



## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1

The Academy takes very seriously the experience of students, individually and collectively, and will consistently and rigorously follow this policy and procedure when complaints are made.

## 1.2

This policy has been adapted from the policy used by the validating partner, the University of West London.

## 1.3

It has been reviewed against the conditions and expectations expected of the Office for Students and for the Quality Assurance Agency.

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# 2. MAPPING AGAINST THE QAA QUALITY CODE

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## 2.1

This policy has been written against the QAA UK Quality Code which require higher education providers to meet the following expectation:

## 2.2

Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

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# 3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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## 3.1

The Academy seeks to maintain high standards in its provision of courses, services and facilities to students. The Academy has established its student complaints procedures to deal with legitimate complaints from students in a fair, prompt and efficient manner.

## 3.2

Complaints will be addressed through a three stage process. Stage I: Informal Resolution of Complaints Stage II: Formal Complaints Procedure and Stage III: Review

## 3.3

All complaints will be dealt with without recrimination and no student will be disadvantaged on account of raising a complaint. Students may complain individually or collectively, where appropriate. Complaints will be investigated objectively. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

## 3.4

All complaints will be dealt with constructively and the student will be informed of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld, the Academy will make an appropriate response including taking any necessary corrective action. Means of redress include an explanation of actions taken or planned and written or oral apologies.

## 3.5

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that any person about whom a complaint is made shall be supplied with a copy of the complaint. A student may be asked to attend an interview with the member of staff investigating their complaint.

## 3.6

A record of Stage II complaints received from students and the means of resolution will be kept by the Registry and reported annually to the Academic Board as part of the Academy's monitoring and quality assurance processes. No information that will identify any individual will be available within the report.

## 3.7

A student may seek advice from the Student Support Team when making a complaint and may be accompanied by another student or a representative, for example an officer of the Student Support Team, in any meeting that takes place in connection with a complaint he/she has lodged. However, under no circumstances may the student be represented by an external organisation.

## 3.8

Where a complaint made by a student is believed to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, the Academy reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the student for breach of the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

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# 4. SCOPE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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## 4.1

This procedure is designed to deal with complaints arising from:

- i. provision of academic services described in the Academy's publications including teaching, content of courses, support for learning
- ii. incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the Academy
- iii. provision of other Academy services described in literature published by the Academy

## 4.2

The student complaints procedure does not cover the following:

- i. any matters relating to examination and assessment procedures or academic appeals which are otherwise dealt with through the Academic Appeals process.
- ii. disciplinary issues which is otherwise dealt with through the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.
- iii. admissions procedures prior to enrolment as a student of the School which is otherwise dealt with through the Admissions Policy, Procedure and Regulations.
- iv. complaints about the behaviour of other students which is otherwise dealt with through the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

## 4.3

Where a student makes a complaint about the behaviour of another student or about unacceptable behaviour of Academy staff the Registry shall consult as appropriate and determine the correct student or staff procedure or policy to be followed. Where appropriate the complaint will be referred under the staff or student disciplinary procedures. Such determination shall be final.

## 4.4

This procedure applies to all students of the Academy accompanied by another student or a representative, for example an officer of the Student Support Team, in any meeting that takes place in connection with a complaint he/she has lodged. However, under no circumstances may the student be represented by an external organisation.

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# 5.

## STAGE I: INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

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### 5.1

If a student requires advice or wishes to discuss the matter before making a complaint he/she should consult his/her personal tutor, student representative or the Student Support Team.

### 5.2

The complaint may be made orally or in writing, normally within ten working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or in any event as soon as possible.

### 5.3

Most complaints will normally be resolved informally by an appropriate member of staff.

### 5.4

The member of staff to whom the complaint is made will investigate or refer the complaint. A response will be made to the student via email, normally within ten working days.

### 5.5

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of this informal procedure, then they should follow the procedures described in the formal complaints procedure below

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# 6.

## STAGE II: FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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### 6.1

A complaint under this procedure should be made to the Registrar, in writing, normally within twenty working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or the outcome of the informal resolution. The following details must be provided:

- a full statement of the complaint
- brief details of the steps already taken to resolve the complaint
- reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the attempts to resolve the complaint
- what the student would like done
- what remedy the student is seeking
- a copy (not original documents) of any documentary evidence the student wishes to submit
- the student's name and the Academy student ID number
- full contact details for the student (including preferred method of contact e.g. email)
- whether the student has representation and if so whom

The complaint should be emailed to : [registrar@jca.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@jca.ac.uk)

## **6.2**

The Registrar will determine whether all the necessary information has been provided and may contact the student requesting additional details and evidence. In all cases, the Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

## **6.3**

The Registrar will forward the complaint to the appropriate area(s) who will investigate the complaint using the information provided by the student in their written statement of the complaint. A response, detailing the investigation, will be sent to the student in writing within twenty working days of the full complaint being acknowledged by the Academy. The response sent to the student must be copied to the Registrar and all relevant parties.

## **6.4**

In instances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint within 20 working days for a legitimate reason, the relevant area investigating the complaint shall write to the student and inform them of:

- The name of the person investigating their complaint
- The reason for the delay
- The date by which the student will be notified of the outcome

The letter sent to the student must be copied to the Registrar and all relevant parties.

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# **7.**

## **STAGE III: REVIEW (COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES)**

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### **7.1**

If a student has reason to believe that his/her complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, he/ she should write to the Registrar within twenty working days of the date of the outcome letter, setting out his/ her reasons. On the instruction of the Director, his/her nominee will act as College Ombudsman and review the handling of the complaint in the light of the student's written statement and report in writing to the Director within 10 working days. The Director may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in the light of this report. The Director will send a written reply to the student within 20 working days of receiving the request for the review of the handling of the complaint from the student.

### **7.2**

Dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint will not in itself constitute grounds for a review.

### **7.3**

Following review, there will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the Academy, however in some cases an appeal may be brought to the awarding body (i.e. the University) under its own complaints procedures, and thereafter to the OIA.

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## **8. OTHER PROCEDURES/ EXTERNAL REVIEW**

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### **8.1**

After the conclusion of the review as per 7.1, students may refer the decision to the awarding body, the University of West London, in accordance with their Student Complaints Procedure set out in their Student Handbook, as a Stage II complaint

### **8.2**

Where no external review is possible under the awarding body's student complaints procedure, the Academy will state the reasons why, and issue a Completion of Procedures Letter within 28 days of its decision.

### **8.3**

After receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter (either from the Academy or the awarding body), students may refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

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## **9. OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR**

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### **9.1**

If the student remains dissatisfied with the written response they have received, the student may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for external review. Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). Guidance can also be sought from the Students' Union.

