

Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach of School of Contemporary Music to resolving a complaint or grievance involving any person who is a bona fide visitor, prospective student, enrolled student or member of staff.

Scope

Whole School of Contemporary Music

Complaints and grievances, as well as complaints of unlawful discrimination, workplace harassment, sexual harassment and bullying by staff or students are outside the scope of this policy and are addressed in separate policies.

Policy

Resolutions of academic grievances are based on

School of Contemporary Music is committed to providing an effective complaints and grievances management system which prioritises the welfare of those involved.

School of Contemporary Music ensures:

- transparent, ethical, and timely procedures for addressing complaints, grievances and appeals;
- equality and fairness to all parties, without prejudicial treatment;
- protection of privacy and reputation of all parties involved;
- the right of all parties to have a support person present during meetings;
- accordance with current legal requirements;
- independent review of a decision determined in response to a grievance;
- administering without charge to a bona fide grievant;
- adherence to the ethos of integrity, probity and social justice as embodied in its mission statement;
- due process in investigation and resolution.

Definitions

1. **Academic decision or action:** a decision/action made by an School of Contemporary Music staff member that is directly related to a student's academic progress in his/her course of study. This may include, but is not restricted to: an issue arising from progression in a course of study, academic supervision, academic freedom, ethical practice, professional experience performance, quality of feedback from faculty or course workload. In the case of disputed assessment grades, the student should refer to the Assessment Policy. In the case of exclusion from a course of study, the student should refer to the Exclusion from a Course or Subject Policy.
2. **Non-academic decision or action:** a decision/action made by a School of Contemporary Music staff member that is not directly related to a student's academic assessment or progress in his/her course of study. It may include, but is not limited to: customer service

and administration, marketing and information, facilities, fees/finance related matters, welfare.

3. **Authorised Officer:** A relevant School of Contemporary Music staff member with authority who may be approached at any time in relation to the policy, process and implications of making a complaint or grievance. This may include, but is not limited to, a Director, Marketing Officer, Administrative Officer or Facilities Coordinator.
4. **Senior Officer:** If a grievance escalates, the next most senior officer becomes the point of contact regarding that grievance. This may include, but is not limited to, a Director, Financial Controller, Marketing Officer, or Facilities Manager.
5. **Vexatious Complaint:** complaints or grievances which are considered without merit, malicious or already resolved.
6. **Complaint:** a minor problem or concern which may have arisen from a lack of, or unclear, communication.
7. **Grievance:** a major problem or concern for which the complainant is seeking an official resolution.

General feedback and comment from applicants and students about administration, academic programs and services will not be treated by School of Contemporary Music as a complaint or grievance unless action or a response is required.

- the intrinsic merit of the grievance;
- proficiency of the grievant; and
- values and practices of the academic community locally and internationally.

Responsible for implementation
Chair, Academic Administration

Key stakeholders
All staff and students

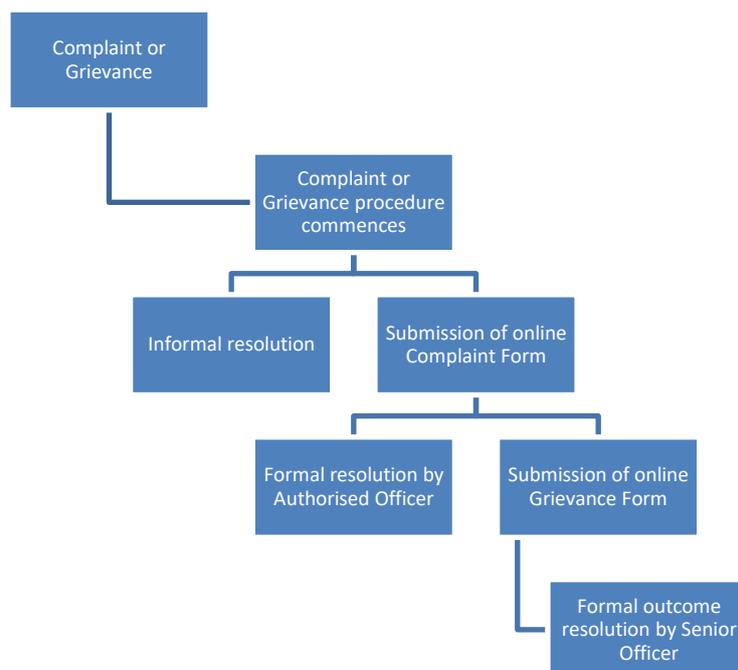
Procedures

Complaint and Grievance Resolution Procedures

The following principles guide the complaint and grievance resolution procedures:

