



Student Complaints Procedure

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A. Introduction

1. ArtsEd welcomes the views of its students and is committed to providing a high-quality experience for each student. We encourage you to inform us as soon as possible if there is a possible cause for concern or if you have suggestions for improvements.
2. You can tell us about a concern in person or in writing. In the first instance, you may wish to tell your head of year, course leader, or personal tutor. We aim to address most student concerns quickly and respond to feedback when we receive it.
3. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when you are dissatisfied with an aspect of your experience with us and wish to make a complaint.
4. This procedure sets out the steps a student (or former student) can take to make a complaint, and the steps we will take to investigate and try to resolve it. An overview of the procedure can be found in Appendix [X].
5. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the following which can be found on the Policies page of our website:
 - Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech
 - Student Voice and Participation Policy
 - Fee Refund and Cancellation Policy

6. The above list is not intended to be exhaustive and, where appropriate, other policies and procedures should be considered.
7. All policies are carried out in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy and Data Protection Policy.

B. Scope

8. You can use this procedure to make a complaint if you are a current or former Higher Education student.
9. **Complaints should be made as soon as possible and no later than three months after the event you are complaining about.** If you are complaining about a series of events, you should complain within three months of the final event. Former students may use this procedure to complain about something within the last three months of being registered with us, but must still ensure that they submit the complaint within three months of the event(s) taking place.
10. Complaints that are raised more than three months after the event(s) occurred will not usually be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevented you from telling us earlier. In this case, you must demonstrate (usually with evidence) why you were unable to make the complaint within the usual timescale.
11. You cannot use this procedure to complain about admissions or auditions, or to dispute an admissions decision. Instead, you should use the complaints and appeals procedure set out in the Admissions Policy, available on the [Policies page of our website](#).
12. You should not use this procedure to make allegations of student or staff misconduct. Instead, these should be reported via SpeakUp [\[link\]](#). They will then be handled in line with the Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Procedure and/or the Student Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, or the Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, all available on the [Policies page of our website](#). You may make a complaint about more general staff behaviour if it relates to your course or experience at ArtsEd, e.g. inadequate support, administration or teaching, poor communication, unfair treatment, etc.
13. You cannot use this procedure to dispute or appeal a decision about your academic performance. Instead, you should make an appeal against an Assessment Board decision following the steps set out in the Academic Appeals Procedure, available on the [Policies page of our website](#).
14. We may reclassify a complaint or concern submitted through one procedure if it falls outside the scope of that procedure, or if an alternative procedure is better suited to investigate it. We will notify you if we do this.
15. ArtsEd's Higher Education courses are validated by City St George's, University of London (City St George's). Students on validated courses may make use of some of City St George's services. If you wish to complain about any City St George's services, you should complain directly to City St George's, in line with their Senate Regulation

26: Student Complaints, available on their [Senate Regulations webpage](#). You may also be eligible to take a complaint about your academic course to City St George's after completion of all ArtsEd complaints procedures. You should see Section H for more information.

16. The three-year courses in Acting and Musical Theatre leading to the award of BA (Hons) are additionally validated by Trinity College of London as Professional Performing Arts Diplomas. The Trinity Professional Performing Arts Diplomas are only open to students in receipt of Dance and Drama Award (DaDA) funding. If you wish to complain about something relating to the Trinity Professional Performing Arts Diplomas because you are in receipt of DaDA funding you should, in the first instance, make your complaint directly to ArtsEd using this procedure.

C. Key Principles and Definitions

17. A student complaint is an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction about your learning experience with us, or an aspect of a service or facility which is provided to you by us or should have been provided to you by us.
18. A complaint is usually about one or more of the following:
 - The standard of a service provided by us or on our behalf by a third party
 - The delivery of a programme, teaching or administration
 - Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by us or on our behalf by a third party
 - Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional materials and other information provided by us
 - Our failure to meet obligations, including those outlined in student handbooks, programme or module specifications, Student Terms and Conditions, and the Student Protection Plan
 - Our failure to follow published regulations, procedures and/or policies
 - A certain action or lack of action taken by us and/or taken by staff members while undertaking activities on behalf of ArtsEd

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive and, where appropriate, other matters will be considered by the Complaints Procedure.

19. We expect you to tell us as soon as reasonably possible that something has gone wrong, so that we have the opportunity to put it right.
20. We expect you to submit supporting evidence when you make a complaint or to explain why evidence is not available. Our decisions will be evidence-based.
21. We expect you to suggest what we can do to put things right. We will notify you as early as we can if this is beyond what we can reasonably provide or what we are able to provide.
22. We will ensure that you have access to support services throughout your complaint. You can find details on the [Student Welfare page of our website](#) or email studentsupport@artsed.co.uk.

