

BRADFORD BIRTH TO 19 SCITT

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Date Approved: November 2025

Approved By:

Review date: November 2027

Publication: This Policy and Procedure 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 vision - Working in partnership to develop highly employable, research-informed, early-career-ready teachers who transform the life chances of young people in their local communities. The nature of any SCITT course is a focus on school-based experience and skills development. For most weeks trainees are on school based placement for at least 3 days and sometimes 5 days per week. The venues for the taught sessions are also currently within local schools.

Scope

a. This policy can be used by anyone who is a current Trainee with BBto19 SCITT, or a Trainee who completed their training with BBto19 SCITT within 3 calendar months of the date of initiating the complaint

Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered unless there are exceptional and evidence-based reasons to do so, particularly where serious safeguarding or child protection issues are alleged, requiring immediate internal review.

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

- Complaints related to judgments on Sheffield Hallam University's Assignments / PGCE accreditation will result in the conclusion of the BBto19 internal process for that specific issue. The trainee will be formally directed to the Sheffield Hallam University Complaints Procedure.
- The trainee should note that any subsequent OIA review regarding the academic outcome will be in respect of the university's procedures. Complaints related to Review judgements or decisions to terminate school placements are covered by BBto19 SCITT Appeals Policy.
- Complaints related to inappropriate behaviour by members of BBto19 SCITT staff, staff in partner schools or other Trainees may be better dealt with using BBto19 SCITT's Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose of this complaints policy is to provide clear procedures for dealing with complaints made by Trainees against Bradford Birth to 19 SCITT (BBto19 SCITT).

BBto19 takes trainee concerns seriously in the first instance to reduce formal complaints and initiating formal procedure. However, in those instances where a trainee does not feel that a concern has been addressed, or it is of sufficient gravity, then BBto19 SCITT's formal complaints procedure should be used.

The prime aim of BBto19 Complaint policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Complaints should be lodged promptly or at least within two calendar months of the incident. If a complaint is received after this time, unless there are exceptional circumstances, BBto19 SCITT will take no further action.

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Definition of Exceptional Circumstances (EC): For the purpose of reviewing complaints submitted after the two calendar month limit, Exceptional Circumstances are defined as incidents that are short-term, arise unexpectedly, and are demonstrably beyond the trainee's control. Examples of situations that may qualify include serious short-term physical or mental illness, or bereavement through the death of a close relative or partner. Circumstances generally considered ineligible include minor short-term illness, holidays, or loss of un-backed-up work/computer failures

The BBto19 SCITT Complaint Policy has four main stages outlined as follows:

1. Informal resolution- A concern is raised informally with a trainee's tutor or SCITT course leader. If the matter is not resolved verbally a trainee can proceed to the next stage.
2. Formal stage- A formal written complaint. If the matter is not resolved a trainee can proceed to the next stage.
3. Review Stage- A further internal investigation. If the matter is not resolved a trainee can proceed to the next stage.
4. Independent external review (OIA). If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may refer it to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

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

A Trainee should use the Complaint Recording Form included as Appendix A. This allows trainees set out their complaint in a clear and succinct way, referring to evidence relevant to the complaint.

- The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The Head of ITT will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days. The complaint will be delegated to the Leadership Team member with direct responsibility for the particular area. The complaint will be delegated to the Leadership Team member with direct responsibility for the particular area. An investigation will be conducted, which will be proportionate to the complexity and seriousness of the complaint, interviewing the Trainee and other

relevant parties where appropriate and conclusion reached. If the 21 working day timeline cannot be met due to the complexity of the investigation, the delegated Leadership Team member will notify the complainant in writing before the deadline expires, detailing the reason for the delay and providing a revised projected response date. Leadership Team member will write to the complainant within 21 working days of the complaint being received.

Stage 3: Review Stage (final internal BBto19 stage)

A Review Panel drawn from three members of BBto19 SCITT Management group 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.
- 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 4: Independent External Review (OIA)

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. BBto19 is a member of this scheme. If the trainee is unhappy with the outcome, they may be able to ask the OIA to review your complaint. They can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

Trainees' normally need to have completed the complaints procedure before they can complain to the OIA. We will send a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when we have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps we can take internally. If complaint is not upheld, BBto19 will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If complaint is upheld or partly upheld trainee can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if they want one. More information about Completion of Procedures Letters can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

If the complaint is upheld or partly upheld, the Trainee must confirm in writing whether they accept the proposed remedy within ten working days. If the Trainee declines the remedy, or explicitly requests a Completion of Procedures Letter, the letter will be issued promptly.

Trainees must make their complaint to the OIA within 12 months of completing this procedure. The 12 month period will normally run from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- BBto19 SCITT will retain data related to the complaint for a minimum of **24 calendar months** from the start of the complaint, or **12 months following the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter**, whichever is later. After this time all data will be deleted. All data will be stored securely during this time.
- All complaints will be treated confidentially. BBto19 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, BBto19 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 _____