



## Student Disciplinary Policy

LOCAL POLICY

Version 9

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This document is only valid on the day it was printed. The master and control version of this document will remain with Corporate Development. Amended and approved versions of the policy must be sent to Corporate Development once approved. Final versions will be posted on the intranet by Corporate Development.

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### **Policy Compliance details:-**

Compliance with Equality Legislation.

### **PLEASE NOTE: Policies must be equality screened before being submitted to SLT and Trade Unions:-**

Equality Screened initially 07/01/2009 and rescreened in Jan 2019 following a revision of the Policy.

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## Document History

Version Number	Author	Updates/Amendments	Date
1.0	Learner Success	Student Disciplinary Policy including Malpractice is too large - feedback from the staff voice is that they struggle with understanding their role in administering student disciplinary.	23/01/2019
2.0	Learner Success	Policy transferred to new format and simplified as above.	04/02/2019
3.0	Learner Success	Policy reviewed to include additional curriculum guidance and a new section to incorporate existing arrangements for managing student off campus anti-social behaviour.	18/04/2019
4.0	Learner Success	Policy reviewed to include student disciplinary forms (staff intranet version only) and to standardise references to key roles and student consent to share information with parent/guardian.	21/11/2019
	Learner Success	Paragraph 7.2 replaced 'on a placement or in their place of employment' with 'or in a place of employment related to their course of study at Belfast Met'	10/12/19
5.0	Learner Success	Paragraph 7.3 Off Campus Anti-Social Behaviour section updated and extensively amended with new process primarily with respect to the removal of the sanction of fines.	17/09/20
6.0	Learner Success	Appendix D updated in line with off campus offences related to COVID 19. Appendix E updated in line with the updated Student Code of Conduct	08/09/2021
6.0	Corporate Development	References to Director of Curriculum and Learner Success changed to Deputy Chief Executive (Curriculum and Partnerships)	23/06/2023
7.0	Learner Success	Scheduled review of the policy. 4. Student Code of Conduct. Paragraph expanded to reference students with disability, learning difficulty, or long-term medical conditions. 7.3 Student Off Campus Anti-Social Behaviour - paragraph included to provide context of partnership working in the Holylands. 9. Student Support, paragraph enhanced to provide clarity of support entitlement throughout the disciplinary process. 10. Student Disciplinary Process, extended to include paragraph advising that beyond the verbal warning stage of the policy, the Investigating Authority and the Disciplinary Authority must be two distinct members of staff. 10.1 Verbal Warning – time frame added. 10.2 First Written Warning - time frame added.	05/12/2023

Version Number	Author	Updates/Amendments	Date
		10.3 Final Written Warning – time frame added. 10.4 Stage 4 Suspension/Dismissal - time frame added. 15. Complaints extended to advise that the student has the right to raise the matter with the awarding body associated with their programme of study.	
8.0	Learner Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All references to Deputy Chief Executive replaced with Deputy Director for Curriculum &amp; Learner Success</li> <li>All references to Head of Student Support replaced with Pastoral Care Manager</li> </ul> 5. Clarification of staff roles 10. “General Principles” graphic replaces narrative. Amendments made to table showing roles and responsibilities. 10.1 Clarification regarding escalation. 10.2 Clarification regarding escalation. 10.3 Clarification regarding escalation. 10.4 Clarification regarding precautionary suspension. 11. Clarification on retention of records. 14. Amendments to table showing Appeals process.	26/6/2024
9.0	Learner Success	Policy re-worked to create at-a-glance guidance on each of the four disciplinary stages. Removed requirement for student to sign the investigation report during the investigation meeting. Changed references to ‘Appeal Chair’ to ‘Appeal Authority’ to standardise the staff role terminology. Changed Stage 4 label ‘Suspension/ Dismissal’ to ‘Dismissal’ to distinguish it from precautionary suspension. Removed Student Code of Conduct excerpts from the investigation report template; template amended to include evidence, conclusion and recommendation headings and incorporated into the student disciplinary forms. Added reference throughout to the location of the student disciplinary forms on the staff intranet site.	