23. We will make reasonable adjustments to this procedure (e.g. extensions to timescales or allowing you to submit information in a different way) if you need them. You should contact the Student Cases team in Registry by emailing studentcases@artsed.co.uk to discuss adjustments you may need.
24. The standard of proof that we will use when reaching a decision is the balance of probabilities. This means that, to uphold an allegation, we must find evidence that it is more likely than not that the alleged event(s) took place in the way you describe.
25. The burden of proof is on you. This means that you will need to prove that the allegation can be upheld, rather than asking us to prove that it cannot.
26. We will ensure that the outcome of your complaint is clear, that our decisions are reasonable and explained to you, and that we try to put right what has gone wrong if we uphold your complaint.
27. We will ensure that you are not treated less favourably because you have submitted a complaint. We will also make sure that any member of staff named in a complaint is not treated less favourably. However, if we uphold a complaint about a member of staff, that member of staff may be asked to take additional training, given additional support or may be subject to disciplinary proceedings as set out in our Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, available on the [Policies page of our website](#).
28. We will ensure that we handle complaints sensitively and with the appropriate level of confidentiality. Information will only be made available to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint. When you make a complaint, you should avoid disclosing unnecessary personal information (for example, medical conditions) unless you feel it is relevant to the complaint. You must also avoid disclosing other people's personal data when making your complaint unless you have been given written permission by the person(s) to do so.
29. If there are aspects of your complaint which are particularly sensitive, you should inform the Student Cases team (by emailing studentcases@artsed.co.uk) and discuss with them how your information may need to be shared.
30. If you have made a complaint involving another student or a member of staff and it has been upheld, we will advise you of this. However, it may not be appropriate to share any specific details with you, particularly where further action is being taken. To help manage your expectations, we will advise you of this at the earliest opportunity.
31. If you make a complaint that is wholly unreasonable, vexatious, frivolous, abusive or malicious in nature, we may take disciplinary action against you, as set out in the Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Procedure, available on the [Policies page of our website](#).

D. Procedure

32. Our complaints procedure has three internal stages. We expect that each stage is completed before you move to the next stage. Exceptionally, and if your complaint is

very serious or sensitive, you may submit a formal complaint at Stage 2 without completing Stage 1.

33. **Stage 1 informal resolution:** We will look into your concern and try to resolve it quickly and informally, usually with the people most directly involved.
34. **Stage 2 formal resolution:** If you are dissatisfied with attempts to resolve your complaint at Stage 1, we will investigate and try to resolve your complaint more formally.
35. **Stage 3 complaints review:** If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, you may be eligible to request a review of the way your complaint was handled at the earlier stages.
36. **External review:** If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 3, you may be eligible to have your complaint reviewed externally.
37. Further detail about each of these stages can be found below.

E. Stage 1: Informal Resolution

38. This stage is designed to give your School or the relevant department an opportunity to consider your complaint and address it within the department as quickly as possible for an early resolution.
39. **You should tell us about the complaint as soon as possible and certainly within three months of the event(s) you are complaining about, as set out in point 9.**
40. To make a Stage 1 complaint, you should send an email to the Student Cases team in Registry at studentcases@artsed.co.uk. You should summarise your concerns, provide any evidence you have available and tell us what we could do to put things right.
41. When we receive your Stage 1 complaint, we will arrange for a member of staff from your School or the relevant department to contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint and try to resolve it as soon as reasonably practical.
42. If appropriate, this would usually be the member of staff most directly involved in the event leading to the complaint. This is to give that member of staff the opportunity to address your concerns directly.
43. Where it is not possible or appropriate for the member of staff most directly involved in to contact you, an alternative member of staff will be appointed by the head of the relevant department or the Director of the School.
44. Following this meeting, you will be sent a record of your conversation, including details of any action to be taken.
45. It should normally take no longer than 15 working days from the date you submit your complaint for the matter to be resolved by us. We will notify you in writing, and provide

the reason(s), if we require more than 15 working days from the date you submit your complaint to resolve your case.

46. At the end of Stage 1, we will provide you with a written response to your complaint, which will either give details about the proposed resolution or explain why we do not feel that we can propose a satisfactory resolution to your complaint.
47. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may submit a complaint for formal investigation and resolution at Stage 2.

