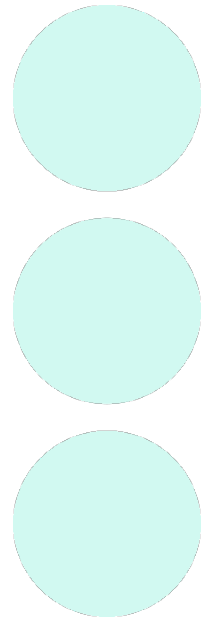




UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Professional
and Continuing
Education



Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)

Student Complaints Resolution Procedure

2026/27

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1. Introduction

Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) is part of the University of Cambridge. We take all student complaints seriously and aim to resolve concerns quickly, fairly and transparently.

This document is available to all students studying with PACE. It explains how to raise a complaint, and how it will be responded to, and how unresolved matters may be escalated.

PACE serves students with different enrolment statuses. The type of course you are studying will determine the escalation route of your complaint, should it not be resolved at the Local Resolution stage. This document explains each route clearly so that you may understand the right process for your situation.

2. Understanding your complaint route

The type of course you are studying will determine your complaints route. There are two categories:

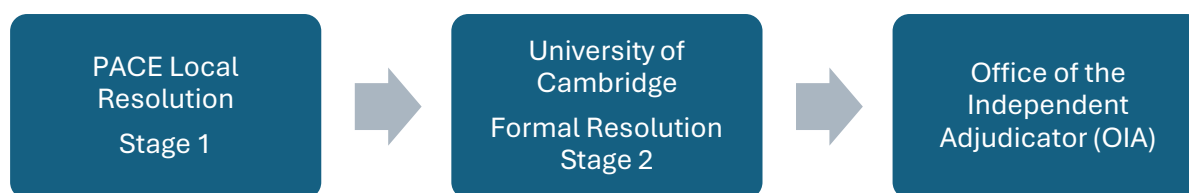
Student type	Your complaint route
Award-bearing student (Studying towards a PACE certificate, diploma, or advanced diploma) Or Matriculated student (Studying towards a Master of Studies, which involves formally joining the University through one of the Colleges)	PACE Local Resolution (Stage 1), then University Formal Resolution (Stage 2)
Non-award-bearing student (e.g. International Summer Programme, short courses without a University of Cambridge award)	PACE Local Resolution, then escalation to Director of PACE (or nominee) for Final Review (Stage 2)

Not sure which category applies to you?

If you are unsure of your student or course type, check your offer letter or course enrolment documents, or contact your Course Administration team. They will help you identify the right process.

2.1 Award-bearing / matriculated students

You are an award-bearing student if you are enrolled on a PACE programme that leads to a University of Cambridge qualification - for example a Certificate, a Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Master of Studies (MSt). An overview of your complaints route is below and explained in [Chart A](#).



2.2 Non-award-bearing students

You are a non-award-bearing student if you are on a PACE course that does not lead to a University of Cambridge award. This includes the International Summer Programme, Better Futures Programme, weekend courses, short online courses, and the Career Accelerators.

Your booking terms and conditions sit alongside this procedure. They set out what you agreed to when you booked - fees, cancellation, refunds, and changes to your course. If your complaint is about any of those, please read your booking terms first. This procedure covers how PACE has applied those terms to you, and everything else about your experience with us. An overview of your complaints route is below and explained in [Chart B](#).



3. Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Complainant	You - the student making the complaint.
Responsible Officer	The PACE staff member authorised to receive and respond to complaints at Local Resolution stage – Head of Academic Quality or nominee.
Supporter	A person of your choice who may accompany you to any meeting held as part of this process.
Local Resolution (Stage 1)	The first stage of the complaints process, handled by PACE and available to all students. This is usually an investigation managed by the Responsible Officer and is explained in paragraph 6.2 .
Formal Resolution (Stage 2)	The second stage of the University's complaints procedure, available to matriculated students and those undertaking an award-bearing course, handled by OSCCA, if you remain dissatisfied after Local Resolution.
Final Review (Stage 2)	The second and final stage which applies only to students undertaking non-award-bearing courses. The Director of PACE (or nominee) reviews the Stage 1 investigation and outcome. There is no further internal escalation after this stage. Explained in Chart B .

