

COMPLAINTS

7.1 COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AGAINST ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

7.1.1 BAC's complaints procedure

All accredited institutions must have in place an explicit and fair complaints procedure to which students, their parents/guardians or other representatives have access, and this procedure should be exhausted before a complaint is referred to BAC.

If a student or their representative has completed the institution's own complaints procedure but has still not achieved a satisfactory resolution, they should submit to BAC the following:

- A detailed letter of complaint, including a full description of the cause for complaint and the circumstances in which it arose
- A signed statement authorising BAC to investigate the complaint and to raise the matter with the institution on their behalf
- Copies of all supporting documentation relating to the complaint.

A complaints pack with more detail is available to download from the BAC website. BAC staff will seek to resolve all complaints received against accredited institutions to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the institution, with the exception of complaints which appear to relate to offences more appropriately referred to a statutory authority.

If a complaint is received against an institution which BAC does not accredit, BAC will ascertain whether or not the institution is accredited by another recognised accrediting body. If it is, BAC will redirect the complainant to that other body. Any new or outstanding complaints against an institution whose accreditation BAC has withdrawn, or which withdrew voluntarily from accreditation, will be similarly redirected should the institution later be awarded accreditation by another recognised accrediting body.

7.1.2 What BAC will do

If BAC receives a complaint from a student or their representative against an accredited institution, the following procedure applies:

- The details of the complaint will be recorded by BAC staff
- The institution concerned will be informed of the nature of the complaint and asked to investigate its cause
- The institution will be required to submit a written response within 10 working days detailing the outcome of its investigation and, where appropriate, proposing a course of action to resolve the matter
- BAC will inform the complainant of the outcome of the institution's investigation and any proposed course of action
- BAC will, with the agreement of both the complainant and the institution, make reasonable attempts to mediate between the two parties in order to resolve the matter
- As a result of its mediating role BAC may make recommendations for resolving the matter, but these will not be binding on either party.

If after BAC's attempts at mediation the matter remains unresolved, a detailed report on the complaint will be made to the Accreditation Committee.

A detailed report will also be made to the Accreditation Committee if more than three complaints against any one institution are received within one year.

7.1.3 What the Accreditation Committee will do

If the Accreditation Committee receives a report on a complaint against an accredited institution, it will assess whether or not there is evidence that the standards required for accreditation are not being met, and it may make one of the following decisions:

- to dismiss the complaint
- to require further investigation by BAC of the complaint, which may include an unannounced spot check at the institution's expense
- to require the institution to undertake remedial or compensatory action where it is considered to have failed to meet the responsibilities or uphold the standards of accreditation; if the institution refuses to undertake such action, its accreditation may be withdrawn (see [section 3.3.2](#))
- to require an immediate spot check, supplementary inspection or reaccreditation inspection at the institution's expense where there is evidence that the minimum standards required for accreditation are not being met; if the institution refuses to submit to the inspection, its accreditation may be withdrawn (see [section 3.3.2](#))
- to suspend or withdraw accreditation; this decision is normally made only where the report of the complaint indicates that the institution has refused to cooperate with BAC's investigation, that it has refused to take any required remedial or compensatory action, or that there is convincing evidence of illegal behaviour by its senior management or any other serious breach of BAC's regulations (see [section 3.3.1](#))

BAC will notify the complainant and the institution in writing of the Accreditation Committee's decision.

7.1.4 What BAC will not do

BAC will not consider complaints under the following circumstances:

- where the substance of the complaint is not relevant to BAC's regulations or accreditation standards
- where the complaint is made anonymously or solely by telephone or email: complaints must be made in writing and accompanied by the complainant's name, address and signature
- where the complaint relates to a refund claim but is not accompanied by legible proof of payment in the form of a receipt; copies of bank statements are not sufficient
- where the complaint is already subject to a legal process
- where the complaint relates to a contractual dispute between the institution and an employee or employees
- where the complainant has failed, without good reason, to make use of the institution's own complaints procedure
- where the complainant has failed, without good reason, to fully establish that the content of a course is of value to them and the awarding body is appropriately recognised before enrolment.

7.2 OTHER COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

BAC will carry out an investigation where a statutory body shares evidence or intelligence that a BAC-accredited institution is breaching legal requirements. Under these circumstances, the statutory body will be informed of the outcome of BAC's investigation of the complaint.

No formal complaints procedure is available to any other complainants, but BAC may choose to carry out its own investigations of accredited institutions if it receives any evidence or intelligence of a failure to meet the standards required for accreditation or a breach of other BAC regulations.

7.3 COMPLAINTS AGAINST BAC

BAC is committed to working in an open and accountable way. This includes responding positively to complaints from institutions by investigating them thoroughly and where possible correcting any mistakes identified.

7.3.1 *Complaints about the content of inspection reports*

Complaints about factual inaccuracies in inspection reports or feedback concerning their conclusions, requirements and recommendations should be addressed to the [Accreditation Manager, BAC, 76 Shoe Lane, London EC4A 3JB](#). No action will be taken if complaints of this nature are received more than 30 days after receipt of the report.

7.3.2 *Complaints about inspectors or staff*

The roles and responsibilities of BAC inspectors and staff are addressed fully in their training programmes. Inspectors and staff are made aware of what is expected of them, both in the content of their work and in the way they carry it out. BAC takes seriously its duty to prepare inspectors and staff to do their work effectively, professionally and with due courtesy and regard to the institution and its staff. In turn, BAC expects that institutions will treat inspectors and staff with the respect, courtesy and professionalism necessary for a successful inspection.

BAC recognises, however, that there might be occasions when institutions may wish to complain about the conduct, behaviour and actions of BAC, its staff and its agents in relation to the published purposes, procedures, criteria, methods and protocols associated with its accreditation scheme. Complaints such as these should be sent to the [Accreditation Manager, BAC, 76 Shoe Lane, London EC4A 3JB](#). Complaints about the Accreditation Manager should be sent instead to the Chief Executive.

7.3.3 *Inspection feedback forms*

Please note that an inspection evaluation questionnaire will be emailed to the institution after every inspection. Please use this to submit any feedback (positive or negative) you may have about the inspectors or the conduct of the inspection. The formal complaints procedures are not a means for institutions to provide such feedback.

The Accreditation Manager may contact the institution to investigate any negative feedback. Feedback on an inspection is not passed to the inspector(s) concerned until after the inspection report has been considered by the Accreditation Committee. Any relevant response from the inspector(s) will be passed to the institution.

7.3.4 *Complaints about the accreditation scheme*

These will be considered by BAC's Executive Committee. Complaints such as these should be submitted in writing to the [Chief Executive, BAC, 76 Shoe Lane, London EC4A 3JB](#). Complainants will be informed of the Executive Committee's response to their complaint by its Chairman within 10 working days of its meeting.