

Complaints Procedure

There are five stages to the process, and we attempt to resolve your issue at the earliest stage possible.

An issue will not be taken to a higher stage until all possibilities of redress at the earlier stage have been exhausted.

EXCEPT where there is a matter of gross misconduct or similar very serious or urgent issues, where in consultation with the Director, an issue might move direct to Formal Complaint stage.

- Stage 1: Problem Solving
- Stage 2: Written Grievance
- Stage 3: Formal Complaint
- Stage 4: Internal Appeal
- Stage 5: External Appeal

A chart showing the relationship between the stages is at the end of this document.

Stage 1 – Problem Solving

If you have an issue or a problem with some aspect of your experience, you will be expected to raise this with the person responsible. Ideally this will be face to face, but could be by telephone or email. This person must then be given a reasonable opportunity to resolve your issue satisfactorily.

The following table gives a guide as to who you should contact in the first instance for specific areas of concern:

Area	First Contact for problem solving
Actions of a student working in the Student Placement Service	Student Placement Service Manager
Actions of a member of the teaching staff	Programme Director
Academic Results, Marking or Assessment	Training Manager
Other Course or Student Administration	Programme Director
Services provided by the Charity – e.g. room booking, premises or facilities	Office and Facilities Manager
Financial Issues – bill paying, invoicing etc	Finance Manager
Actions of a training therapist	Programme Director

Only if you are unable to get a satisfactory resolution at stage one after a reasonable period will a stage two grievance be considered.

Stage 2 – Written Grievance

In more serious cases, we might have been unable to resolve your issue at stage one, despite reasonable efforts. In this case, a written grievance can be submitted. This should set out clearly the following points:

- The precise nature of the issue
- The steps taken by you to attempt to resolve it at Stage 1, including who you have spoken to and their response (if any).
- What remains to be resolved by the Trust, and what action by us you feel would resolve the matter.

A written grievance must be submitted (either by email or hard copy) to the following individuals (depending on the subject of the grievance):

A written grievance should **only** be sent to the named responsible person below. Try to avoid copying your written grievance widely (for example to other members of staff, trustees or fellow

students) because this might prejudice your case should it reach the appeals stage and will also, inevitably, delay the process.

Area	Who to send the written grievance
Actions of a student working in the Student Placement Service	Programme Director
Actions of a member of the teaching staff	Programme Director
Academic Results, Marking or Assessment	Programme Director
Course or Student Administration	Programme Director
Services provided by the Charity – e.g. room booking, premises or facilities	Director of Operations and Finance
Financial Issues – bill paying, invoicing etc	Director of Operations and Finance

The recipient of a written grievance will acknowledge receipt immediately, and conduct an investigation. This will involve talking to those involved and will aim at reaching a speedy resolution.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the responsible Director may arrange a conciliation meeting facilitated by a neutral third party. Failure to attend the conciliation meeting without reasonable excuse may result in the issue being taken to stage 3 or in consideration of the issue terminating at this stage.

In normal circumstances, this will be completed within 15 working days, and you will receive a written response outlining the outcome and actions taken.

Only once the written grievance has been considered and responded to can the issue be taken to the Formal Complaint stage.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint

Where you have been unable to get reasonable redress of your grievance at stage 2, you may make a Formal Complaint.

Formal complaints must be in writing, addressed to the same responsible person listed at the Grievance stage. It should include the following information:

- The precise nature of the issue
- The steps taken by you to attempt to resolve it at each earlier stage (where appropriate)
- What remains to be resolved by the Trust, and what action by us you feel would resolve the matter.

Area	What happens to the complaint?
Actions of a student working in the Student Placement Service	A formal Trust Complaint panel is constituted and considers the complaint, and recommend redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately.
Actions of a member of the teaching staff	A formal Trust Complaint panel is constituted and considers the complaint, and recommend redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately.
Academic Results, Marking or Assessment	A sub-committee of the Trust Complaint panel, consisting of members of the Programme Executive team, is constituted and considers the complaint, and recommends redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately.
Course or Student	The complaint will be considered by a Complaints sub-

Administration	committee of the Trust Board of Trustees. They will recommend redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately.
Services provided by the Charity – e.g. room booking, premises or facilities	The complaint will be considered by a Complaints sub-committee of the Trust Board of Trustees. They will recommend redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately
Financial Issues – bill paying, invoicing etc	The complaint will be considered by a Complaints sub-committee of the Trust Board of Trustees. They will recommend redress or sanctions as appropriate. These recommendations will normally be implemented immediately
Actions of a training therapist	The complaint will be considered by the Programme Director and may be referred to the appropriate professional body (BACP, UKCP)

In normal circumstances, Formal Complaints will be dealt with within 25 working days, and you will receive a written response outlining the outcome and actions taken.

Stage 4 – Internal Appeal

In rare cases, stages 1 to 3 fail to provide necessary redress of an issue. If you still remain unsatisfied, then you have the right to appeal within 15 working days of being advise of the outcome at Stage 3.

An appeal will only be upheld where you are able to demonstrate that there has been one or more of the following:

- a major procedural failure
- you have been treated unfairly or with prejudice
- there are pertinent new facts relating to the issue that need to be considered.

Your appeal will be heard within 25 working days of receipt.

An appeals panel is not constituted re-make the decisions or recommendations made at the earlier stage – e.g. it is not a chance to ask for a ‘second opinion’ – it is there to ensure you have been treated fairly and reasonably, and that the procedures have been followed scrupulously and transparently.

If the panel finds that there are grounds for the appeal to be upheld, then the panel can:

- impose a lesser sanction
- impose a greater sanction
- overturn the original decision and ask for the matter to be reviewed.

Stage 5 – External Appeals

The Psychosynthesis Trust is an organisational member of the BACP and the UKCP and adheres to the BACP codes of ethics and complaints and disciplinary procedures. In the event you feel the organisational processes in stage 1 to 4 have failed to meet the standards expected by BACP / UKCP, then you have the right to raise a complaint with BACP / UKCP. In considering your complaint, they will wish to see all the materials and process that has preceded the complaint, through our stages 1 to 4.

The Trust is also a registered charity, and where the complaint relates to its probity or governance as a charity, then you also have the right to make a complaint to the Charity Commission.

The Psychosynthesis Trust Complaints Panel

This will be composed of the Executive Director or a senior staff member other than the one who originally dealt with the matter, a Trustee and an independent external member. One member of the panel will act as chair. This panel will receive full documentation and may interview those involved in the complaint, and conduct such further investigation as is deemed necessary. The panel will make recommendations with regard to the outcome, which may include:

1. Instigation of disciplinary procedures with regard to core staff
2. Instruction to refund all or part of and fees or payments
3. Limits on further employment of a freelancer, with or without conditions regarding supervision, re-training etc.
4. Referral of the matter to the BACP / UKCP or other relevant professional body.

Outcomes

At stages 1 and 2, the outcome will be a satisfactory resolution to the issue for all parties.

At stage 3 – Formal Complaint, the outcomes may include:

- Formal disciplinary action against an individual.
- Instruction for actions to be taken by the staff.
- Refund of all or part of fees
- Formal Referral of the issue to another body

In the first instance, any problems or concerns should be taken to the member of staff most directly concerned. If it is not possible or appropriate to do so, the Study Tutor or, failing this, the Programme Director should be approached. If resolution cannot be reached, an approach may be made to the Executive Director.