

COMPLAINTS POLICY

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

LFA defines a complaint as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of a course, behaviour of an LFA stakeholder (e.g. staff, actor, tutor), LFA service, LFA facility or LFA site which should be investigated.’

The purpose of the complaint procedure is to provide an opportunity to resolve any complaint as quickly and fairly as possible.

The complaints procedure is not intended for contesting assessment results. If you are unhappy with the outcome of an assessment, you should submit an appeal, as outlined in the Academic Appeals section of this handbook.

The complaints procedure applies (but is not limited) to:

- Complaints arising from a student’s educational experience, other than disputes relating to assessment and examinations (see below);
- Complaints in respect of academic and/or administrative support or other services provided;
- Complaints regarding alleged harassment by staff, tutors or persons assisting in the delivery of the course;
- Complaints arising from alleged discrimination by staff, tutors or person assisting in the delivery of the course in relation to gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or otherwise.

The complaints procedure does **not** apply to:

- Academic dishonesty
- Programme regulations
- Class attendance
- Grade Appeals
- Classification of award (e.g. pass, merit, distinction or grade class – 1st, 2nd, 3rd)
- Issues affecting progression (i.e. moving between academic years or modules)
- Dismissal from a programme of study
- Complaints against other students: Should there be a complaint regarding another student, the complainant should first contact the Student Welfare Officer (in the Front of House Office), who will invoke a different set of guidelines

WHEN CAN I COMPLAIN?

Complaints should normally be made within 8 weeks of the issue(s) occurring. Complaints submitted outside this time period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

The complaint procedure is open to any current LFA student, as well as previously-registered students who have either left or graduated from the Academy within the last 8 weeks.

WHO CAN HELP ME MAKE A COMPLAINT?

- Course Leader and Coordinator
- Personal Tutor
- Student Welfare Officer

WHAT IS THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE?

The LFA has a three-stage complaints procedure:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If a student has a dispute with someone, or feels that they are being treated unfairly, they are encouraged to raise the cause of that dissatisfaction with the person most directly concerned and talk through the issue. The majority of complaints should be capable of resolution at this stage.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by informal discussion with the person concerned, or if the student feels uncomfortable, or is unable to discuss the complaint directly with the person involved, the student should approach the Course Team, either in person or in writing. This is still the informal part of the procedures. A prompt written response acknowledging the complaint should be expected and the course team will address the issue informally or if the complaint clearly involves an issue of safety or gross misconduct then they may progress the complaint to Stage 2 without delay.

If the complaint has been addressed informally but the student does not believe it has been satisfactorily resolved, then the student should proceed to Stage 2 of the complaint process, detailed below.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

To submit a formal complaint, students must complete an electronic [complaints form](#), and send any supporting materials to complaints@londonfilmacademy.com. The student should expect to receive an outcome within 20 working days of the complaint being investigated.

Students should only resort to the formal procedure:

- When informal resolution has been sought and has failed;
- When the grievance is against the Course Leader/Coordinator.
- Where there is a significant concern for safety or gross misconduct involving: theft, fraud, dishonesty, offensive behaviour (specifically harassment, bullying, fighting, aggressive or intimidating behaviour, threats of violence, dangerous horseplay), property damage, incapacity from excess of alcohol or drugs or unsafe behaviour which puts the person or others at risk of harm.

Formal complaints will be received and reviewed by the Head of HR (not the Course Team), who will acknowledge receipt within five working days. Should the complaint be about this member of staff, then the student should state this clearly requesting that another senior manager be appointed to deal with the complaint.

The detail of the grievance must include (amongst other things):

- Complainant's contact details and student number;
- A summary of what discussions have taken place and the reasons why the previous actions to date have been unsatisfactory;
- Witnesses who have consented to being interviewed
- The desired outcome sought by the complainant.

The LFA will then carry out an investigation. This may involve interviewing the student making the complaint and others directly involved. Interview notices will be made in writing in advance. Students are entitled to bring someone with them to any meetings held to discuss the complaint. This person, referred to as a "friend", should be a member of the Academy (eg. a fellow student or course deliverer) and/or a parent/guardian (if the student is under 18 years old).

Following investigation, a full response should normally be expected within 20 working days from the receipt of the complaint form. Where this is not the case the student should be informed of an



alternative timescale. Any recommended remedies will be implemented by the department concerned as soon as possible, and written confirmation of action taken will be sent to the Principal.

LFA will need to keep records of complaints and their investigation and will monitor the information relating to complaints to allow us to improve our services. Complaints will be logged and monitored by the Head of HR. The complaint record is separate from the student record.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If at the end of the process the student is still unhappy with the LFA actions, they may appeal in writing to the Joint Principal(s) or their nominated representative by email (appeals@londonfilmacademy.com). The student should expect to receive an outcome within 20 working days of the complaint being reviewed.

SUBMITTING A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

When resolution of a complaint has failed internally, **BA students ONLY** may submit a formal grievance to the University of Derby. For full details, please refer to the University's [Grievance Procedure](#).

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

If students remain dissatisfied with the final outcome and all processes above are complete, they may request an independent review of their case by the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#):

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

Telephone: 01189 599813
Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk
Website: www.oiahe.org.uk

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure is intended to incorporate the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness and shall be conducted in reference to the following guidelines:

- Always be polite – abusive or inflammatory language is not acceptable neither is the widespread dissemination of any complaint.
- A person making a decision in a case should declare any personal interest they have in the proceedings.
- A person who makes a decision should be unbiased and act in good faith.
- Proceedings should be conducted so that they are fair to all parties.
- Each party should be given the opportunity to ask questions and respond to the evidence of the other party.
- A decision maker should take into account all relevant considerations and extenuating circumstances and ignore any irrelevant considerations.
- Justice should be seen to be done.
- Wherever possible, the Academy would wish to see any complaint resolved as close as possible to its point of origin, and with a minimum of formality.