*Table setting out the version history of this Policy - what changes were made, when and by whom*

## Distribution

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*Table setting out policy details*

## Contents

1. Policy Aim.....	6
2. Policy Objectives .....	6
3. Scope of the Policy.....	6
4. Student Code of Conduct.....	6
5. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct in the Classroom.....	7
6. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct outside the Classroom.....	7
7. Prevention of Harm.....	7
8. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct away from College Premises .....	7
8.1 Trips, Visits, Residential Excursions and Organised Social Events .....	7
8.2 Placements and Places of Employment .....	7
8.3 Student Off-Campus Antisocial Behaviour .....	8
9. Student Support.....	9
10. Student Disciplinary Process.....	9
10.1 Stage 1 – Verbal Warning .....	10
10.2 Stage 2 – First Written Warning .....	11
10.3 Stage 3 – Final Written Warning.....	12
10.4 Stage 4 – Dismissal.....	13
11. Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates .....	14
12. Recording of Student Disciplinary Sanctions.....	14
13. Academic Misconduct .....	14
14. Misconduct of a Criminal Nature .....	14
15. Appeals Against Student Disciplinary Sanctions .....	14
16. Complaints .....	15
Appendix A - Student Disciplinary Investigation Process Summary .....	16
Appendix B - Index of Student Disciplinary Forms/Templates .....	17
Appendix C - The Role of the Investigating Authority.....	18
Appendix D - The Role of the Disciplinary Authority .....	19

## 1. Policy Aim

This policy aims to ensure consistency in the handling of alleged breaches of the Student Code of Conduct (the 'Code') at Belfast Metropolitan College, and in how any resulting disciplinary action is implemented.

## 2. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are: -

- To inform staff and students of the investigation and disciplinary procedures for alleged breaches of the Student Code of Conduct.
- To be the main reference document for investigations, disciplinary action and penalties for all acts of alleged student misconduct, except in cases where the Awarding Bodies, Public, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) and Higher Educational Institutes (HEI) have policies that supersede this policy through a Memorandum of Approval/Articulation.
- To maintain good order at the College and during College activities in order to provide the most conducive environment for all students, staff and visitors.
- To ensure consistency in the handling of alleged student misconduct and to maintain effective student discipline across the College.

## 3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students enrolled at the College, irrespective of their mode or location of attendance.

This policy also applies to students when they are out of College on organised College events, on placements or in their place of employment, or when they engage in off-campus misconduct which brings the College into disrepute.

All alleged breaches of the Student Code of Conduct must be handled in line with this policy. Staff should never ignore behaviour which is in breach of the Code, no matter how minor. If breaches are ignored or not recorded, and a student later does something more significant, College management will be unaware of the student's previous poor behaviour.

## 4. Student Code of Conduct

All students enrolled at the College must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct.

Reasonable adjustments may be made for students with a disability, learning difficulty or long-term medical condition.

## 5. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct in the Classroom

Class lecturers are responsible for dealing with breaches of the Student Code of Conduct in the classroom, in line with effective classroom management practice. They must set appropriate expectations for student conduct, e.g. no shouting; silence while listening to the lecturer's instructions; listening respectfully to the contributions of others, etc.

If, in exceptional circumstances, a class lecturer needs help to remove a student from the classroom, they should ask nearby staff for assistance. If there are no staff nearby, they should send a student to request help from campus reception.

## 6. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct outside the Classroom

Staff who observe student misconduct outside the classroom, e.g., during movement between lessons and during breaks, should challenge it. They should ask the student(s) for their name, student ID number and programme of study. If the student(s) refuse(s) to provide this information, they will be in breach of the Student Code of Conduct.

The member of staff should then pass on the information to the relevant Course Coordinator(s) or Curriculum Area Manager(s) for follow-up. Any available CCTV images of the student misconduct may be used as part of any internal investigation.

## 7. Prevention of Harm

The College has a duty to prevent harm and to maintain a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. If, as a last resort, there is a need to physically restrain a student for safety purposes, or to remove them from the premises, any force used must be the minimum necessary.

Where possible, more than one member of staff should be involved. Ideally, one of the staff should be the same sex as the student. If physical restraint is used, the Head of Department/School must be informed, and a record must be kept of what took place. The student disciplinary process must be invoked, if appropriate, when the curriculum team follows up on the incident.

## 8. Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct away from College Premises

### 8.1 Trips, Visits, Residential Excursions and Organised Social Events

The Student Code of Conduct, which includes the rules on alcohol consumption, also applies during student trips, visits, residential excursions and organised social events. Breaches may result in student disciplinary action on return to the College. A serious breach may lead to the student being sent home at their own expense, pending investigation.