OSCCA	The Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals - the University's central team responsible for formal complaints at Stage 2 and beyond. OSCCA does not handle complaints from students on non-award-bearing courses.
OIA	The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education: an independent national body you can contact after exhausting the University's internal process. Free to students. The OIA can only consider complaints from students who are eligible under its scheme, which does not usually include students on non-award-bearing courses. See www.oiahe.org.uk
Working days	Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays and the week between Christmas Day (25 December) and New Year's Day (1 January).
Completion of Procedures Letter	A formal letter confirming that the University has completed its internal complaints process. Issued by OSCCA to matriculated students and those on award-bearing courses at the end of the University's procedure. It confirms that you may be able to take your complaint to the OIA.
Final Response Letter	A letter confirming that PACE has completed its internal complaints process. Issued to students on non-award-bearing courses at the end of the Final Review, or where a complaint is terminated. It sets out the final outcome and confirms there is no further internal stage.

4. Our commitment to you

The University is committed to handling all complaints in a way that is:

- Fair and transparent - decisions are based on evidence and made without bias.
- Timely - we will acknowledge and respond within the timeframes set out in this procedure.
- Respectful - all students and staff will be treated with dignity throughout the process.
- Accessible - we will make reasonable adjustments. Please tell us about any needs when you submit your complaint.
- Confidential - information you share will only be passed to those staff who need it to investigate and resolve your concern.

4.1 Scope

You can use this process to raise a complaint if you are unhappy with:

- the standard of teaching, supervision, or academic support provided by PACE;
- the quality of PACE facilities, resources, or services;
- accommodation, catering, or an excursion that PACE has arranged as part of your course;

- the way PACE staff have behaved towards you;
- how PACE handled a request for support or a reasonable adjustment, including any requirements you told us about when you booked;
- PACE not following its own published policies, procedures or terms and conditions;
- inaccurate or misleading information provided by PACE;
- a change PACE has made to your course, or to the services and facilities connected with it;
- any other action or inaction by PACE that has negatively affected your studies or experience.

4.2 Matters outside the scope of this procedure:

Some matters are dealt with under a different procedure. If you raise one of these here, we will tell you which process applies and pass your complaint on where we can.

Matters with their own procedure:

If your concern is about:	Please see:
Marks, assessment, or examination decisions	Examination Review Procedure https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews
An allegation of academic misconduct	Academic Misconduct Procedure https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism-and-academic-misconduct
Student conduct or discipline	Student Disciplinary Procedure https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-discipline
Your application or admission to PACE, including a withdrawn offer	Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy https://www.pace.cam.ac.uk/policies-and-reports/policies
A refund, cancellation, or fee charge	Refund and Cancellation Policy, and the General Terms and Conditions for the booking and provision of courses (Sent to you at the time of purchase)
Freedom of speech	Non-award-bearing: raise it with PACE through this process in the first instance. Award-bearing/matriculated: University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech .

	https://www.governanceandcompliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-and-guidance/university-code-practice-freedom-speech
Harassment or sexual misconduct	Contact the PACE Student Support Team, who will explain the options available to you and, where appropriate, refer the matter into University procedures. You do not need to use this complaints process first. https://www.studentsupport.cam.ac.uk/harassment-and-sexual-misconduct

Other matters we cannot investigate:

- complaints that have already been investigated and concluded under a previous process;
- complaints about a person or organisation that is not part of PACE;
- complaints raised more than 20 working days after the event, unless you give us a good, evidenced reason for the delay (see Section 5.2).

4.3 Possible outcomes of an upheld complaint

If we uphold your complaint in whole or in part, we will say so clearly in our response.

Depending on what has happened, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation of what happened and why;
- an acknowledgement that the matter could have been handled better;
- an assurance that we will take steps to stop it happening again, with an explanation of what those steps are and when we will make them;
- a review of the policy or practice that led to the problem;
- a refund, a fee waiver, or a payment towards costs you have reasonably incurred.

This list is not exhaustive, and we will consider any outcome you have asked for. We will tell you if we cannot offer what you have asked for, and why.