- Resolution will be handled informally where possible and appropriate.
- Complaints and grievances will be addressed as close as possible to the source of dissatisfaction.
- Where an individual remains dissatisfied with the decision, she/he is entitled to continue to the next step in the procedures, providing new or additional information is provided to support the case. It is not sufficient to simply disagree with the decision.
- The complaint or grievance must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of the day of event or decision.
- The process of resolution is to commence within 10 working days of lodgement.
- The complainant will receive a decision within 20 working days of receipt of the application or such other extended time as the relevant Authorised Officer may reasonably authorise.
- A student's enrolment will be maintained while the appeal process is ongoing.
- The complainant will not suffer any reprisal as a result of lodging a grievance or an appeal.
- A student who lodges a vexatious complaint will have it dismissed or considered as academic misconduct.
- A complainant attending a meeting associated with resolving a complaint or grievance may be accompanied by a support person. This person must not be a legal representative or a currently practicing solicitor or barrister.
- The Complaints and Grievances Register records are retained for a minimum period of five years.
- A complainant may choose to have their grievance reviewed by an external complaint handling process. In this situation, School of Contemporary Music will not continue further consideration of matters where the process options have been exhausted or where the student has taken their grievance to an external agency.

The procedure for the notification and resolution of a complaint or grievance is outlined below:



Step 1: Informal resolution

- An individual who has a complaint or grievance should, where possible, discuss this with the relevant School of Contemporary Music staff member who may be determining the academic or non-academic decision or action which has given rise to the issue. The relevant staff member will deal with the issue promptly and, where possible, provide the individual with a full explanation in writing of the reasons for the decision/action.
- If there is a conflict of interest arising from the staff member addressing the complaint, the staff member should refer the complainant directly to the relevant Authorised Officer (usually that staff member's supervisor).
- The majority of complaints should be resolved at this stage. If the complaint has not been resolved the complainant may lodge a formal complaint, as outlined below.

Step 2: Submission of online Complaint Form

- If the individual's concerns cannot be resolved informally, she/he may submit an Complaint Form, including any supporting documentation, which will be viewed by the relevant Authorised Officer (usually the supervisor of the staff member involved in the complaint). For student complaints involving another student, the Authorised Officer is the Director.
- The Authorised Officer will address the complainant's concerns promptly, and provide to the complainant a full explanation in writing of the reasons for the decision.
- A report will be recorded by the Authorised Officer on the Register of Complaints and Grievances.
- An academic decision or action will be tabled at Academic Administration.
- A non-academic decision or action will be reported to the appropriate Head of Department.

Step 3: Submission of Online Grievance Form

- If the complainant's concerns still cannot be resolved, she/he may submit an online Grievance Form which will be directed to the relevant Senior Officer (usually the supervisor of the Authorised Officer).
- In order to reach an agreed resolution the Senior Officer may conduct separate interviews, convene conciliation meetings or request relevant information.
- The Senior Officer will provide to the student a full explanation in writing of the reasons for the decision.
- The Senior Officer retains final responsibility for any decision regarding an appeal.
- If the Senior Officer is the relevant School of Contemporary Music staff member referred to in Step 1, or the relevant Authorised Officer referred to in Step 2, the Principal will handle the grievance.
- The Senior Officer will advise the complainant in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- A report will be submitted on the relevant Register of Complaints and Grievances.
- An academic decision or action will be tabled at Academic Administration.
- A non-academic decision or action will be reported to the appropriate Head of Department.
- Any grievance which is anonymous and may allege or involve abuse of a minor or is a protected disclosure of alleged corruption or wrongful conduct in the context of the Corporations Act is reported immediately to the Principal (or other suitable officer, where relevant).

- If the Authorised Officer is satisfied prima facie that there is no basis to a grievance, the officer notifies the grievant accordingly in writing and the grievance is deemed to have lapsed. If so requested by the grievant, the Authorised Officer provides a detailed and reasoned explanation.

External Dispute Resolution

Should the internal School of Contemporary Music procedures listed above not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the complainant, provision is made for external, independent grievance resolution, will act to appoint an external reviewer who is independent of School of Contemporary Music. The appointed reviewer must make a determination and advise the relevant senior officer of School of Contemporary Music, the complainant within 30 days, providing in writing the reasons and rationale for any decisions and/or actions to be taken. If the appointed reviewer makes recommendations in relation to a reviewed grievance, the relevant senior officer of School of Contemporary Music will ensure that the recommendations are implemented within 20 working days. Decisions of the appointed reviewer shall be final and binding on all parties.

International Students

International students who wish to lodge an external appeal or complaint about the decision resulting from Steps 1 to 3 above can contact Ombudsman. The Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education provider.

The student and School of Contemporary Music will be bound by the decision of the ombudsman and such decisions are final and non-reviewable. While the parties attempt to resolve the matter the student will continue to attend classes as normal unless the student has a reasonable concern about an imminent risk to his or her health and safety.

Policy owner: Chair, Academic Administration

Policy category: Academic: Community Conduct & Grievances

Policy status: Approved

Related policies:

Assessment Policy

Harassment, Bullying, Unlawful Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Last amended: 11th Jan. 2018