### 8.2 Placements and Places of Employment

The Student Code of Conduct also applies when students are on placement or in a place of employment related to their course of study at Belfast Met. Breaches may result in student disciplinary action. A serious breach may lead to the termination of the placement.

### 8.3 Student Off-Campus Antisocial Behaviour

Belfast Met works with Queen’s University (QUB), Ulster University, Belfast City Council and the PSNI to manage student off-campus antisocial behaviour, particularly in the Holyland area of Belfast. This joint approach ensures consistency when dealing with off-campus incidents involving students, such as noise complaints or other antisocial behaviour.

As representatives of the College, all Belfast Met students must be respectful and considerate to all local residents, including other students. Any off-campus activity which breaches the Student Code of Conduct and causes the College reputational damage will be dealt with through the student disciplinary process.

The QUB Neighbourhood Engagement Team investigates off-campus complaints involving Belfast Met students and produces investigation reports for student disciplinary purposes. Students who are asked to go to an investigation meeting at QUB are obliged to attend it. Failure to attend will be viewed as failure to cooperate with the College’s disciplinary authorities, which is in itself a breach of the Code.

The QUB team produces an investigation report, which includes a conclusion and a recommendation on student disciplinary action, where appropriate. The investigation report is forwarded to Belfast Met’s Pastoral Care Manager, who reviews the case and decides whether to uphold the complaint. If the complaint is upheld, the relevant Curriculum Area Manager (CAM) is informed of any disciplinary action to be taken against the student.

The standard penalties for off-campus antisocial behaviour are shown in the table below.

<b>Standard Penalties for Student Off-Campus Antisocial Behaviour</b>			
<b>Offence</b>	<b>First Breach</b>	<b>Second Breach</b>	<b>Further Breaches</b>
Antisocial disturbance, including off-campus noise disturbance	First Written Warning or AEI Workshop, if appropriate*	Final Written Warning	Referral to Student Discipline Panel
Failure to co-operate with the College’s disciplinary authorities	First Written Warning	Referral to Student Discipline Panel	Referral to Student Discipline Panel

\* For a first offence only, the student may be offered the non-disciplinary alternative of the Alcohol Education Initiative Workshop at QUB instead of a formal sanction under this policy.

If an off-campus complaint is upheld and a formal sanction is to be applied, a curriculum referral form is sent to the relevant CAM for disciplinary follow-up. In these cases, there is no need for the curriculum team to appoint an Investigating Authority, as the investigation has already been completed and the disciplinary outcome has already been determined.

The CAM then meets with the student to explain the outcome and administer the required disciplinary sanction and returns the completed and signed curriculum referral form to the Learner Success Departmental Administrator. The CAM also sends the School Departmental Administrator a copy of the disciplinary action taken against the student, so the central record of disciplinary sanctions for that academic department can be kept up to date.

Repeat or serious breaches may be referred to a Student Discipline Panel. The Panel, made up of the relevant Head of Department and CAM, and a senior manager from the Department of Learner Success, will determine the disciplinary penalty to be imposed.

## 9. Student Support

Student disciplinary procedures should always go hand in hand with support. Students going through the disciplinary process, in any capacity, are likely to experience additional stress and anxiety. Students must therefore be reminded of the availability of the College's student support services at all stages of the disciplinary process.

All students are entitled to ask a member of College staff to accompany them to an investigation meeting or disciplinary hearing. This member of staff will act as a source of support, not as an advocate. A student may ask to be accompanied by someone who is not a member of staff, but permission for this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Students with a disability, learning difficulty or long-term medical condition may need reasonable adjustments throughout the process and may ask their Learning Support Officer for support.

If a student has a Nominated Signatory due to their mental capacity, the Nominated Signatory must be invited to accompany the student to any investigation meeting or disciplinary hearing.

## 10. Student Disciplinary Process

There are four stages in the student disciplinary process:

- Stage 1 – Verbal Warning
- Stage 2 – First Written Warning
- Stage 3 – Final Written Warning
- Stage 4 – Dismissal

The disciplinary stages are normally applied in sequence, i.e., a verbal warning at Stage 1 for a first breach, a first written warning at Stage 2 for a second breach, etc.