4.4 Respectful behaviour

We ask all students to communicate respectfully with staff throughout this process. Abusive, discriminatory or threatening language, unreasonable persistence, or behaviour designed to cause disruption will not be tolerated. Where this happens, we will provide a notice first and give you the chance to change how you are engaging with us. Persistent disruptive behaviour may result in your complaint being terminated.

PACE may also terminate consideration of a complaint that is determined to be malicious, frivolous, or vexatious - for example one that is obsessive, harassing, or repetitive, or that insists on unachievable outcomes.

If a complaint is terminated on these grounds, we will tell you in writing and explain why. For students on non-award-bearing courses, this will be a Final Response Letter and is the end of the process. For matriculated students and those on award-bearing courses, the letter will explain that you may still submit your complaint to OSCCA under the University's Student Complaint Procedure.

5. How to make a complaint

5.1 Raise the matter informally first

Before making a formal complaint, we strongly encourage you to raise your concern informally with the relevant member of PACE staff, your Course/Academic Director, or the Course Administration team. Many issues can be resolved quickly this way.

5.2 When to submit a complaint

If informal contact has not resolved your concern, or if you do not feel comfortable raising it informally, please use the form in [Appendix A](#) to enact the Local Resolution Stage 1 process. A copy can also be requested from the Quality Office: qa@pace.cam.ac.uk

⌚ Time limit - 20 working days

You should raise your complaint as soon as possible, and normally within 20 working days of the event you are complaining about (University Complaints Procedure, para. 3.1). Complaints submitted outside this timeframe will not normally be accepted unless you provide a valid, evidenced reason for the delay. If a disability or health condition affected your ability to submit in time, please explain this in your complaint.

5.3 What to include

Your complaint should clearly set out:

- what happened, including key dates and names of anyone involved;
- how the matter has affected you;
- what you have already done to resolve the matter informally (if applicable);
- what outcome you are seeking;
- any supporting evidence (emails, letters, records of conversations).

Getting support

We encourage you to seek support before submitting. You could speak to:

- Your Course Administration team or Course Director
- PACE Student Support Team (studentsupport@pace.cam.ac.uk)
- An adviser of your own choosing

If you are a matriculated student or enrolled on an award-bearing course, you may also seek support from the [Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre](#), if you feel this is relevant to your complaint.

5.4 Where to send your complaint

Please email your completed form to:

PACE Academic Quality Office

Email: qa@pace.cam.ac.uk

If you cannot submit by email, contact your Course Administration team to arrange an alternative.

5.5 Group complaints

Groups of students raising the same concern may submit a group complaint. The group must identify a lead complainant who will be PACE's main point of contact. PACE may separate complaints if individual situations differ or different remedies are sought.

5.6 Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints cannot normally be accepted, as it may not be possible to investigate effectively without knowing who has raised the concern. In exceptional circumstances, PACE may consider an anonymous complaint if there is compelling evidence that investigation would be in the public interest.

6. After you submit your complaint

6.1 Acknowledgement

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days of receiving it.

6.2 Investigation

The Responsible Officer will investigate your complaint. This may involve reviewing the information and evidence provided, consulting relevant staff, requesting further information, or inviting you to a meeting.

You are not obliged to attend a meeting, and the Responsible Officer is not obliged to hold one. However, if a meeting is offered, you may bring a supporter of your choosing - for example a friend, family member, adviser, or other trusted person.

6.3 Requests for further information

We may need to ask you for further information or evidence to investigate your complaint properly. If we do, we will tell you clearly what we need and give you 10 working days to respond.

Where we make such a request, we will extend our own response deadline by the same number of working days you take to reply, up to a maximum of 10. We will confirm the revised date in writing when we receive your response.

If you need longer than 10 working days, please tell us before that period ends and explain why. We will agree a reasonable extension where there is a good reason, including where a disability or health condition affects your ability to respond in time.

If we do not hear from you within 10 working days, and you have not asked for more time, we will make a decision on the information we already hold.

6.4 Your right to bring a supporter

You are entitled to bring a supporter to any meeting held as part of this process. A supporter accompanies you for moral support and to help you feel at ease - they are not there to speak on your behalf (unless you have been granted permission to use a representative; see below). There are no restrictions on who your supporter can be, but they must behave respectfully throughout.

