

Admissions complaints procedure

Purpose

The bpf is committed to providing a fair, transparent, professional and supportive process for all applicants wishing to study with us, however there may be occasions when an applicant wishes to raise a concern about our admissions process.

This guidance sets out our complaints procedure and the routes for an applicant to make a complaint.

Scope

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by an applicant about our admissions process, which may include decisions, conduct, communication or administration in relation to an application to undertake a programme of study which offered by the bpf.

It may be helpful for the applicant to read this Guidance in conjunction with our:

- Analytical and Ethical Stance of a bpf Trainee
- Competency and Pillars Framework for bpf Trainees

Students who are registered on a programme of study and whose complaint does not concern an application to another programme of study with the bpf, should refer to our Student Complaints Policy.

Who can make a complaint

This guidance applies to:

- individuals applying for admission to a programme of study
- applicants who have been offered a place, but have not yet registered
- applicants whose application is under consideration
- applicants who have been unsuccessful in securing a place on a programme

We understand that applying to train and study can be time sensitive and often with set admission deadlines. To help us support the admissions process for applicants, complaints should be made as soon as possible, and within 30 days of the issue, or the last issue if there is more than one.

Applicants should not feel that they will be disadvantaged in any current or future applications by bringing forward a complaint, and all complaints are taken seriously, dealt with without recrimination and treated confidentially as far as is reasonably practicable.

We would encourage applicants to bring forward complaints themselves. The bpf will not accept complaints from a third party to act on behalf of an applicant unless we have received written permission from the applicant to confirm their agreement that the third party will act as their representative. It is not normally appropriate or necessary for the applicant to appoint a legal representative.

Grounds for complaint

Applicants may submit a complaint in relation to matters including:

- failure for the bpf to follow our admissions procedures
- administration errors or maladministration
- unreasonable delay in processing an application
- failure to communicate decisions or information appropriately
- concerns regarding the conduct of staff or individuals involved in the admissions process
- inaccurate, misleading or incomplete information provided by the bpf
- failure to implement agreed reasonable adjustments
- concerns regarding fairness or consistency in the operation of our admission procedures

Complaints that are outside of the scope of this Guidance.

We will not consider complaints that are about:

- academic, professional or clinical judgement exercised by interviewers, our training committees or our academic staff
- decisions relating to academic suitability, professional suitability or readiness for training
- course requirements and admissions criteria
- strategic decisions regarding programme capacity or the number of places available
- anonymous complaints, except where there is a compelling safeguarding, welfare or public interest reasons for an investigation
-

Complaints that are intended to disrupt or with no serious purpose.

We will not accept complaints that:

- we have previously considered and decided
- that are about something which a fair-minded person would consider to be trivial

- that the applicant is pursuing in a way that is having a seriously negative effect on our staff or work
- where an applicant is looking for a remedy that lacks any serious purpose or value

Process

Timelines

When an applicant raises a complaint, we will aim to complete our investigation and resolve the complaint promptly and methodically, however more complex complaints (for example, complaints that have multiple issues) may take longer. We will aim to complete our complaints procedure within 90 calendar days of receiving a formal complaint. We require all applicants to provide all information or evidence promptly and within any set deadlines.

Table 1: Overview of timeline

In this Guidance, we refer to calendar days (not working days).

Stage	Timeline
Step 1: Early resolution	Within 30 days of the issue, or most recent issue
Step 2: Formal complaint Submission of Formal complaint by applicant	Within 14 days of the outcome of the early resolution
Step 2: : Formal complaint Complaint reviewed by the Director of Professional Standards (<i>or nominee</i>)	Within 28 days of receiving the formal complaint
Step 3: Review of formal complaint Submission of request for the review of formal complaint by applicant	Within 14 days of the outcome of the formal complaint
Step 3: Review of formal complaint Review of formal complaint by the CEO (<i>or nominee</i>)	Within 28 days of receiving the Review of formal complaint form
Completion of Steps 2 and 3	Within 90 calendar days

Step 1: Early resolution

Many complaints can be resolved quickly and initially with the Director of Training or Chair of the training committee for the applicant's programme of study.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible and no longer than 30 days after the issue or the most recent issue. If the applicant is unsure who to contact with their complaint, they can contact

the Corporate Governance Team for advice by sending an email to complaints@bpf-psychotherapy.org.uk.

Where an early resolution is not possible or appropriate, for example if the complaint is complex, where there are allegations of misconduct, harassment or discrimination or when the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the early resolution, the applicant can take their complaint formally to the Corporate Governance Team (Step 2).

Step 2: Formal complaint:

The formal process is activated when:

- the applicant has good reason for not wanting to engage with the early resolution
- early resolution was attempted, but the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome
- the issues raised by the student are complex and require a detailed investigation
- the Corporate Governance Team decide that the applicants complaint should be considered at the formal stage without first trying early resolution.

The applicant should send their complaint to the Corporate Governance Team by sending an email to complaints@bpf-psychotherapy.org.uk. The formal complaint should be raised as soon as possible and no longer than 28 days after the outcome of the early resolution.

The formal complaint will be considered by the Director of Professional Standards or nominee

Step 3: Review of formal complaint

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, they can ask for a review of a formal complaint. The complaint must have been considered at the formal stage before it can be taken to the review stage. The request for the review of formal complaint should be raised as soon as possible and no longer than 28 days after the outcome of the formal complaint.

The review stage will consider:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- new evidence that could make a difference to the outcome and which the student could not have reasonably been provided earlier in the process.

The review stage will not normally consider new issues afresh or involve a further investigation. The CEO or nominee, who has not previously been involved at any previous stage of the complaint, will consider the request for the review of the formal complaint. The outcome of the review stage is final.

Resolutions to Complaints

At each stage, we will communicate our decisions and outcomes, providing clear reasons and rationale where appropriate, at the completion of each step in the complaints procedure.

Possible outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

1. That the complaint is upheld, or partially upheld, and the bpf may:
 - a. provide an explanation or clarification on the outcome and admissions decision
 - b. issue an apology
 - c. consider corrective administration action
 - d. reconsideration of an aspect of the admissions process where a procedural error is identified
2. That the complaint is not upheld and no further action will be taken

The bpf review the outcomes of all complaints in order to identify and take forward opportunities for learning and to support the applicant experience.

When the course is delivered in partnership with another educational institution

If the application has been made for a course or programme of study which is delivered by the bpf in partnership with another educational institution, such as Birkbeck (University of London), University College London or the Anna Freud Centre, the applicant should follow the admissions policy for the educational partner.

We may share information that is proportionate to the complaint with the relevant educational partner for the purposes of investigating or responding to a complaint.

Internal Resources

Applicants may wish to refer to our [student policies and regulations webpage](#), where we publish our

- Analytical and Ethical Stance of a bpf Trainee
- Competency and Pillars Framework for bpf Trainees
- Student Complaints Policy

External resources

- University College London
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/>
- Birkbeck, University of London
<https://www.bbk.ac.uk/>

Version	Date	Description of Amendments	Author
V1	17.08.2026		Director of Professional Standards