Staff must use their professional judgement when assessing the seriousness of the alleged misconduct and may decide to bypass Stage 1 or Stage 2 for a more serious breach of discipline.

Formal investigation is not needed at Stage 1. At Stage 2 and above, however, the Investigating Authority may only recommend a disciplinary sanction to the Disciplinary Authority, if the student's culpability has been proven following a thorough investigation.

The tables in sections 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4 give more information on each of the four stages, including the relevant Investigating Authority, Disciplinary Authority and Appeal Authority requirements and timescales and validity periods.

Appendix A of this policy contains a flowchart summarising the Student Disciplinary Investigation Process. Appendix B provides an Index of the Student Disciplinary Forms/Templates available on the **staff intranet site** only. Appendix C explains the role of the Investigating Authority, and Appendix D explains the role of the Disciplinary Authority.

If a student refuses or fails to attend an investigation interview or a disciplinary hearing, the disciplinary process will continue, regardless. Similarly, if a student refuses to countersign the record of the disciplinary hearing, the disciplinary action will be taken, regardless.

## 10.1 Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

<b>Type of misconduct</b>	Minor misconduct, if previous informal advice has failed to improve the student's behaviour
<b>Examples of breaches which may merit this sanction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking or vaping on the premises</li> <li>• Attendance dropping below an acceptable level</li> <li>• Punctuality dropping below an acceptable level</li> <li>• Wearing symbolism or symbols of a sectarian significance linked to the community conflict in Northern Ireland, including Glasgow Celtic or Glasgow Rangers football shirts and symbolism</li> </ul>
<b>Investigating Authority</b>	Class Lecturer
<b>Level of investigation required</b>	The recorded notes of the Class Lecturer
<b>Timing</b>	Must be issued within 5 working days of the misconduct
<b>Action required before issue</b>	<p>The Investigating Authority must check the central record held by the School's Departmental Administrator to confirm the student's current level of disciplinary sanction (if any)</p> <p>If the student already has a current verbal warning, the sanction shown in the next stage of the disciplinary process must be applied instead, i.e., a first written warning</p>
<b>Disciplinary Authority</b>	Class Lecturer or Course Co-ordinator
<b>Method of issue to student</b>	Verbally, during a formal meeting with the Disciplinary Authority
<b>Relevant forms and templates</b>	The Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates are available on the Belfast Met staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B
<b>Record keeping</b>	<p>The Disciplinary Authority must send a written copy of the verbal warning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student</li> <li>• The School's Departmental Administrator, to file in the central record of student disciplinary sanctions</li> </ul> <p>The Disciplinary Authority may also send a written copy of the verbal warning to the student's parent/guardian/employer, but only with the student's written consent</p>
<b>Validity period</b>	6 months from the date of issue
<b>Appeal Authority</b>	Course Co-ordinator or Curriculum Area Manager

## 10.2 Stage 2 – First Written Warning

<b>Type of alleged misconduct</b>	Repeated minor misconduct (if a verbal warning is current), or more serious misconduct
<b>Examples of breaches which may merit this sanction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheating on a class test or assessment</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• Attendance continuing to drop below an acceptable level</li> <li>• Punctuality continuing to drop below an acceptable level</li> <li>• Off-campus antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• Failing to comply with a reasonable instruction from staff</li> <li>• Abusive, offensive or otherwise inappropriate comments (whether online or offline)</li> </ul>
<b>Investigating Authority*</b>	Class Lecturer or Course Co-ordinator
<b>Level of investigation required</b>	Culpability proven in a full investigation report completed by the Investigating Authority
<b>Timing of investigation</b>	Completion within 40 working days of the alleged misconduct If this timescale cannot be met, the Investigating Authority must write to the student to explain the reasons for the delay
<b>Action required before the Investigating Authority submits the investigation report to the Disciplinary Authority</b>	<p>The Investigating Authority must check the central record held by the School's Departmental Administrator to confirm the student's current level of disciplinary sanction (if any)</p> <p>If the student already has a current first written warning, the Investigating Authority must recommend the sanction shown in the next stage of the disciplinary process instead, i.e., a final written warning</p>
<b>Disciplinary Authority*</b>	Course Co-ordinator or Curriculum Area Manager
<b>Method of issue to student</b>	In writing, after a formal student disciplinary hearing chaired by the Disciplinary Authority
<b>Relevant forms and templates</b>	The Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates are available on the Belfast Met staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B
<b>Record keeping</b>	<p>The Disciplinary Authority must send a copy of the first written warning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student</li> <li>• The School's Departmental Administrator, to file in the central record of student disciplinary sanctions</li> </ul> <p>The Disciplinary Authority may also send a copy of the first written warning to the student's parent/guardian/employer, but only with the student's written consent</p>
<b>Validity period</b>	6 months from the date of issue
<b>Appeal Authority*</b>	Curriculum Area Manager or Head of School