The University expects students to correspond directly with the Responsible Officer. In exceptional circumstances (for example, where a disability or health condition prevents you from doing so), you may request permission to use a representative. Please write to the Responsible Officer explaining why; they will grant the request where it is reasonable to do so.

Legal representation is not normally required or appropriate at this stage.

6.5 Decision and response

The Responsible Officer will respond to you in writing, within 15 working days of receiving your complaint.

If a response cannot be provided within 15 working days, you will be notified before the end of that period, with an explanation of the delay and a revised estimated date.

The written response will explain the outcome, give reasons for the decision, and tell you how to proceed to the next stage if you remain dissatisfied.

7. Summary of timeframes

Stage	Timeframe
You submit your complaint	Within 20 working days of the event
PACE acknowledges your complaint	Within 5 working days of receipt

PACE responds with a decision under Stage 1 of the procedure	Normally within 15 working days of receipt
If dissatisfied: escalate to next stage	Within 20 working days of receiving the PACE response
Award-bearing/Matriculated: OSCCA responds under Stage 2 of the University Procedure	In line with the University's Student Complaint Procedure. The University aims to complete Formal Resolution and any Review within three months, though this can be extended in some circumstances. OSCCA will keep you updated.
Non-award-bearing: Director of PACE (or nominee) responds under Stage 2 of the procedure	Within 20 working days of receiving your request.
If we ask you for further information	You have 10 working days to respond. Our response deadline extends by the time you take, up to 10 working days.

8. Resolution and escalation

PACE will endeavour to resolve your complaint at the earliest stage. If you remain dissatisfied with the investigation outcome you may escalate to the next (formal) stage of the process. As this process differs depending on your course of study, a flow chart has been provided.

Award-bearing / matriculated student (Studying towards a PACE certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or Master of Studies)	Flow Chart A
Non-award-bearing student (e.g. International Summer Programme, short courses without a University of Cambridge qualification)	Flow Chart B

9. Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability or other need that requires an adjustment to how this process works for you, please let us know when you submit your complaint or at any point during the process. PACE is committed to making this process accessible to all students and will endeavour to accommodate all reasonable requests.

10. Data Protection and records

All personal information collected during the complaints process will be handled in accordance with the University of Cambridge Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR. Information will only be shared with staff who need access to it to investigate and resolve the complaint.

11. Monitoring and review

PACE will monitor complaints received under this procedure to identify patterns, trends, and opportunities for improvement. A summary of complaints and outcomes will be reported to the PACE Academic Policy and Operations Committee, and the PACE Strategic Committee annually.

This procedure will be reviewed every 2 years and updated as necessary to reflect changes to University policy.

Document control	
Title	PACE Student Complaints Resolution Procedure 2026-27
Version	V1
Author/Owner	Henrietta Branston; Director of PACE Governance
Date approved	15 September 2026
Mechanism for approval	Academic Policy and Operations Committee
Review status	2 years
Related policy/guidance	https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints

