

# ACADEMY OF MUSIC & SOUND

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### 1. General Principles

1.1 AMS seeks to maintain high standards in its provision of courses, services and facilities to students. AMS has established its student complaints procedures to deal with legitimate complaints from students in a fair, prompt and efficient manner.

1.2 Complaints will be addressed through a three stage process.

Stage I: Informal Resolution of Complaints

Stage II: Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage III: Review

1.3 All complaints will be dealt with without recrimination and no student will be disadvantaged on account of raising a complaint. Students may complain individually or collectively, where appropriate. Complaints will be investigated objectively. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

1.4 All complaints will be dealt with constructively and the student will be informed of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld, AMS will make an appropriate response including taking any necessary corrective action. Means of redress include an explanation of actions taken or planned and written or oral apologies.

1.5 All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that any person about whom a complaint is made shall be supplied with a copy of the complaint. A student may be asked to attend an interview with the member of staff investigating their complaint.

1.6 A record of Stage II complaints received from students and the means of resolution will be kept by the AMS and reported annually to the Senior Management Team as part of the AMS's monitoring and quality assurance processes. No information that will identify any individual will be available within the report.

1.7 A student may be accompanied by another student or a representative, in any meeting that takes place in connection with a complaint he/she has lodged. However, under no circumstances may the student be represented by an external organisation other than a student union. Under no circumstances shall the costs be re-claimable save for expenses in exceptional cases.

1.8 For students under the age of 18 additional support may be provided.

1.9 Where a complaint made by a student is believed to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, AMS reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the student for breach of the Code of Conduct. This will be investigated as a potential breach of Section 2.2. (c) of the Code:

*Respect other members' basic rights to work and live in a safe, secure environment, free from anxiety, fear, intimidation and harassment.*

1.10 Where a complaint is upheld AMS will reimburse the student upon production of receipts for incidental expenses (eg travel and subsistence) that have been necessarily incurred by the student in the resolution of their complaint. If a complaint is not upheld the student will be informed of the reason(s) for that decision. AMS may in its discretion reimburse the student upon production of receipts for incidental expenses necessarily incurred by the student in putting forward their complaint if satisfied that the complaint was made in good faith.

1.11 For good practical reasons, complaints should be identified and investigated as soon as possible after the problem becomes known. Complaints lodged by current students **more than three months** after the event will only be considered in those circumstances where there is a demonstrable reasonable cause for the delay.

Complaints will not be considered from recent graduates or other former students any later than three months after the problem becomes known and/or if three months have expired from the point of formal notification of the conferment of the award or other reason for the expiry of enrolment.

## 2 Scope of the Complaints Procedure

2.1 This procedure is designed to deal with complaints arising from:

- i) provision of academic services described in the AMSs publications including teaching, content of courses, support for learning
- ii) incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the AMS
- iii) provision of other AMS services described in literature published by the AMS

This includes:

- Admission procedure
- Assessment
- Lecture
- Tutorial session
- Work based activity

2.2 The student complaints procedure does not cover the following:

- i) any matters relating to an HE assessment decision. See UWL Academic Regulations.
- ii) Disciplinary procedure. See AMS Disciplinary Policy
- ii) complaints about student accommodation that is not University owned and/or controlled.

## 3 Stage I: Informal resolution of complaints

3.1 Firstly, discuss your issue with the Centre Manager, Course Coordinator or lecturer; problems can usually be sorted out quickly with discussions. You may be asked to come in for a 1:1 chat to discuss your issues and possible resolutions.

3.2 The complaint should be made orally or in writing, normally within ten working days of the incident or action form which the complaint arises, or in any event as soon as possible.

3.3 Most complaints will normally be resolved informally by an appropriate member of staff.

3.4 The member of staff to whom the complaint is made will investigate or refer the complaint. A response will be made to the student orally or via email, normally within ten working days.

3.5 If you feel the grievance is so serious that you cannot continue with your work or studies until the grievance has been rectified, then seek permission from a member of the management team to leave the premises whilst your grievance is being dealt with.

3.6 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of this informal procedure, then they should follow the procedures described in the formal complaints procedure below.

## **4 Stage II: Formal complaints procedure**

4.1 A complaint under this procedure should be made to the Vice Principal, in writing, normally within twenty working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or the outcome of the informal resolution.

The following details must be provided:

- a full statement of the complaint
- brief details of the steps already taken to resolve the complaint
- reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the attempts to resolve the complaint
- what the student would like done
- what remedy the student is seeking
- a copy (not original documents) of any documentary evidence the student wishes to submit
- the student's name and the University student ID number
- full contact details for the student (including preferred method of contact eg email)
- whether the student has representation and if so whom

The complaint should be addressed to:

Mel Baxter – Vice Principal [mel.baxter@academyofmusic.ac.uk](mailto:mel.baxter@academyofmusic.ac.uk)

4.2 The Vice Principal will determine whether all the necessary information has been provided and may contact the student requesting additional details and evidence. In all cases, the Vice Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

4.3 The Vice Principal will forward the complaint to the appropriate area(s) who will investigate the complaint using the information provided by the student in their written statement of the complaint. A response, detailing the investigation, will be sent to the student in writing within twenty working days of the full complaint being acknowledged by AMS.

4.4 In instances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint within 20 working days for a legitimate reason, the Vice Principal shall email the student and inform them of:

- The name of the person investigating their complaint
- The reason for the delay
- The date by which the student will be notified of the outcome

## 5 Stage III: Review (Completion Of Procedures)

5.1 If a student has reason to believe that his/her complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, he/ she should write to the Principal within twenty working days of the date of the outcome letter, setting out his/ her reasons. On the instruction of the Principal will review the handling of the complaint in the light of the student's written statement. The Principal may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in the light of this report. The Principal will send a written reply, in the form of a Completion of Procedures letter, to the student within 20 working days of receiving the request for the review of the handling of the complaint. The Completion of Procedures letter exhausts the AMS's internal procedures (see template and info sheet). There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the AMS.

Steve Ryan – Principal [steve.ryan@academyofmusic.ac.uk](mailto:steve.ryan@academyofmusic.ac.uk)

## 6. Students on SQA courses in Scotland

6.1 Students on SQA short courses, and HND can complain directly to SQA about assessment related matters (but not assessment judgements) once they have exhausted their centre's complaints procedure as a further stage of escalation.

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/25071.html>

## 7. Students on undergraduate or post graduate courses in partnership with University of West London

7.1 May raise a formal complaint with the University of West London once the student has exhausted the procedures in place at AMS.

7.2 If the student remains dissatisfied with the written response, they have received from AMS after going through the 3 stages of the procedure, the student may refer their case to **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)** for external review. The Completion of Procedures Letter will be needed to submit to QIA. Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: **[www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)**.

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**Agreed by:** Steve Ryan, Mel Baxter