\* The Investigating Authority and the Disciplinary Authority, and the Disciplinary Authority and the Appeal Authority, cannot be the same person at Stage 2. For example, if the Course Co-ordinator is the Investigating Authority, the Curriculum Area Manager must be the Disciplinary Authority, and the Head of School must be the Appeal Authority. The Disciplinary Authority and the Appeal Authority must have had no previous involvement in the student disciplinary incident/case.

### 10.3 Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

<b>Type of alleged misconduct</b>	Repeated minor misconduct (if a written warning is current), or more serious misconduct
<b>Examples of breaches which may merit this sanction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal abuse of students, staff or visitors</li> <li>• Causing damage to College equipment</li> <li>• Making false allegations against students or staff</li> <li>• Lewd, indecent or obscene conduct</li> <li>• Stealing/gaining advantage by deception</li> <li>• Falsifying documents</li> <li>• Tampering with College tools or equipment, including safety equipment</li> <li>• Misuse of social media</li> <li>• Making/distributing photographic/video/audio recordings of staff, students or visitors without their permission</li> </ul>
<b>Investigating Authority*</b>	Course Co-ordinator or Curriculum Area Manager
<b>Level of investigation required</b>	Culpability proven in a full investigation report completed by the Investigating Authority
<b>Precautionary suspension</b>	The student may be suspended as a precautionary measure before the investigation begins, if there is reasonable concern for the safety and wellbeing of students and/or staff
<b>Timing of investigation</b>	<p>Completion within 40 working days of the alleged misconduct</p> <p>If this timescale cannot be met, the Investigating Authority must write to the student to explain the reasons for the delay</p>
<b>Action required before the Investigating Authority submits the investigation report to the Disciplinary Authority</b>	<p>The Investigating Authority must check the central record held by the School's Departmental Administrator to confirm the student's current level of disciplinary sanction (if any)</p> <p>If the student already has a current final written warning, the Investigating Authority must recommend the sanction shown in the next stage of the disciplinary process instead, i.e., dismissal</p>
<b>Disciplinary Authority*</b>	Curriculum Area Manager or Head of School
<b>Method of issue to student</b>	In writing, after a formal student disciplinary hearing chaired by the Disciplinary Authority
<b>Relevant forms and templates</b>	The Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates are available on the Belfast Met staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B
<b>Record keeping</b>	<p>The Disciplinary Authority must send a copy of the final written warning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student</li> <li>• The School's Departmental Administrator, to file in the central record of student disciplinary sanctions</li> </ul> <p>The Disciplinary Authority may also send a copy of the final written warning to the student's parent/guardian/employer, but only with the student's written consent</p>
<b>Validity period</b>	9 months from the date of issue
<b>Appeal Authority*</b>	Head of School or Director of Curriculum and Learner Success

\* The Investigating Authority and the Disciplinary Authority, and the Disciplinary Authority and the Appeal Authority, cannot be the same person at Stage 3. For example, if the Curriculum Area Manager is the Investigating Authority, the Head of School must be the Disciplinary Authority, and so on. The Disciplinary Authority and the Appeal Authority must have had no previous involvement in the student disciplinary incident/case.

