

## Student Complaints Procedure: Exeter Provision

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This procedure aims to ensure that concerns and complaints raised by students of the London Film School are addressed promptly and effectively.
- 1.2. Further, this procedure aims to ensure that complaints against the London Film School made by students are treated seriously and fairly in order to ensure students' interests are protected and the London Film School's high quality standards maintained.
- 1.3. The School endeavours to minimise complaints by involving students in formal decision making processes at all levels and by encouraging them to provide regular feedback in course committee meetings and surveys.
- 1.4. No student making a complaint under these Procedures, whether successfully or otherwise, shall be treated less favourably than would have been the case had a complaint not been made. However, if it is later discovered that a complaint was not genuine, the London Film School or the partner university may consider initiating a disciplinary procedure.
- 1.5. The Academic Registrar has overall responsibility for Student Complaint Procedures.

### 2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1. The London Film School seeks to ensure that all complaints shall be:
  - a) Treated seriously and fairly;
  - b) Resolved promptly;
  - c) Treated consistently;
  - d) Dealt with and resolved wherever possible, at the informal stage;
  - e) Dealt with without prejudice or bias.
- 2.2. It is the intention of the procedure that complaints are resolved as quickly and at as early a stage as possible.
- 2.3. Details of the complaint shall remain confidential to the parties concerned.
- 2.4. All parties concerned shall be entitled to see all evidence to be considered and to put their case.
- 2.5. Anonymous complaints or evidence will not be considered.
- 2.6. If there are allegations of a criminal offence, the University may refer the matter to the police and suspend its own proceedings until the outcome of any criminal proceedings are known.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1. This procedure is available to current students of the London Film School who are enrolled on one of the following programmes:
  - a) MA International Film Business;
  - b) PhD Film by Practice.
- 3.2. This procedure is also available to former students of the London Film School who are within one month of ceasing their registration.

- 3.3. The procedure is available for students to raise concerns about their experience at the London Film School only (e.g. an academic department, student services, supervision, or teaching by a member of LFS staff or contractor engaged by LFS).
- 3.4. Students on the MA International Film Business or PhD Film Practice who have concerns relating to the University of Exeter should refer to the University's regulations available at <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/policies/calendar/part1/otherregs/complaints/>.
- 3.5. This procedure may not be used for academic appeals which are dealt with under the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

#### 4. General Stipulations

- 4.1. Delays in raising a concern may make resolving the problem difficult or even impossible. Complaints will not normally be dealt with more than one month after the incident(s) that caused the complaint, unless there is good reason for the delay.
- 4.2. Students may ask a friend or family member to be present at any formal meetings.
- 4.3. Legal representation at panel hearings is not permitted, and communications from legal representatives shall normally not be responded to.
- 4.4. If a student brings legal proceedings against the School which may be relevant to the student's complaint, the School will normally suspend consideration of the complaint until the outcome of those proceedings is known. If the matters complained about are disposed of in those proceedings, then the School may terminate consideration of that complaint through its formal complaints procedure.
- 4.5. Students will be responsible for paying any personal costs or incidental expenses associated with the formal complaints procedure. The School will not reimburse any of them.
- 4.6. The Academic Registrar is responsible for interpreting these procedures and his/her decision shall be final except in cases where the interpretation involves a complaint against the Academic Registrar in which case interpretation of the procedures shall be the responsibility of the Director.

## 5. Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

### 5.1. Stage 1: Informal Stage

- 5.2. Before making a formal complaint, students are encouraged to raise their concerns with the person most directly responsible. This is usually the quickest and easiest way of resolving matters.
- 5.3. Students may also ask an appropriate member of staff (e.g. term tutor or Head of Department) or a member of the Students' Union to deal with the matter.
- 5.4. Where proportionate, students shall be provided with a written outcome.
- 5.5. Students who are not satisfied with the response should submit a complaint under this procedure.

### 5.6. Stage 2: Formal Stage

- 5.6.1. The formal stage is used where students are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Informal Stage or where it is not possible or suitable to resolve the matter at the Informal Stage (e.g. due to the character, complexity or seriousness of the case).
- 5.6.2. Students who wish to make a formal complaint shall:
- a) Make their complaint in writing, using the appropriate form;
  - b) State the issues about which they wish to complain and what outcomes they are seeking;
  - c) State what steps they have taken to resolve the issue before making a complaint;
  - d) Include all relevant evidence that they wish to rely upon;
  - e) Submit their complaint within one month of the act or omission complained of (complaints received after this deadline will be deemed invalid unless the complainant has demonstrated good reason for any period of delay);
  - f) Submit their complaint to the Academic Registrar via email at [academicregistrar@lfs.org.uk](mailto:academicregistrar@lfs.org.uk).
- 5.6.3. The Academic Registrar will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the student within five working days and ask the complainant to confirm that they have submitted all relevant evidence. If this is not received, the student should contact Academic Registry immediately.
- 5.6.4. The Academic Registrar shall advise, in writing and within five working days, any member(s) of staff or students involved that a complaint has been received.
- 5.6.5. The Academic Registrar shall consider the evidence, written or otherwise, and, if necessary, hold additional conversations with the complainant and any other persons they deem appropriate in order to fully investigate the complaint.
- 5.6.6. The complainant is required to participate with the investigation process in a timely and cooperative manner and comply with any reasonable requests for additional information/requests for meetings made by the Academic Registrar.
- 5.6.7. The Academic Registrar shall, within ten working days, decide whether:
- a) The complaint is justified; or
  - b) There is no reasonable justification for the complaint.

- 5.6.8. The Academic Registrar shall make their decision known in writing to the student and any other persons involved. The written report shall set out the initial findings in relation to each issue raised together with a summary of the evidence supporting each finding.
- 5.6.9. Where required, the Academic Registrar shall make recommendations as to how the complaint may be resolved. All parties are shall be invited to accept the recommendations.
- 5.6.10. If the recommendations and an appropriate timeframe are agreed, the Academic Registrar shall ensure that the recommendations are implemented in full and within the agreed timeframe.

**5.7. Stage 3: Appeals**

- 5.7.1. If a student’s formal complaint has not been resolved in a way that is satisfactory, the student should refer the complaint to the University of Exeter centrally through the Student Cases Office ([studentcases@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:studentcases@exeter.ac.uk)) within 10 working days of the final response from the London Film School.
- 5.7.2. The University aims to complete the Appeals stage (Stage 3) within 60 calendar days of receipt.
- 5.7.3. The University will obtain a copy of the full file from the London Film School and a committee may be convened to take this forward. Full details of the committee protocol; timeframe and procedures can be found on the University of Exeter website.

**5.8. Review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

- 5.8.1. Students who have exhausted the internal complaint procedures of the London Film School and the University will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter by the University.
- 5.8.2. Students who are not satisfied with the School’s final decision can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to review their case. Please note that the OIA must receive a student’s signed OIA Complaint Form in this Office within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter; otherwise they will consider their complaint to be out of time. More information about the OIA and its procedures can be found here: <http://oiahe.org.uk>

**6. Version Control**

Version Number	Changes	Author, Title	Date
1.0	Draft in consultation with the University of Exeter	Philip Range, Academic Registrar, LFS; Jodie Potter, Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships), University of Exeter	12/07/2018
1.0	Approved by Chair’s Action	Gisli Snaer, Director and Chair of Academic Board	12/07/2018