Chart A – Award-Bearing / Matriculated

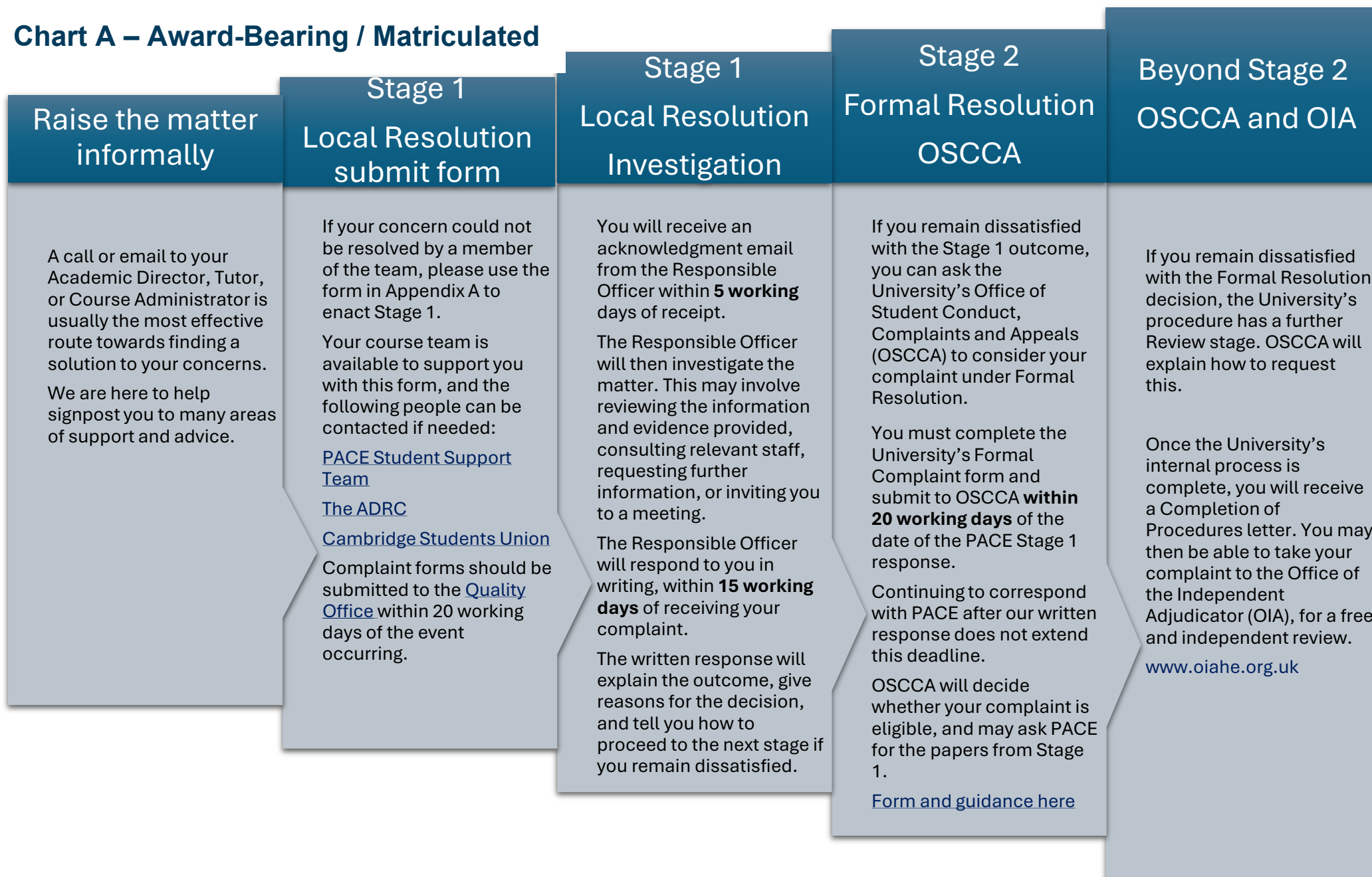
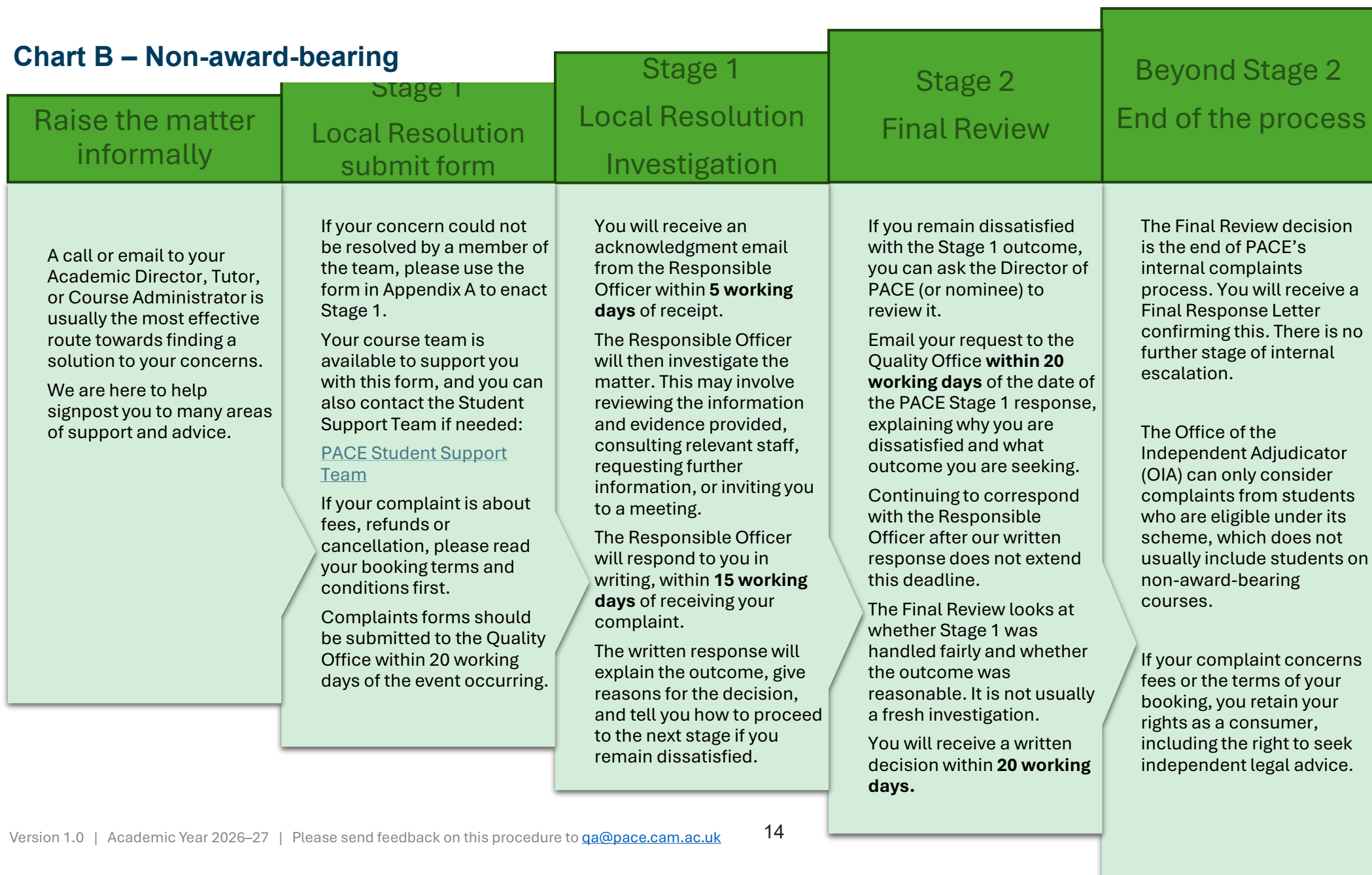