## 10.4 Stage 4 – Dismissal

<b>Type of alleged misconduct</b>	Repeated misconduct (if a final written warning is current), or more serious misconduct
<b>Examples of breaches which may merit this sanction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A serious breach of the Student Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Selling or supplying illegal substances on College premises or placements etc.</li> <li>• Risking the health/safety/wellbeing/professional reputation of students, staff and visitors</li> <li>• Physical assault of a student, member of staff or visitor</li> <li>• Abusive (physical, emotional, sexual or financial) misconduct or neglect or exploitation</li> </ul>
<b>Investigating Authority</b>	Curriculum Area Manager or Head of School
<b>Level of investigation required</b>	Culpability proven in a full investigation report completed by the Investigating Authority
<b>Precautionary suspension</b>	The student may be suspended as a precautionary measure before the investigation begins, if there is reasonable concern for the safety and wellbeing of students and/or staff
<b>Timing of investigation</b>	Completion within 40 working days of the alleged misconduct
	If this timescale cannot be met, the Investigating Authority must write to the student to explain the reasons for the delay
<b>Action required before the Investigating Authority submits the investigation report to the Disciplinary Authority</b>	The Investigating Authority must check the central record held by the School's Departmental Administrator to confirm the student's current level of disciplinary sanction (if any)
<b>Disciplinary Authority*</b>	Director of Curriculum and Learner Success
<b>Method of issue to student</b>	In writing, after a formal student disciplinary hearing chaired by the Disciplinary Authority
<b>Relevant forms and templates</b>	The Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates are available on the Belfast Met staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B
<b>Record keeping</b>	<p>The Disciplinary Authority must send a copy of the notice of dismissal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student</li> <li>• The School's Departmental Administrator, to file in the central record of student disciplinary sanctions</li> </ul> <p>The Disciplinary Authority may also send a copy of the notice of dismissal to the student's parent/guardian/employer, but only with the student's written consent</p>
<b>Validity period</b>	Two years from the date of issue
	The College may refuse a dismissed student re-entry to any course during this validity period - the decision on re-entry rests with the Director of Curriculum and Learner Success
<b>Appeal Authority*</b>	Principal and Chief Executive

\* The Disciplinary Authority and the Appeal Authority must have had no previous involvement in the student disciplinary incident/case.

## 11. Student Disciplinary Forms and Templates

The student disciplinary forms and the student disciplinary investigation meeting and report templates are available on the **staff intranet site** only. The link in Appendix B is only accessible via the staff intranet site and will not work from the Belfast Met website.

## 12. Recording of Student Disciplinary Sanctions

Each School's Departmental Administrator must keep a central record of their students' disciplinary sanctions. The Investigating Authority must confirm the student's current level of disciplinary sanction (if any) from that central record before recommending a new disciplinary sanction to the Disciplinary Authority.

If a student already has a current sanction at a particular stage, the sanction shown in the next stage of the disciplinary process must be applied instead. For example, a student with a current verbal warning cannot be given another verbal warning for a second breach – they must receive a first written warning instead.

On conclusion of the process, the Disciplinary Authority may share (on a need-to-know basis) with relevant curriculum staff the reason for which a warning has been issued and the level of sanction imposed. The Disciplinary Authority may also share, on the same basis, details of any conditions attached to a disciplinary warning.

## 13. Academic Misconduct

In cases of academic misconduct, the College may notify the Awarding Body, Higher Educational Institution (HEI), and/or Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) and withhold certification/accreditation until the relevant organisation is satisfied of the investigation and/or conclusion.

## 14. Misconduct of a Criminal Nature

The College must report any suspected criminal act to the PSNI and does not have to tell the student about this in advance. The College may decide to continue its own internal investigation process or to suspend it, pending police enquiries.

## 15. Appeals Against Student Disciplinary Sanctions

Appeals must be made in writing within 10 working days of the date on which the disciplinary action was taken and be sent to:

Director of Curriculum & Learner Success  
Belfast Metropolitan College  
Titanic Quarter Campus  
7 Queens Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9DT

The appeal hearing will normally be held within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal letter.

The student will be required to attend the hearing and may ask to be accompanied by a friend, but not by a legal representative. After evidence is presented by the Disciplinary Authority and the student, the Appeal Authority will consider the evidence and decide whether to uphold or reject the appeal.

The Appeal Authority's decision is final, and there is no further right of internal appeal.

The student will be informed in writing of the appeal outcome within 5 working days of the hearing.

