

The Courtauld

The Courtauld Institute of Art

Student Complaints Policy

Contents

1.1	Introduction
1.2	Scope of the Policy
1.3	Underlying Principles
2.1	Types of Student Complaints Policy
3.1	Submitting a Complaint
3.2	Early Complaint Resolution
3.3	Stage 1: Informal Complaint Resolution
3.4	Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint
3.5	Stage 3: Final Written Resolution and COP
4.1	Submission to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)
5.1	Student Complaints Policy Timeline

1.1 Introduction

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 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 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.

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

- The Student 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

The issues listed below are the **types of complaints that can be considered under the 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**:

- 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 or PhD upgrade decisions.
- 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.

The Courtauld reserves the right to investigate, when appropriate, one of the excluded categories if it is considered fair and reasonable to do so.

3.1 Submitting a Complaint

3.2 Early 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 may make your complaint, you can contact Student and Academic Services (SAS'@courtauld.ac.uk) for guidance. It is important that you seek resolution as soon as possible, and normally within 10 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 early resolution may not be possible and you may choose to submit an informal complaint in writing.

3.3 Stage 1: Informal Complaint Resolution

You must submit your Stage 1 Informal Complaint in writing to the relevant Head of Department or Professional Service and supply as much information as possible and explain

why direct resolution was not possible, to enable the complaint to be considered. As with direct complaint resolution it is important to seek resolution as quickly as possible and normally within 10 working days of the occurrence of the problem. You will receive an acknowledgement within 2 working days and will normally receive a response to your concern from the Head of Department/Professional Service or nominee within 10 working days.

Complaints submitted more than 10 working 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 Institute of Art.

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.

3.4 Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint informally you can lodge a formal written complaint. Students must submit a written formal complaint within 10 working days of receipt of the response to the Stage 1 Informal Complaint.

You must submit your Stage 2 complaint on the Complaints Form to academic.registry@courtauld.ac.uk and supply as much information as possible to enable the complaint to be considered.

You will receive initial acknowledgement of your Stage 2 complaint within 2 working days. The Academic Registrar, in consultation with the Dean and Deputy Director, will appoint an investigator and you will receive notification of who is investigating your complaint within 5 working days of sending in your Stage 2 complaint. You will receive final notification regarding the outcome of Stage 2 of your complaint within 25 working days of receipt of your formal complaint. Your complaint will be carefully reviewed and you may be asked to supply further information or clarification.

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.

3.5 Stage 3: Complaint Review and Final Notification of Outcome

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 must submit your Stage 3 complaint within 10 working days of receipt of the response to the Stage 2 Formal Complaint to 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 be chaired by a senior member of staff of The Courtauld appointed by the Dean and Deputy Director (from an approved pool of senior and experienced staff) and it will include a representative from the Students' Union and an external co-opted academic member (such as a Governing Board member, an external examiner or other suitable external representative) who can provide impartial advice and guidance. A secretary will be nominated by the Academic Registrar.

You will receive initial acknowledgement of Stage 3 of your complaint within 2 working days. Given that a Panel, including external members, has to be convened this will be done within 20 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 25 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).

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

If you have exhausted all the internal processes 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 Institute of Art 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 Institute of Art 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 Courtauld Institute of Art 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>.

5.1 Student Complaints Policy Timeline

Ref	Stage	Action	Working Days
3.2	Early Resolution	Student to talk to the member of staff most directly concerned.	10
3.3	Stage 1 – Informal Complaint Resolution	If direct resolution not possible, the student should submit an informal complaint in writing. The relevant Head of Department/ Professional Service or their nominee will investigate the complaint and issue an outcome letter to the student.	10
3.4	Stage 1 – Student Response to Decision	The student should respond to the outcome letter. If the outcome is not accepted, a formal complaint can be submitted.	10
3.4	Stage 2 – Formal Complaint	An investigator appointed by the Academic Registrar will investigate the complaint and draft an investigation report. The report and a covering outcome letter will be sent to the student.	25
3.5	Stage 2 – Student Response to Decision	The student should respond to the outcome letter. If the outcome is not accepted, the student can request a review of the outcome.	10
3.5	Stage 3 – Complaint Review and Final Notification of Outcome	A Review Panel will be appointed to review the complaint and issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter to the student.	25
3.6	Referral to Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)	If the student does not accept the outcome of the review, referral may be made to the OIA.	(12 months from receipt of Completion of Procedure Letter)

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