



GREEN VALLEY ACADEMY

Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved: October 2026

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Reference	GVA-13
Policy owner	Academic Registrar and Admissions Officer; oversight by the Student Experience, Engagement and Employability Committee
Approved by	Academic Board and Board of Directors — October 2026
Effective from	05 October 2026
Next review	October 2027, and upon any change to the University of Wolverhampton's student complaints procedure
Applies to	All enrolled students of courses delivered by GVA under franchise from the University of Wolverhampton, and recent former students within the time limits of this procedure
Linked documents	University of Wolverhampton Student Complaints Procedure and Terms and Conditions; Applicant Appeals and Complaints Policy; Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy; Safeguarding and Prevent Policy; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Scheme

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1. PURPOSE AND THE FRANCHISE CONTEXT

- 1.1** This policy gives every student a clear, free, fair and timely route to raise a complaint about GVA and to have it put right, and it connects that route — without gap or obstruction — to the University of Wolverhampton's own student complaints procedure and, beyond it, to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Because GVA delivers franchised provision, students are registered students at the University of Wolverhampton and contract with the University on its published Terms and Conditions: GVA operates the first tier of complaint handling for the services and delivery it provides, and the University's published Student Complaints Procedure stands behind GVA's stages as the further and final internal route, with the final internal decision resting with the University. No member of GVA staff shall ever discourage, delay or obstruct a student's access to the University's procedure or to the OIA, and every final-stage response issued by GVA shall state the onward route plainly.
- 1.2** A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response — about the quality of teaching or supervision as delivered by GVA, about GVA's facilities, services or administration, about the conduct of GVA staff, or about GVA's failure to follow its own published policies. A complaint is distinct from matters which belong to other procedures and shall be routed to them without being rejected: challenges to assessment outcomes, progression or award decisions are academic appeals and are governed by the University of Wolverhampton's Academic Regulations, GVA administering first-tier consideration only as those regulations permit; allegations of harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct are handled under the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy or the Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment and Staff-Student Relationships Policy, with the student's consent sought on the route; disclosures of wrongdoing in the public interest may be made under the Whistleblowing Policy; concerns about fees, refunds or fee liability are governed by the University's fee framework as set out in the Tuition Fees and Refunds Policy, GVA helping the student to route the matter to the University; and any matter disclosing risk to a person's safety is referred at once into the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, whatever door it arrived through. Where a student raises a matter through the wrong procedure, staff shall redirect it, tell the student where it has gone, and preserve the original date of raising all time limits.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1** The following principles bind every person handling a complaint under this policy: accessibility — a complaint may be made in writing, by email to complaints@greenvalleyacademy.co.uk, through the published online form, or orally to any member of staff, who shall record it accurately and confirm the record with the student, and reasonable adjustments shall be made to every stage on request or identified need; no detriment — no student shall ever be disadvantaged, academically or otherwise, for making a complaint in good faith, and any victimisation of a complainant is itself a disciplinary matter; fairness — complaints are investigated impartially by persons without prior involvement, both sides of any dispute are heard, and conclusions rest on evidence; proportionality — resolution is attempted at the lowest effective level and escalated only as needed; timeliness — every stage has a published timescale, delays

are communicated with reasons and a revised date, and time limits are applied with discretion for good cause shown; confidentiality — information is shared only with those who need it for resolution, within data protection law; and support — a student may be accompanied at any meeting by a fellow student, friend or family member, and the Wellbeing team's support is offered wherever a complaint reveals distress. Anonymous complaints are accepted and assessed on their evidence, though the remedies available to an unidentifiable complainant are necessarily limited, and group complaints may be brought with a named lead complainant acting for the group.

