



# **POLICY 003 COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY**

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## **Policy 003: COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 1.1 This policy describes how the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) supports students who are engaging with and making use of the Student Complaints and Grievances. If you are not sure who to speak to, seek advice from the Student Hub at your campus or via [studentsupport@acm.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@acm.ac.uk).
- 1.2 This policy explains, in an open, transparent and accessible way, how ACM deals with student complaints and grievances.
- 1.3 Complaints against ACM made by students are treated seriously and, if found to be justified, are acted upon to ensure that our students' interests are protected.
- 1.4 ACM is committed to providing a high-quality experience for each student and encourages all students report any cause for concern in a timely manner.

### **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Student grievances and complaints**

- 2.1 The guiding principles are that complaints shall be:
  - a) treated seriously and with fairness;
  - b) dealt with promptly, sensitively and at the appropriate level of ACM;
  - c) treated consistently across ACM;
  - d) progressed through two stages – an informal stage and, if necessary, a formal stage;
  - e) dealt with and resolved, wherever possible, informally and with the least amount of disruption as is possible.
  - f) without prejudice to a student's or group of students' right to pursue remedies outside ACM and the awarding body, having exhausted ACM and/or the awarding body's complaints procedures
  - g) In order to be considered, any student complaint must be submitted no more than six calendar months after the event or problem relating to the complaint.
- 2.2 The procedures detailed below are designed to manage all forms of student complaints. ACM reserves the right to refer student cases to be investigated under the Appeals Policy and Procedure if deemed appropriate.
- 2.3 These complaints procedures and any decisions made under them are not intended to give rise to legal rights, or obligations on ACM or its awarding bodies to

pay compensation either in respect of a decision made pursuant to the procedures or for a breach of these procedures. This policy is intended to facilitate ACM to resolve grievances.

2.4 Complaints can only be accepted and acted on when received from the student themselves or, where the student is under 18 or deemed to be unable to act in their own interest, from the Parent or Guardian previously declared to ACM.

2.5 Students are strongly encouraged to provide ACM feedback to allow ACM the opportunity to act on the feedback at the earliest opportunity before raising a complaint. If after receiving feedback they still wish to seek further advice they should refer to the stages below:

1. **Informal Complaint** - Students should raise the complaint with the relevant team responsible to be invited to an in-depth discussion for early resolution. If unsure who to contact [studentsupport@acm.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@acm.ac.uk) can assist students at this stage.
2. **Formal Complaint** - Students can submit a complaint form for a formal investigation of the issue, where they are not happy with all previous early resolution responses. This is submitted to [studentengagement@acm.ac.uk](mailto:studentengagement@acm.ac.uk). The complaints panel will meet to review all formal complaints raised.
3. **Validating body/ partner institution review** - following the outcome of a formal appeal students may request a review by the validating body/ partner institution. Students can appeal the result at stage 3 of a formal complaint where they feel there was a material error in the way the complaint was processed. When the review has been concluded, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter.
4. **(HE students only)** Following this, any student who is dissatisfied with the final decision on their case may be able to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. Information and eligibility rules are available at: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

2.7 Students must submit complaints within the timescale stated within the complaints procedure. If there is a delay in submitting a complaint, the complainant may be asked to explain the reason for the delay, and the delay may be grounds for the complaint to be rejected. If significant time has passed, it may be difficult and/or impossible for a fair and proper investigation of the circumstances and detail of the complaint.

2.8 If the student or applicant is not satisfied with the decision at the conclusion of ACM's Formal stage or if the recommendations made at this stage are not implemented, they may appeal in the first instance to ACM's awarding body for their programme, which will follow its own process, as noted in 2.9 below.

2.9 For information on the complaints policy of their relevant awarding body, students should refer to:

- a) Degree students: [Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures, Middlesex University Regulations](#)
- b) Diploma Students: [University of the Arts London's Student Complaints Procedures](#)
- c) Diploma Students, where a grievance relates to funding: [East Surrey College Complaints Procedure](#)

2.10 For applicants, decisions made by the awarding institution will be final, in line with their regulations.

2.11 For relatively minor queries or complaints, students and applicants are encouraged to raise them in the first instance to a relevant member of staff. The appropriate member of ACM staff may be able to resolve the issue without needing to make use of these Student Complaints and Grievances Policy, and corresponding Procedure.

### **Group Complaints**

2.12 ACM recognises that students may wish to lodge complaints collectively. In such instances students are asked to nominate one spokesperson with whom ACM staff will liaise to address the complaint. The spokesperson should endeavour to gather the views of all of the students who wish to lodge the complaint. If Stage 1 does not satisfactorily address the complaint, the spokesperson should complete a written explanation of the complaint (either a report or via the Student Complaints Form), which should be agreed by the entire group before submission. Students may opt to have their elected Student Representative act as spokesperson for the group.

### **Possible Outcomes from an Upheld Complaint**

2.13 Where a complaint is upheld, ACM may instigate in any one or a combination of the following resolutions

- A change in teaching content or teaching/support staff where applicable
- A partial or full refund of fees paid
- A opportunity for a student to repeat certain teaching without additional cost
- A altered date the student ceased study on a course.

## **3. POLICY OWNER**

3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance Team. The Student Complaints and

Grievances Policy lead is:

- Head of Continuous Improvement
- Quality Assurance [qualityassurance@acm.ac.uk](mailto:qualityassurance@acm.ac.uk)

3.2 Decisions and appropriate actions in support of the implementation of the Policy will be authorised by the following designated staff:

- Quality Assurance
- Head of Student Services
- Registry Manager
- Senior Management, including Executive Senior Management

## **4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Internal Documents**

- Academic Appeals
- Academic Integrity
- Admissions
- Student Disciplinary
- Equality and Diversity

### **4.2 External Documents**

- Middlesex University Regulations: Student complaints and grievance procedures
- University of the Arts, London: Student Complaint Procedures
- East Surrey College: Client Feedback Policy
- QAA Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

## **5. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW**

Version: 3

Approved on: February 2020

Approved by: Executive Committee