

The Courtauld

The Courtauld Institute of Art

Student Complaints Policy

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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) and students who withdrew from/finished their studies no more than 3 months ago. There is a separate policy in respect Sexual Misconduct. .

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.
- 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.

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 Student Complaints Policy does not cover the following:

- Requests for new or different services or facilities.
- Matters where there are separate policies or procedures, for example Academic Appeal.
- Matters of academic judgement (the considered view of an appropriately qualified and experienced subject specialist on a student's academic performance. This could relate to learning outcomes, the award of marks for an assessment)
- Appeals against the decision not to offer a place to an applicant.
- Complaints raised anonymously
- Third party complaints
- Complaints submitted by someone acting on behalf of the student.
- Complaints submitted out of the deadline time, as specified in section 1.2.

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 the Programme Administration team 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. 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 5 working days and will normally receive a response to your concern from the Head of Department/Professional Service or nominee within 20 working days.

Complaints submitted more than 10 working days after the issue(s) occurred will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. 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.

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.

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 an acknowledgement of your Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days. You will receive final notification regarding the outcome of Stage 2 of your complaint within 30 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, a member of staff (either academic or professional services) and it will include a representative from the Students' Union. A secretary will be nominated by the Academic Registrar.

You will receive initial acknowledgement of Stage 3 of your complaint within 5 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 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 (OIA).

4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (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 (OIA).

The 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. 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>.

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.

<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 is 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.	20
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 outcome letter will be sent to the student.	30
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.	30
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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