3. STAGE ONE: EARLY RESOLUTION

- 3.1** Most concerns are best resolved when they arise, quickly and informally. A student should raise the concern within twenty working days of the event, with the member of staff concerned, their Personal Academic Tutor, the relevant Module Leader or the Course Director, whichever the student is most comfortable approaching; the staff member receiving the concern shall engage with it constructively — explaining, apologising, correcting or arranging what is needed — and shall respond within five working days, recording briefly what was raised and how it was resolved so that themes remain visible centrally. Early resolution is encouraged but never compulsory: a student may proceed directly to stage two where the matter is serious, where it concerns the person, they would otherwise raise it with, or where they prefer a formal route, and no student shall be sent back to stage one against their wishes more than once.

4. STAGE TWO: FORMAL COMPLAINT

- 4.1** Where early resolution has not succeeded, or the student proceeds formally, the student submits a formal complaint within ten working days of the stage one response (or within twenty working days of the event where stage one was not used), stating what happened, what has been done so far, and the outcome sought. The complaint is acknowledged within three working days and investigated by a senior member of staff with no prior involvement, appointed by the Principal; the investigator shall examine the relevant records, meet the student (with a companion if wished) and any staff concerned, and may seek any evidence reasonably needed; and the investigator shall issue a written outcome within fifteen working days of acknowledgement, extended only for good reason communicated with a revised date. The outcome letter shall state what was investigated, what was found, whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld, the reasons, the remedy offered where upheld — which may include an apology, correction of records, repeat provision of a service, a change of arrangements, or a recommendation to the University where the remedy lies within the University's authority — and the route to stage three with its time limit. Where a remedy requires a decision that rests with the University of Wolverhampton — anything touching assessment outcomes, registration, the award or fee liability — GVA shall prepare and submit a documented recommendation to the relevant department of the University, tell the student what has been submitted and to whom, and support the student while the University decides.

5. STAGE THREE: INTERNAL REVIEW, AND THE UNIVERSITY AND OIA ROUTES

- 5.1** A student dissatisfied with the stage two outcome may request a review within ten working days, on one or more of the following grounds: that the procedure was not followed correctly at stage two in a way material to the outcome; that the outcome was not reasonable on the evidence; or that new material evidence exists which, for good reason, could not be provided earlier. The review is conducted by the principal, or by a senior person appointed by the principal with no prior involvement where the principal has been involved, within ten working days; the reviewer does not reinvestigate from the beginning but examines whether the grounds are made out, and may confirm the outcome, substitute a different outcome, or return the matter for reinvestigation. The stage three letter concludes GVA's internal procedure and shall state plainly: that the student may take the complaint to the University of Wolverhampton under the University's published Student Complaints Procedure, with the current contact route and any applicable time limit; and that upon completion of the University's internal procedures the student will receive from the University a Completion of Procedures letter and may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education within the OIA's published time limit. GVA shall cooperate fully and promptly with the University's consideration of any complaint concerning GVA — providing the complete file within five working days of request — and shall implement without delay any remedy or recommendation the University or the OIA directs.

6. RECORDS, LEARNING AND GOVERNANCE

- 6.1** Every formal complaint is logged centrally by the Academic Registrar and Admissions Officer with its subject, stages, timescales met, outcome and remedy; records are held confidentially under GVA's retention schedule, separately from academic records, and a complaint is never noted on a student's academic file. The Student Experience, Engagement and Employability Committee receives a termly report of volumes, themes, outcomes, timeliness and equality analysis, and the Academic Board an annual report including actions taken so that complaints improve provision rather than merely resolving cases; upheld complaints generate documented corrective actions with named owners and completion dates, verified by the Quality and Compliance Lead; and patterns touching quality of delivery are reported to the University through the partnership route as its processes require. Complaints made in bad faith — vexatious, malicious or persistently repeated after final decision — are rare, and no complaint shall be so classified except by the principal in writing with reasons, the student retaining always the University and OIA routes. This policy is reviewed annually, and immediately upon any change to the University of Wolverhampton's Student Complaints Procedure, whose current published version governs the onward stages.

7. PUBLICATION AND AWARENESS

- 7.1** This policy is published on GVA's website with the online complaints form, is introduced to every student at induction and through the student handbook and is available in

accessible formats on request. It can be found at www.greenvalleyacademy.co.uk/policies.