F. Stage 2: Formal Resolution

48. If you choose to submit a Stage 2 complaint, you should complete the [Student Complaints Form](#) within **10 working days** of receiving the outcome of your Stage 1 complaint.
49. In instances where you deem the matter too serious to be considered under Stage 1, or if you have tried to resolve your concerns informally via another procedure, it may be possible for you to proceed directly to Stage 2. In this case, you should ensure that you submit the complaint **within three months of the event(s) that you are complaining about**, as set out in 9. If it is not possible for you to proceed straight to Stage 2, we will notify you and attempt to resolve it informally via Stage 1.
50. Along with a description of what has happened and how it has impacted you, you should submit all the evidence you want to be considered as part of the investigation. This could include email correspondence, receipts or invoices, letters from a medical professional and witness statements from other people who may be able to verify your account. If you are unable to provide witness statements but would like us to contact your witnesses to ask them to provide a statement directly, you will need to provide us their full name(s) and contact detail(s).
51. We will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days, and then deal with it promptly.
52. A member of the Student Cases team in Registry will first consider whether your complaint is eligible:
 - Whether your complaint has been submitted within the relevant timeframe
 - If not, whether you have provided a good reason supported by evidence for this.
 - Whether the issues you are raising can be considered under the Student Complaints Procedure.
 - If not, whether the issues you are raising should be considered under a different procedure.
53. If we find your complaint ineligible, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter. A CoP letter confirms that you have completed our internal procedures and that there is no further opportunity for you to pursue the complaint internally. You will be signposted to options for further review, as set out below.

54. If we find your complaint eligible, we will proceed to investigate your complaint. The Registrar (or nominee) will assign an investigating officer. The investigating officer will be a different person from anyone involved in considering your complaint at Stage 1.
55. The investigating officer will consider:
- What you have written in your complaint
 - The evidence you have provided
 - Any additional evidence we have or gather from ArtsEd
 - Procedure documents, guidance, and legal or regulatory requirements
 - Other relevant information
56. The investigating officer will decide whether the allegations in your complaint can be upheld and, if required, will recommend a remedy.
57. Our aim is to take no more than 30 working days (this usually means six weeks) to conclude a Stage 2 investigation, but complex cases may take longer. If we need more time, we will notify you of the new timeframe.
58. At the end of Stage 2, we will provide you with a written outcome that explains how we have considered your allegations and what we have concluded. Each allegation can be:
- **Upheld:** We have found evidence that the allegation occurred, on the balance of probabilities
 - **Not upheld:** We have found evidence that the allegation did not occur, on the balance of probabilities
 - **Not substantiated:** There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion
59. If allegation(s) are upheld, the investigating officer will propose a remedy or explain why no remedy is appropriate.
60. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you may be eligible to submit a request for a review by the Registrar or their nominee at Stage 3.

G. Stage 3: Formal Review

61. If you choose to request a review of your complaint at Stage 3, you should complete a Stage 3 Review form [\[link\]](#) within **15 working days** of receiving the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint.
62. You can only submit a Stage 3 Review on one or more of the following grounds:
- That there has been a **procedural irregularity** during the investigation which had a material effect on the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint
 - That the Stage 2 outcome is **unreasonable** given the facts of the case
 - That **new information** has come to light, which you were unable to disclose previously (for valid reasons) and this information would have had a material impact on the outcome of the investigation
63. To request a review on the grounds of **procedural irregularity**, we expect that you can demonstrate that there has been a significant procedural error that has had an impact

on the outcome of the Stage 2 complaint. This means that the outcome would have been different if the error had not occurred. The error may be to do with the way the complaint was handled or investigated, or the way that the outcome was reached.