Chart B – Non-award-bearing



Complaint Submission Form – Appendix A

Please complete this form as fully as possible and email it to qa@pace.cam.ac.uk

If you need help completing it, contact your Course Administration team or the PACE Quality Office.

Please indicate your course type in Section A so that your complaint is directed to the correct process.

SECTION A - Your Details

Full name						
Student / enrolment number						
Course name / Programme of study						
Course type	award-bearing		non-award-bearing		Unsure	
University email address						
Alternative email address (if preferred to University email)						

SECTION B - Nature of Your Complaint

Date(s) of the incident(s) or issue(s)	
Who or what is your complaint about? e.g. name of staff member, service, or department	
Please describe what happened. Include key dates and names of any witnesses.	
How has this matter affected you?	
What steps have you already taken to resolve this informally?	

What outcome are you seeking?	
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SECTION C - Supporting Evidence

List any documents, emails, or other evidence you are providing. Please attach these to the email with your completed form.

List of attached documents / evidence (if any)	
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SECTION D - Accessibility and Support

Do you require any reasonable adjustments to take part in this process?	☐ Yes (please describe below) ☐ No
Name and contact details of any supporter or adviser (optional)	

SECTION E — Declaration

By submitting this form, I confirm that:

- the information I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge
- I understand that making a false complaint may be treated as a breach of student discipline
- I consent to the information in this form being shared with relevant PACE staff for the purpose of investigating my complaint
- I have read and understood the PACE Student Complaints Resolution Procedure

Signature (typed name is acceptable)	
Date of submission	