Equality Complaints Guidance
Introduction

There are separate procedures complaints against individuals and complaints against policies and processes.

Although all students, University and LEP staff will have received appropriate training in Equality and diversity issues, there may an instance in which a student, staff or any individual or organisation that comes into contact with the student may wish to express a concern or lodge a complaint about an equality issue.

Complaining about a Student

Any concern about a student’s conduct and attitude, which would include any concerns about equality issues, would result in the student entering the concerns process. The procedure for this is outlined in the Code of Practice for the Concerns Group.

Briefly, the concern will be reported using the ‘Concerns Reporting Form’ (see below or directly from Student Support through Dr Claire Stocker (claire.stocker@buckingham.ac.uk)) which will be widely available. It contains guidance on the nature of the concern being raised and judgement of their severity. Any member of staff, student, patient or member of the public may raise a concern using this form. However, if you would like to contact the Equality Lead for advice prior to raising a concern or to help in this process, this is appropriate.

As a result of entering the Concerns Process due to an equality complaint the standard methods of the process will be followed including:

- The student will be notified of the concern
- The student will be required to attend an interview with a senior member of staff to:
  - Allow the student to respond to the concern by giving their side of the story, which will be recorded. The Concerns Group will not adjudicate in the case of disagreement between the student and the person raising the concern. Both the concern and the student response will remain on record. The student will not be allowed to challenge the person raising the concern directly and should they attempt to do so then that action would itself be considered a concern.
  - Warn the student that they need to avoid further concerns being raised.
- The student will normally be asked to undertake some task requiring reflection upon professional attitudes. This may the completion of a short reflective piece of work, consideration of appropriate GMC guidance, or analysis of relevant case studies with the aim of changing attitudes and reducing the chances of a repeat concern. If this work is not completed satisfactorily and on time, then a further concern will be noted and with possible elevation to ‘Red’ concern.
- Concerns will be held on record throughout the student’s time on the course and for 10 years thereafter and may be provided to appropriate authorities such as the GMC if serious issues arise later.

However, in addition to this the concerns process will inform the Equality Lead of the outcome of the complaint so this can be recorded independently and feedback provided to the complainant.
**Complaining about a member of Staff**

Any concern or complaint regarding equality and diversity issues against a member of the Medical School should be reported directly to the Equality Lead. This can be done informally or formally in the following processes:

**An Informal complaint**

We would encourage all individuals to first lodge an informal complaint. This consists of an e-mail or a personal correspondence with the Equality Lead. The issue will be discussed confidentially although a record of the nature of the complaint and the area of the Medical school (i.e. curriculum, placements, or assessments) will be documented as evidence.

The outcome of an informal complaint discussion is either resolution or the submission a formal complaint.

**A formal complaint**

A formal complaint needs to be registered with the Equality Lead using the Equality complaints form. This form (Appendix A) allows details of the complaint to be recorded in a systematic way but there is no confidentiality to the individual making the complaint.

The form is then reviewed by the Equality Lead who will convene a meeting of the appropriate staff members, usually including the Director of Medical Education and/or the Head of School, to discuss the complaint. The complaint can result in the following actions:

- No further action
- Remedial action recommended, i.e. in the form of formal discussions between involved parties or additional training
- Disciplinary action

Once action has been taken, the Equality Lead will record this independently and provide feedback to the complainant.

**Complaining about a policy or process**

Although all policies, code of practice and processes have been scrutinised for their adherence to equality and diversity standards prior to their approval and implementation, there may be an instance where an individual feels as if there has been an inequality of opportunity due to an official process.

Any complaints regarding policies and procedures should be lodged formally with the Equality Lead using the report form found in Appendix B.

The submission of this form will result in the discussion of the complaint at the appropriate board meeting. For example, a complaint against a curriculum process will be dealt with through discussion with curriculum leads at the curriculum executive.

Once discussed and the outcome determined, the Equality Lead will record this independently and provide feedback to the complainant.
Appendix A- Staff Equality Complaint Form

Please complete all sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate:</th>
<th>Major concern</th>
<th>Moderate concern</th>
<th>Minor concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Complaint against………………………… Date……………………

This form should be used whenever any concerns are identified with regard to the equality and diversity conduct of a member of staff in the Medical School. The form does not imply that any decision has been made or outcome implied. It indicates that a concern has been raised.

Circle the appropriate category. Comments are required

1. Direct or indirect discrimination of individuals or groups
2. Inappropriate comments or behaviour to individuals or groups
3. Perceived victimisation to individuals or groups
4. Providing diminished equality of opportunity to individuals or groups

Comments (required):

Form submitted by (please print and sign): ...........................................

Please submit this form securely for the attention of Dr Joanne Selway, Medical School, University of Buckingham, MK18 1EG (joanne.selway@buckingham.ac.uk)
Appendix B- Policy or Process Equality Complaint Form

Please complete all sections

Complaint against (policy name) ..............................................................
Date ........................................................................................................

This form should be used whenever any concerns are identified with regard to the equality and diversity of policies and processes in the Medical School. The form does not imply that any decision has been made or outcome implied. It indicates that a concern has been raised.

Circle the appropriate category. Comments are required

1. Direct or indirect discrimination of individuals or groups
2. Inappropriate comments or behaviour to individuals or groups
3. Perceived victimisation to individuals or groups
4. Providing diminished equality of opportunity to individuals or groups

Comments (required):

Form submitted by (please print and sign): ..............................................

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