

Complaints Policy and Procedure



Complaints Policy

Statement of Intent

At ArtsEd we pride ourselves on our openness and approachability. ArtsEd welcomes the expression of opinions, ideas and suggestions, and in particular, recognises the right of students to air a grievance, express a concern or make a formal complaint. Concerns and complaints are always taken seriously and it is our aim to resolve them in the most satisfactory manner possible. In the event of a student wishing to express a concern or make a complaint, we encourage the complainant to bring the matter to our attention as early as possible. This gives us opportunity to try and rectify a problem or to explain ArtsEd's position before a matter escalates. If you are in any doubt as to whether or not to raise a concern, we encourage you to contact us for further advice.

Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sensitively, efficiently and at the appropriate level so that it may be resolved as soon as possible. Students should never feel that a complaint will be taken lightly or that a complaint could adversely affect their opportunities at ArtsEd. However, the policy distinguishes between a difficulty which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint which requires investigation.

Definition of Complaint

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines a student complaint as *"an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about [an institution's] action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the [institution]."*

Who can make a complaint

Complaints can be made by an individual or a group of students. Students are able to obtain support and representation from the Students' Union.

Informal Resolution of Complaints

ArtsEd encourages informal resolution at any stage in the process and positive engagement with complainants. Investigation of a complaint should in the first instance be taken forward at the level at which the complaint occurred.

Malicious, vexatious or frivolous complaints and those submitted anonymously

If a complaint is found to be malicious, vexatious or frivolous the complainant may be subject to the student disciplinary procedure. Complaints which are found to be without substance will be dismissed. Complaints submitted anonymously are not normally investigated.

Formal Investigation

Formal investigation will be proportionate to the complaint and will be undertaken by someone with no direct prior involvement. If a particular person is subject to a complaint, s/he will be entitled to see and respond to it before any conclusion is reached.

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, they may apply to the Principal for a review of that outcome. Following conclusion of the review, ArtsEd will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter.

Following this, any student who is dissatisfied with the final decision on his/her case may request a review of the outcome of their complaint by City University London where the complaint relates to the quality of the academic programme, once the ArtsEd complaints procedure has been completed and the final outcome confirmed. The request for a review must be submitted in writing to the University within 21 days of receiving written confirmation from ArtsEd of the final outcome of the investigation. Full details of the procedure can be found in Appendix A to the University's Senate Regulation 26 which is available on the City University London website www.city.ac.uk.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Having exhausted all of the procedures of both ArtsEd and City University, a student has recourse to the ombudsman, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

Complaints Procedure

Student(s)

Has a matter of proper concern, which he/she wishes ArtsEd to address. The student makes a complaint to the member of staff concerned or responsible for that aspect of ArtsEd's business.



Recipient of the Complaint

Either resolves the complaint themselves or passes it to the head of department for investigation. (Where the complaint is resolved at this stage, the recipient of the complaint responds to the complainant outlining the action taken to address the concerns raised.)



Where the complaint is forward to the Head of Department for consideration
Head of Department

Acknowledges the complaint in writing, giving a timescale within which a response is to be provided. The Head of Department (or nominee) records the receipt of the complaint and the date on which the acknowledgement letter is sent. The Head of Department (or nominee) investigates the concerns identified in the complaint and writes to the complainant giving details of the outcome of his/her investigation.



Where the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint
Student

Writes to the Principal to express his/her continued dissatisfaction with the outcome.



Principal (or Nominee)

Reviews the complaint, makes recommendations where appropriate, and responds to the complaint giving details of the outcome of his/her review.



Where the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint and where that complaint relates to the quality of his/her academic programme

Student

Writes to the nominated Officer of City University London to request a review of the outcome of the ArtsEd investigation within 21 days of receiving written notification of the final outcome from ArtsEd.



City University London Officer

Will conduct a review of the ArtsEd decision to determine whether it was reasonable. The review is not a reconsideration of the case and evidence. Full details of the procedure can be found in Appendix A to the University's Senate Regulation 26 which is available on the City University London website www.city.ac.uk.



Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Following conclusion of the review by City University London, the University will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter. Following this, any student who is dissatisfied with the final decision on his/her case may be able to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Information and eligibility on rules are available at www.oiahe.org.uk.

Summary of Responsibilities

Student

- Attempts informal resolution, by raising concerns with most relevant person at the earliest opportunity
- If not satisfied with informal resolution, reports more formal complaint as soon as possible, stating desired outcome, and providing all relevant information
- Promptly requests final internal review if not satisfied with outcome of formal complaint

Recipient of the complaint

- Seeks early and informal resolution wherever possible, through positive engagement with student
- Responds to the student once a decision is reached, clearly explaining the process followed and reasons for the decision and any recommendations

Head of Department (or nominee)

- Ensures the proper recording and acknowledgement of escalated/formal complaints
- Investigates complaints where necessary and communicates clear outcomes to student
- Oversees the implementation of any resulting recommendations

Principal (or nominee)

- Ensures the proper recording and acknowledgement of complaints at this level
- Reviews the decision reached at the previous stage, initially focusing on the reasonableness of the investigation and outcome
- Reports outcome to student and recommendations of any actions to be taken.