## 16. Complaints

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they are entitled to raise the matter with:

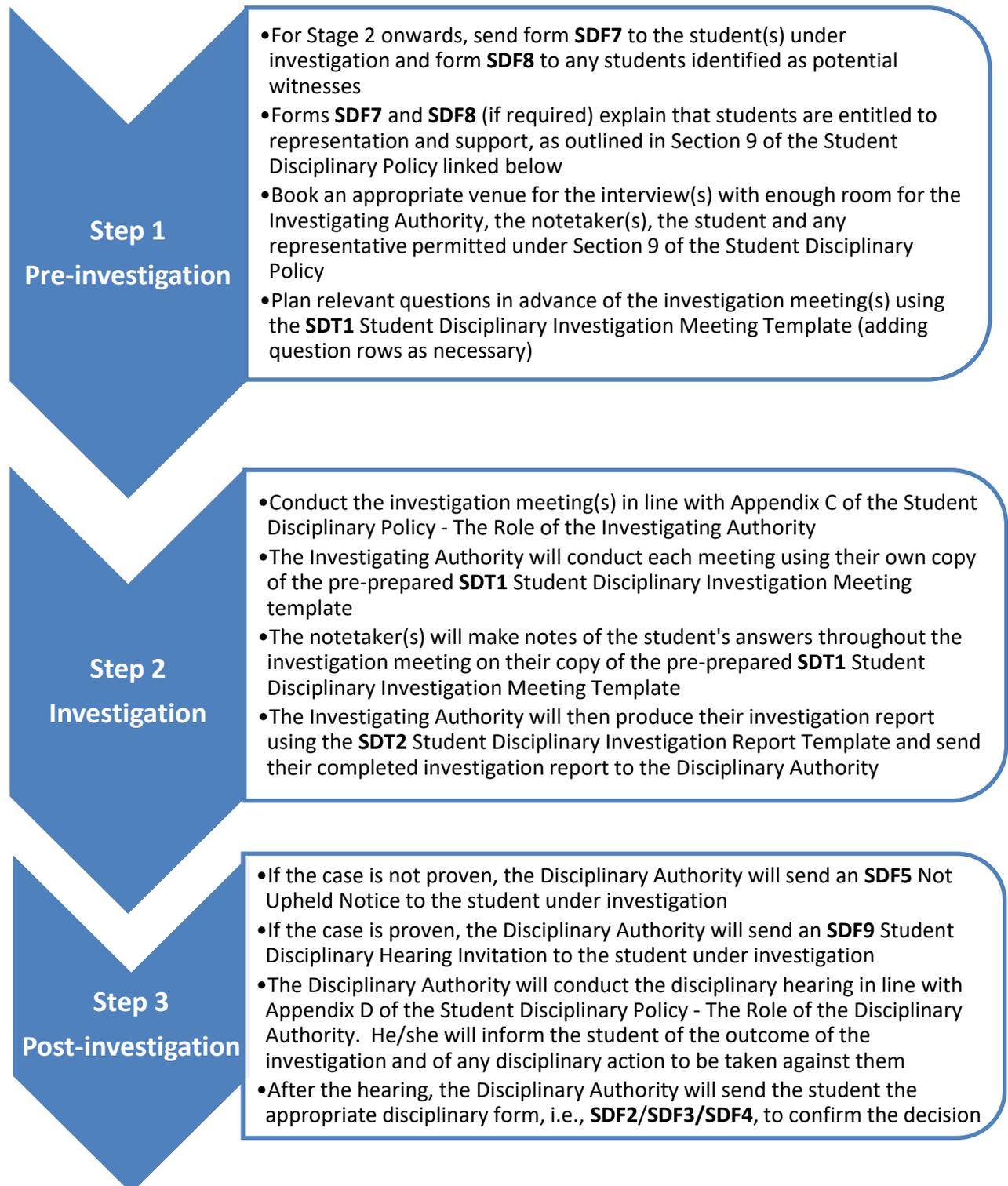
- The awarding body for their programme of study, and/or
- The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (in his/her role as Commissioner for Complaints)

The student can complain to the Ombudsman; however, the Ombudsman will normally only consider a complaint after it has been managed in accordance with the College's Complaints and Compliments Policy.

The contact details for the Ombudsman are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN

## Appendix A - Student Disciplinary Investigation Process Summary



## Appendix B - Index of Student Disciplinary Forms/Templates

Form name	Form description
SDF1	Record of Verbal Warning
SDF2	First Written Warning
SDF3	Final Written Warning
SDF4	Notice of Dismissal
SDF5	Not Upheld Notice
SDF6	Notice of Suspension
SDF7	Student Disciplinary Investigation Meeting Invitation – student under investigation
SDF8	Student Disciplinary Investigation Meeting Invitation – student witness
SDF9	Student Disciplinary Hearing Invitation

Template name	Template description
SDT1	Student Disciplinary Investigation Meeting Template
SDT2	Student Disciplinary Investigation Report Template

Belfast Met staff should click [here](#) to access the forms and templates on the College's staff intranet site, then follow the instructions on how to download, open and edit the document(s) required.

