of the investigation together with copies of the information considered
 - write to the Trainee setting out the outcome of the formal stage, outlining the reasons for each decision made. This letter will also include information about:
 - the Trainee's right to take the complaint to the review stage and the grounds for such a referral
 - the time limit for escalating to the review stage
 - the appropriate procedure and support available.

Where the complaint has been upheld, BBt19 SCITT will explain how and when it will implement any remedy and what the Trainee can do if s/he remains dissatisfied.

Stage 3: Review Stage (final internal BBt19 stage)

If the Trainee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, he or she can request a review. A review may cover:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- any new material evidence that the Trainee was unable, for valid reasons, to provide at Stage 2.

The review will not:

- re-hear the complaint afresh
- involve a further investigation.

A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage (Stage 2) before it can be escalated to the review stage.

If a complaint reaches this stage, a Review Panel drawn from BBt19 SCITT Strategic Board will consider the way in which the complaint was investigated in Stage 2. The Trainee will be invited in writing to attend a hearing and given 10 days' notice of the hearing date.

- Trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, family member, or representative from a Teaching Union or Students' Union.
- The Trainee will be provided with information about the composition of the panel, a copy of the evidence to be considered and information about the support that is available to them including contact details.
- The panel will consist of three members of the Strategic Board. They will consider the evidence and there will be an opportunity for the Trainee and investigating officer to make a presentation.

- A record of the meeting will be taken recording the date, people in attendance, a brief summary of the meeting.

The Panel will consider the following questions:

- Were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
- Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstance?
- Has the trainee received clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the earlier stage?
- If new material evidence has been provided, has the Trainee given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

The Review Panel, having considered the material submitted to them may:

1. overturn the outcome of the formal stage and recommend a remedy
2. refer the complaint back to the formal stage for reconsideration
3. uphold the outcome of the formal stage.

The Chair of the Review Panel will write to the Trainee with their decision and an outline of the reasons for their decision within three working days of the hearing. Where appropriate, this letter will also advise the Trainee on their right to submit a complaint to the OIA, the time limit for doing so and where and how to access advice and support with this process.

Stage 5: Independent External Review (OIA)

Once the review stage is completed, the Trainee is entitled to ask the Office of the Independent

Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), the independent ombudsman service, to review his or her complaint about the outcome of BBt19 SCITT's complaint process. The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter from the Chair of the Review Panel.

5. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- BBt19 SCITT will retain data related to the complaint for 15 months from the start of the complaint and after this time all data will be deleted. All data will be stored securely during this time.
- All complaints will be treated confidentially. BBt19 SCITT will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate the complaint or to respond to the issues raised. In some circumstances data may be used to consider whether a Trainee is fit to practice.
- If a Trainee makes a complaint they should only include any necessary information about third parties. Evidence provided must focus on the impact that a third party has had on the Trainee themselves. For example, if the mitigation is based on the health of a family member, BBt19 do not need to see the detailed medical information about that person.

Appendix A: Bradford Birth to 19 SCITT Teacher Training Complaint recording form

To be used if stage 1 informal resolution has failed to provide you with a satisfactory outcome.

Your Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Contact telephone number _____

Please give specific details of your complaint

Please list any evidence which supports your complaint

Signature_____

Date_____

Official use:

Date of acknowledgement_____

By whom_____

Complaint referred to_____

Date_____