

Freedom of speech complaints scheme

You can use this service to make a free speech complaint to the Office for Students (OfS) about certain free speech issues in English higher education.

Before completing this form, you must read [our guide to free speech complaints](#) and the scheme rules to ensure you understand:

- whether you are eligible to make a complaint through this scheme
- whether the institution you're complaining about is in scope for the scheme
- what we will do next with your complaint
- the information that we might publish about your complaint.

I've read the scheme rules and guide

For information on how we process personal data in relation to the free speech complaints scheme, see [our privacy notice](#).

I've read the scheme privacy notice

Section 1: About you

***1A: Are you the:**

Complainant

Representative

Complainant details:

1B: Your title:

***1C: First name:**

***1D: Surname or family name:**

1E: Preferred name(s):

Section 2: Details of complainant

The information in this section will not be shared with the respondent.

Complainant

***2A: Are you under 18?**

Yes

No

2B: If you are under 18, please ask your parent or guardian to sign here to confirm that they are happy for you make this complaint.

Signature:

My signature indicates that I am confident that the person under 18 for whom I am signing is able to take forward this complaint themselves, including understanding the processes and the consequences of engaging in the process, or that arrangements have been put in place to assist them with understanding (i.e. that a representative will be appointed on their behalf).

Contact details of the complainant

Please include your contact details below even if you are appointing a representative.

2C: Address:

Optional, only complete if you require communications via post.

2D: Contact telephone number:

***2E: Email address:**

2F: Preferred method of communication:

Email

Post

We will usually communicate with you via email unless you specify otherwise. Please check your spam or junk folders regularly or save freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk as a safe sender.

Your identity

2G: Is there a compelling reason why we would need to protect your identity from the respondent or other persons?

Yes

No

Please note that we cannot review anonymous complaints (where you do not provide any details about your identity to us).

2H: If yes to 2G: why would you like your identity to be protected?

If you make a compelling case for us to protect your identity from the respondent or other persons (for example on grounds of credible threat to your safety), we will make reasonable attempts to do so. If we cannot protect your identity, we will set this out and give you the opportunity to withdraw your complaint.

Group complaints

2I: Would you like this complaint to be reviewed as part of a group complaint?

Yes

No

Please enter the details of any complaints you would like your complaint to be grouped with and why you think this grouping is appropriate:

Reasonable adjustments

2J: Do you need any reasonable adjustments? For example, if you are not able to communicate via email.

Section 3 (optional): Representative details

You are not required to appoint a representative. A representative must be over the age of 18.

Examples of a representative you could appoint are a union representative, a lawyer, a friend or a family member.

If you appoint a representative, we will then normally correspond with your representative, rather than directly with you. This means that you should make sure that your representative understands your free speech complaint, will act in your best interests and can keep you informed throughout our review process.

This section will not be shared with the respondent.

***3A: My representative is aged 18 years or over:**

Yes No

A representative must be over the age of 18.

3B: Title:

***3C: First name:**

***3D: Surname or family name:**

3E: Preferred name(s):

3F: Organisational affiliation (if any):

***3G: Describe your relationship with the representative (for example a lawyer, a union representative, a friend, or relative).**

3H: Address of the representative:

Optional, only complete if you require communications via post.

3I: Contact telephone number of the representative:

***3J: Email address of the representative:**

3K: Preferred method of communication:

Email Post

We will usually communicate with you via email unless you specify otherwise. Please check your spam or junk folders regularly or save freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk as a safe sender.

3L: I have informed my representative that I have nominated them to respond to the complaint on my behalf.

Yes No

Section 4: Which institution are you complaining about?

We can only consider complaints about:

- a registered higher education provider
- a 'constituent institution' of a university or college that is registered with the OfS.

A free speech complaint can be made against more than one institution. If you would like to complain about the same topic for multiple institutions, you will need to complete this section of the form for each institution you want to complain about.

***4A: Name of the university, college, or constituent institution you are complaining about:**

***4B: In relation to the institution, you are or were a:**

member of staff

non-student member

person who has applied to become a member of academic staff

person who was, or was at any time invited to be, a visiting speaker.

***4C: Please provide further information about your role. You may also wish to attach supporting evidence to your email when submitting this form.**

Section 5: When did the events complained about take place?

You will need to complete this section of the form for each institution you want to complain about.

This scheme is not retrospective. This means that we will not review a free speech complaint to the extent that its free speech claims concern actions or inactions that took place before 1 September 2026. Our website contains illustrative examples of how we may apply this rule in practice.

A free speech complaint should be submitted to the OfS by 12 months after the date on which the action or inaction you are complaining about last occurred.

***5A: Does your complaint concern action or inaction that took place after 1 September 2026?**

Yes

No

***5B: When did this occur?**

***5C: Are you submitting your complaint within 12 months of the date on which the action or inaction being complained about last occurred?**

Yes

No

5D: If it has been more than 12 months since the date in your answer to 5B, please tell us why you believe this complaint should be considered:

Section 6: Internal review processes at the institution you are complaining about

You will need to complete this section of the form for each institution you want to complain about.