**N.B.** The above link is only accessible to Belfast Met staff via the staff intranet site. The link is not accessible to anyone viewing this policy via the Belfast Met website.

## Appendix C - The Role of the Investigating Authority

The overarching responsibility of the Investigating Authority is to ensure that the integrity of the investigation process cannot be called into question on appeal.

The investigation into the alleged breach of the Student Code of Conduct must be completed as soon as possible. The Investigating Authority must then provide the Disciplinary Authority with a full, factual and objective investigation report within the timescale noted below.

The Investigating Authority must:

- Determine the alleged breach(es) of the Student Code of Conduct, bearing in mind that one incident could involve several breaches of the Code
- Determine the exact nature of the allegation, e.g. the student is alleged by A to have done X, Y and Z
- Determine a timeline of events
- Determine who will be able to make a statement to confirm or refute the allegation(s)
- Make a list of those people, including the student who is accused of misconduct
- Invite them to a student disciplinary investigation meeting
- Plan relevant questions in advance of the investigation meeting(s) using the SDT1 Student Disciplinary Investigation Meeting Template (adding question rows as necessary)
- Meet with each student separately and work through their pre-prepared SDT1 Template
- Open the meeting by advising the student whether they are under investigation or being interviewed as a witness
- Read out the alleged breach(es) and ensure that the student understands it/them
- Ask them to explain in their own words what happened from their perspective
- Do not allow them to deviate from the issue under investigation
- Record their response (in person, or via a note taker)
- Read their response back to them
- If their statement is contrary to other statements, advise them of this and give them the opportunity to explain any contradictions
- Ask them if they have any questions, or anything further by way of comment
- Advise them that they should keep all details of the interview confidential
- Remind them of the availability of the College's student support services
- Bring the meeting to a close by thanking them for their co-operation and advising them that their statement will be included in the investigation report which will go to the Disciplinary Authority
- Determine the outcome of the investigation by deciding whether, on the basis of the evidence presented, the alleged breach(es) of the Code did or did not take place
- If the case is proven, check the central log held by the relevant Departmental Administrator to confirm the current level of disciplinary sanction (if any) of the student(s) under investigation
- If the case is proven, recommend an appropriate disciplinary sanction for the student(s), taking into account any current disciplinary sanctions
- Submit their completed investigation report to the Disciplinary Authority, using the SDT2 Student Disciplinary Investigation Report Template, within 40 working days of the alleged misconduct.

**N.B. The student disciplinary forms and student disciplinary investigation meeting and report templates are available to College staff only on the staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B.**

## Appendix D - The Role of the Disciplinary Authority

The overarching responsibility of the Disciplinary Authority is to ensure that the integrity of the investigation process and the disciplinary hearing cannot be called into question on appeal.

The Disciplinary Authority must:

- Review the investigation report submitted by the Investigating Authority
- If in agreement that the case is not proven, send an SDF5 Not Upheld Notice to the student under investigation
- If in agreement that the case is proven, consider the level of the disciplinary sanction recommended in the investigation report
- Determine the level of the disciplinary sanction to be issued and record the rationale for that decision - this is particularly important, if the sanction differs from the Investigating Authority's recommendation
- Invite the student to a disciplinary hearing
- At the disciplinary hearing, inform the student of the outcome of the investigation and of any disciplinary action to be taken
- Ask the student to sign the record of the hearing to confirm their understanding of the disciplinary sanction, or make a note on the paperwork of the student's refusal to sign
- Remind the student of the availability of the College's student support services
- After the disciplinary hearing, send the student a copy of the relevant paperwork (i.e., first written warning, final written warning or notice of dismissal), to confirm the disciplinary action taken
- After the disciplinary hearing, send the School's Departmental Administrator a copy of the relevant paperwork to file in the School's central record of student disciplinary sanctions
- After the disciplinary hearing, and only with the student's written consent, send a copy of the relevant paperwork to the student's parent/guardian/employer.

**N.B. The student disciplinary forms and student disciplinary investigation meeting and report templates are available to College staff only on the staff intranet site via the link in Appendix B.**