

# Procedure 6.6

## Student Complaints

Please refer also to [LFA Procedure 3.1 - Student welfare and pastoral care](#).

### 1. Introduction

London Film Academy (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 complaints 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. Students who are unhappy with the outcome of an assessment should submit an academic appeal, as described in [LFA Procedure 6.2 - Academic misconduct](#).

### 2. Complaints

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 [LFA Procedure 6.2 - Academic misconduct](#))
- 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 the protected characteristics such as 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)
- issues affecting progression (i.e. moving between academic years or modules)
- dismissal from a programme of study
- Providing information about academic integrity and academic misconduct policy at student orientations, during class and at staff inductions
- Providing a secure system for handing in student work.

#### 2.1. When can complaints be made?

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



## 2.2. Who can complain?

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

## 2.3. Who can help with complaints?

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

## 2.4. The formal complaints process

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 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 still forms an informal part of the procedure. 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, 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 complaints process.

### Stage 2 Formal investigation

To submit a formal complaint, a student must complete an electronic *complaints form*, and send any supporting materials to [complaints@londonfilmacademy.com](mailto: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 Academic Governance and HR Officer (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:

- 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.

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 LFA (e.g. 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 Head of Academic Governance. 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 LFA Human Resources Team. The complaint record will be separate from the student record.

### Stage 3 Appeal

If, at the end of the process, the student is still unhappy with LFA's actions, they may appeal in writing to the Joint Principal(s) or their nominated representative by email ([appeals@londonfilmacademy.com](mailto:appeals@londonfilmacademy.com)). The student should expect to receive an outcome within 20 working days of the complaint being reviewed. If resolution of a complaint has failed internally, BA and MA students ONLY may submit a formal complaint to the University of Derby. For full details, please refer to the [University of Derby's Complaints Procedure](#).

## 2.3 Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

If students remain dissatisfied with the final outcome and all processes above are complete, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) and 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](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk)

Website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

Normally a student cannot complain to OIA without a COP letter.

## 2.4. Rights and responsibilities

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, LFA wishes to see any complaint resolved as close as possible to its point of origin, and with a minimum of formality.

