

# The Courtauld

## The Courtauld Regulations – Student Complaints Policy

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### Regulations – Student Complaints Policy

#### 1.1 Institutional Aims

The Courtauld places a strong emphasis on enhancing the student experience by providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment and is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for all students, reflected in excellent academic, administrative and pastoral support. Our aim is to ensure that every student is satisfied with their experience at The Courtauld.

#### 1.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to **all students** studying at The Courtauld (undergraduate, postgraduate and research). There is a separate policy in respect of Bullying and Harassment.

#### 1.3 Underlying Principles

The Courtauld welcomes constructive comment from students. It hopes that most problems met by students will be resolved through the normal systems of student support, programme administration or the Students' Union. We strongly encourage resolution of this kind and **a student wishing to make representation under this Complaints Policy must have pursued informal resolution prior to bringing a formal complaint.**

It is recognised that from time to time problems do arise and students may wish to express concern or dissatisfaction with aspects of The Courtauld or the quality of services provided. The Courtauld's policy is to encourage feedback regarding perceived problems so that they can be addressed and improvements made to the student experience. The Courtauld sees the handling and monitoring of complaints as an important aspect of our quality assurance procedures.

The Courtauld will follow the following principles when addressing all complaints:

- All complaints will be treated fairly, impartially, effectively and in a timely manner.
- All complaints will be treated seriously and constructively, and can be made without fear of victimisation.
- This Student Complaints Policy applies to both Academic Departments and Professional Service Departments.
- This Student Complaints Policy provides a clear and accessible route for complaints, and is transparent and well publicised.
- Where The Courtauld is found to have made a mistake or fallen short of reasonable expectations, an apology will be made, the mistake rectified where appropriate, and/or action taken to prevent the same mistake happening again.
- Complaints will be monitored and analysed, with a view to addressing the root causes. The Courtauld will report on actions taken as a result of complaints.

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The Courtauld will follow the following practices in respect of any complaint received:

- The Complaints Policy focuses on resolving complaints rather than apportioning blame. Confidentiality owed to staff and students will be protected. However, details of a complaint may need to be shared with relevant parties in order for a full investigation to take place, and individuals named in a complaint will be made aware of the allegations and have the opportunity to give their version of events.
- Wherever possible and agreeable to the parties concerned, complaints will be resolved at a local level and/or without recourse to the formal Student Complaints Policy.
- Repeated or vexatious complaints will not be considered.
- All parties involved in a complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at regular and appropriate intervals during the process.

## 2.1 Types of Student Complaints Policy

The issues listed below are the **types of complaints that can be considered under our Student Complaints Policy**.

- Disciplinary matters (including plagiarism)
- Special (Extenuating) Circumstances and Reasonable Adjustment
- Procedural irregularities
- Research supervision
- Teaching provision and facilities
- Unfair practices
- Welfare.

The issues listed below are **excluded from the Student Complaints Policy**. However, The Courtauld does reserve the right to investigate, when appropriate, one of the excluded categories if it is considered fair and reasonable to do so.

- Complaints raised anonymously
- Third party complaints
- Complaints submitted by someone acting on behalf of the student
- Complaints submitted in relation to a time when the complainant was not an enrolled student of The Courtauld. [*Complaints about the Admissions Process should be raised under the Admissions Policy. Complaints from former students should be raised directly with the Academic Registrar*]
- Complaints about the decisions of Examination Boards or assessments. All appeals against Examination Board decisions or assessment results should consult the Procedures for Appealing against the decision of an Examination/Assessment Board
- Complaints about the outcome of a student disciplinary hearing. These are covered in the Student Conduct Regulations.
- Complaints against a fellow student. These are covered in the Student Conduct Regulations.