64. To request a review on the grounds of **reasonableness**, we expect that you can demonstrate that the outcome was not proportionate given the circumstances at Stage 2 or that the Stage 2 outcome report was not thorough.
65. To request a review based on **new information**, we expect that you can demonstrate that:
 - there is some new information which would have had a material impact on the investigation previously undertaken, i.e. would have changed the outcome of the investigation if it had been known at the time
 - and*
 - that you were unable to disclose it at Stage 2 for a valid reason outside your control. We will not usually consider new information that you did not want to disclose earlier or did not think would be relevant.
66. When submitting your Stage 3 Review form, you should include:
 - The grounds on which you are complaining
 - The reasons that you consider these to be relevant
 - Any new evidence that was not previously available at Stage 2, with an explanation of why it was unavailable
67. We will normally acknowledge receipt of your Stage 3 Review form within five working days of receipt, and will review it promptly.
68. The Registrar or their nominee will act as the reviewer. The reviewer will be a different member of staff from anyone involved in your complaint at Stage 1 or 2.
69. The reviewer will not normally reconsider or reinvestigate the Stage 2 complaint. The review will consider whether the outcome of Stage 2 was reasonable and handled in line with this procedure.
70. As part of the review, the reviewer may hold further discussions with you and/or the subject of the complaint. They may also invite comment or evidence from members of staff involved at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2, and from other people as necessary.
71. Our aim is to take no more than 15 working days to conclude Stage 3, but complex cases may take longer. If we need more time, we will notify you of the new timeframe.
72. At the end of Stage 3, we will provide you with a written outcome that explains how we have considered the grounds set out in your Stage 3 Review form and what we have concluded. The reviewer may propose a remedy, or may decide that further consideration should be given to your original Stage 1 or 2 complaint.
73. You will be notified of your options to request a further review. The next step will depend on the nature of your complaint.

H. City St George's Review

74. City St George's, University of London has overall responsibility for the quality and standards of your academic course. If your complaint is about your academic course and you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, you may be eligible to request a further review by City St George's.
75. A complaint about your academic course may include concerns that:
- We did not adhere to a City St George's regulation.
 - We did not comply with the programme or module specification (e.g. that the quality of the teaching/assessment was inadequate to the point that we failed to deliver what was set out on the programme or module specification) .
 - There is a systemic issue with the quality and standard of the course that City St George's would have a reasonable interest in.
76. A complaint would not usually be considered about your academic course if it is about:
- The way we teach or deliver your course if you believe that we have still met the requirements in the programme or module specification
 - Your timetable
 - Facilities or learning resources
 - Support (academic or pastoral)
 - Administrative or procedural errors
 - Other services we offer
77. You will need to meet certain grounds, as set out in their Senate Regulation 26: Student Complaints, available on their [Senate Regulations webpage](#).
78. You will need to submit a City St George's Stage 3 Review form within **15 working days** of receiving the outcome of the ArtsEd Stage 3 review. When the review has been concluded, City St George's can provide you with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter, confirming that there are no further steps open to you at ArtsEd or City St George's. They will usually issue this automatically if your review is not upheld, but you can request one in any case.
79. If your complaint is not about your academic course, you will not able to request a further review by City St George's. In this case, we can issue you with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter, confirming that there are no further steps open to you at ArtsEd or City St George's. We will usually issue this automatically if your review is not upheld, but you can request one in any case.

I. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

80. The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with your Stage 3 outcome, you can take your complaint to the OIA once you have received a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter from ArtsEd or City St George's.

81. You will usually need to take your complaint to the OIA within one year of receiving your CoP letter.
82. Information and eligibility rules are available at www.oiahe.org.uk.

J. Group Complaint

83. If several students wish to complain about the same issue(s), they may wish to submit a group complaint.
84. The group should follow the same procedure set out above, but will additionally need to provide the name of one or two students to act as the group's representative(s).
85. Where multiple individual student complaints have been made about the same issue(s), we may treat them as a group complaint and, if appropriate, we may ask for the group to nominate one or two students to act as their representative(s).
86. It is essential that ArtsEd and relevant students are completely clear who is involved in a group complaint and, as such, this must be set out clearly in the written statement. The names and email addresses of all students in the group must be included with the complaint email or complaint form. This will give us confidence that the complaint fairly represents the views of all the students who are members of the group.
87. When submitting a group complaint, all evidence should be agreed in advance and submitted with the complaint email or complaint form so that all members of the group know what has been submitted on their behalf. No additional evidence will be accepted once the complaint has been submitted.
88. We will expect the representative(s) to distribute our communications among the group and to collate the group's response to give to us. We cannot be held responsible if representative(s) do not accurately provide the views of any member(s) of the group or fail to pass on information to us as instructed by the group.
89. We usually expect that all students submitting a group complaint have been involved from the start of the process. However, in exceptional cases, it may be possible for other students to join the group at a later stage because their complaint is similar to something that has already been raised earlier and where they are dissatisfied with the earlier outcome.
90. If a remedy is offered, students can accept this on an individual basis, even if others in the group do not agree.

K. Reporting and Monitoring

91. An annual summary report on student complaints and outcomes them will be received by the Higher Education Committee. There will be no reference to individual cases. The reports will show trends and make recommendations for improvements where necessary. A confidential record will be kept separately of individual cases.

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Approving Committee / Ratifying Body	HE Committee
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