

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (SCHOOL-WIDE)**

### **From the Academic Regulations July 2018, Section 37**

1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided academic or otherwise, or the lack of service that a student was led to believe would be provided.
2. A complaint can be raised for dissatisfaction with, or lack of, a service which impacts directly and substantively on the student's programme of study.
3. This procedure applies to any current student, or recent student of the AA School (recent classified as having been registered as a student within the previous 3 months prior to the expression of complaint).
4. Students believing they have grounds for a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to discuss the matter with their Unit Masters/Tutors, Programme Director or Complementary Studies Programme Staff or School Registrar (as relevant) to establish if the matter can be resolved informally.
5. The following actions may be undertaken to resolve the complaint informally:
  - The Unit Masters/Tutors, Programme Director or Complementary Studies Programme Staff or School Registrar (as relevant) will provide more information or a detailed explanation about the area of complaint that might explain or resolve the student's concern;
  - A viable solution to the concern is suggested;
  - An apology provided where it is appropriate to do so;
  - The process for a formal complaint is fully explained;
6. If resolution cannot be reached at an informal level, the student may submit a formal complaint within seven days of exhausting the informal procedure.
7. A formal complaint may be submitted in writing to the School Registrar: [registrar@aschool.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@aschool.ac.uk). (Should the complaint relate directly to the School Registrar, the School Director will be requested to designate a different member of staff with no previous involvement in the matter, and for the purpose only of dealing with the specified complaint).
8. The School Registrar (or designated member of staff) will meet with the student to discuss the details of the complaint, the expectations of the student, and the procedure and timeframes of the process.
9. The student may nominate a named representative to communicate on their behalf.
10. The School Registrar will confirm the person or persons who might be asked to contribute to the investigation of the complaint.
11. In conducting the investigation the School Registrar may also discuss, report or refer to another member of staff for a second opinion; the name of this member of staff will be provided to the student making the complaint.
12. The School Registrar may deem it appropriate to convene a panel to consider the complaint; this panel will be composed of staff who are independent of the complaint and do not pose any conflict of interest.

- 13.** The names of the members of the pane will be provided to the student making the complaint.
- 14.** The investigation (in any of the above forms) will be conducted within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 15.** The student will be informed of the outcome, with reasoning provided for this outcome, within 5 working days of the completion of the investigation.
- 16.** If the complaint is UPHELD, the student will be offered an apology, presented verbally and in writing.
- 17.** If the complaint is NOT UPHELD, the student will be offered an explanation, presented verbally and in writing.
- 18.** The School Registrar will outline in full the reasons why the complaint has not been upheld.
- 19.** Should the student feel that any part of the procedure has not been followed correctly, they may request a review of the procedure by an independent panel within 10 working days.
- 20.** The School Registrar will inform the School Director that an independent panel is to be convened to investigate the process followed.
- 21.** The remit of this panel is NOT to review the original complaint but to assure that a fair and transparent process has been followed.
- 22.** At the conclusion of the process, the student will be issued with a completion of procedures letter in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.