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## 3.1 Submitting a Complaint

### 3.2 Stage 1: Informal Complaint Resolution

Discuss the problem with the member of staff most directly concerned. This might be an academic or a person responsible for a particular service. Many complaints can be dealt with informally through discussion and explanation. If you are not sure to whom you should make your complaint, you can ask at the Advice Desk for guidance. It is important that you seek resolution as soon as possible, and normally within 20 working days of the occurrence of the problem. This increases the opportunity of resolving the problem quickly. However, it is recognised that in some instances informal resolution may not be possible and students should then proceed Stage 2 and explain why informal resolution was not possible.

If you choose to submit your informal complaint in writing you should receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days and will normally receive a response to your concern within 15 working days.

If it seems possible that a response will be delayed you will be told why, e.g. the complexity of the case, staff unavailability through illness or professional commitments, etc. and you will be kept informed of progress.

**If you decide to raise a complaint and are seeking informal resolution, you must ensure that the staff member who is trying to resolve the issue is fully aware that this is the first stage of the complaints process. You cannot retrospectively raise an issue with a member of staff, be unsatisfied with the outcome and then state that this was Stage 1 of the Complaints Process.**

If you remain dissatisfied having approached staff members most directly concerned, you should talk to your Head of Department or the Academic Registrar as it may still be possible to deal with your complaint informally.

### 3.3 Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint informally you can lodge a formal written complaint. Students should submit written formal complaint within 30 days of the issue they wish to complain about. This ensures that, events are clear in the minds of those involved, and when evidence may be more readily available. Complaints submitted more than 30 days after the issue(s) occurred will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are those in which the student is able to demonstrate good reason for not submitting the complaint earlier. The decision on whether or not to accept a late complaint is taken by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and is the final decision of The Courtauld.

You should submit your Stage 2 complaint to [academic.registry@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:academic.registry@courtauld.ac.uk) on the Complaints Form and supply as much information as possible to enable the complaint to be considered.

You will receive initial acknowledgement of your complaint within 24 hours. You will receive notification of who is reviewing your complaint within 5 working days of sending

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in your Stage 2 complaint. You will receive final notification regarding the outcome of Stage 2 of your complaint within 21 working days of receipt of your initial complaint. Your complaint will be carefully reviewed and you may be asked to supply further information or clarification and potentially be interviewed by the Panel regarding your complaint. If you are unhappy with the outcome of Stage 2 of your complaint you may take this to the final stage of the Student Complaints Policy.

## 3.4 Stage 3: Final Written Resolution

This is the final stage of your complaint and will be reviewed by a Complaints Panel specifically convened for the purpose of resolving your complaint.

You should submit your Stage 3 complaint to [academic.registry@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:academic.registry@courtauld.ac.uk). You do not need to supply any further information unless you consider that any evidence has been overlooked by the Stage 2 investigation or that new relevant evidence has become available. If necessary, the Panel may wish to interview you and any other relevant parties regarding your complaint.

The Panel will consist of senior members of staff of The Courtauld, which may include the Director and Deputy Dean. It will include the President of the Student Union (or representative) and an external co-opted member (such as a Governing Board member, an external examiner or other suitable external representative) who can provide impartial advice and guidance.

You will receive initial acknowledgement of Stage 3 of your complaint within 24 hours. Given that a Panel, including external members has to be convened this will be done within 21 working days of receipt of your Stage 3 complaint. The Panel may wish to interview you and related staff/colleagues/fellow students on your complaint.

You will receive final notification of the outcome of your Stage 3 complaint within 30 working days of receipt of your Stage 3 complaint together with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter. Supply of a COP letter is a requirement of our membership of the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). At this point the student can complain direct to the OIA and submit the COP letter they have received from The Courtauld.

## 4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

If you have exhausted all the internal process at The Courtauld regarding your complaint and you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you can contact the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. The Courtauld is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may be able to ask the OIA to review your [*complaint/appeal/disciplinary case etc*]. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed the final stage of the complaint before you complain to the OIA. The Courtauld will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your [*complaint/appeal etc*] is not upheld, The

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Courtauld will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your [*complaint/appeal etc*] is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>.

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## HOW THE COURTAULD'S STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY OPERATES