***6A: Have you raised the issues in your free speech complaint with the university or college, or constituent institution, that you are complaining about under an internal review process, if it has such a process? For example, under a disciplinary, complaints, appeals, grievance or similar internal review process?**

Yes No

If you answered 'yes' to 6A, move to question 6B. If you answered 'no', move to question 6D.

6B: Have you received confirmation from the institution you are complaining about that the processes have concluded?

Yes No

If you answered 'yes' to 6B, move to 6F. If you answered 'No', move to 6C.

6C: Have 90 days elapsed since that process began?

Note: We will normally only accept a free speech complaint once you have completed any available internal review process or, if earlier, once 90 days have elapsed since that process began.

Yes No

If you answered 'yes', move to section 7. If you answered 'no', move to 6E.

6D: Please explain why you have not made a complaint to the universities or colleges listed in your complaint:

Move to section 7 when you have given your answer.

6E: Please explain why you are bringing the complaint to the OfS before 90 days have passed since the internal review process(es) began:

Move to section 7 when you have given your answer.

6F: If the issues in your complaint have been considered by the university or college's internal review process and you have received confirmation that that process has

completed, please give details of the outcome of that process and explain why you are not satisfied with that outcome:

Move to section 7 when you have given your answer.

Section 7: Court or tribunal proceedings

***7A: Are you, or have you been, party to any court or tribunal proceedings relating to the same subject matter as the free speech claims in your complaint?**

Yes

No

We will not review your complaint if it is being, or has been, dealt with by a court or tribunal. You must tell us if this is the case.

You must tell us if you decide to start any proceedings once our review has started because this may affect whether we can continue to review your complaint. You should tell us about the initiation of any proceedings by email at freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Please include any relevant documents when you submit your complaint either via email or post.

If you answered 'yes' to 7A, move to 7B. If you answered 'No', move to section 8.

7B: Are the proceedings currently ongoing?

Yes

No

7C: What is the current status of the proceedings? For example, have they been adjourned or stayed or are you awaiting a final hearing or decision?

7D: Are there any reasons why your complaint should nevertheless be reviewed?

7E: Was a decision reached in the proceedings and what was the decision?

Section 8: Your complaint

8A: Please confirm that, in your judgement, the respondent has potentially breached or may have breached their free speech duty.

Yes

No

8B: Have you suffered adverse consequences as a result of the free speech duty breach?

Yes

No

***8C: Please provide a summary of your complaint.**

Explain what the university or college has done or not done and why you consider that this is a breach of its free speech duty.

Explain the adverse consequences that you have suffered as a result, including when as well as how they have affected you.

You can help us understand your complaint by including a list with key dates and events (in chronological order).

You may include claims other than free speech claims in your complaint. We will only review those other claims if they include information that is relevant to the free speech claims, and we will only determine the other claims to the extent necessary for determining whether the free speech claim is justified.

Section 9: Supporting information

Please include any relevant documents or other types of information that you refer to within your complaint, that may help us with the review process.

If the free speech claims in your complaint have been, or are being considered, by the university or college under an internal review process you may want to submit documents or evidence which support the complaint, such as indications of how the institution has breached its free speech duty and the adverse consequences you have suffered. Please also include a copy of any outcome letter from that process.

- Please share documents with us electronically via email wherever possible.
- Please don't send us original paper documents.

Please submit these documents together with your completed complaint form to freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk.

List the documents you are supplying and which you would like us to consider alongside this complaint form:

Section 10: Declarations (to be completed by the complainant)

The complainant must complete this section even if they have appointed a representative.

Please read this section carefully. By submitting your free speech complaint, you are confirming that you have understood and agree with the declarations below. The OfS cannot consider your complaint without your agreement. If you cannot complete this form, please get in touch at freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Before completing this section, we recommend that you read our information about personal information (see [our privacy notice](#)).

Submitting my complaint

I will tell the OfS immediately if any part of my complaint is being dealt with by a court or tribunal or by another organisation, such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

I declare that the information in the form above is true to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that I can withdraw my complaint at any time before the OfS issues a Notice of Complaint Outcome.

I understand that the OfS is impartial and will not act on my behalf or on behalf of the respondent.

I understand that the OfS may reach a different conclusion on my complaint than a court would reach. I understand that at the end of the OfS's processes, there is no legal requirement on me, or on the university or college I am complaining about, to accept any recommendation that the OfS makes. However, the OfS expects the respondent to comply with any recommendation that it makes in full and within the time limits it sets, and to report to it when the respondent has done so.

Representatives

Only complete this section if you are appointing a representative.

I have completed Section 3 and wish to appoint a representative. By ticking this box I give my consent to the representative acting on my behalf in relation to this complaint. I understand that the OfS will correspond with my representative until I tell the OfS in writing that they are not representing me, at which point the OfS will correspond with me directly.

***Consent to progress the complaint**

I confirm that I am the individual making the complaint and I wish to progress this complaint with the OfS.

Signature:

Date:

Submitting your complaint

To submit your complaint, send your completed form to freespeechcomplaints@officeforstudents.org.uk or via post to:

Office for Students
Westward House
Lime Kiln Close,
Stoke Gifford
Bristol
BS34 8SR.