

Royal Academy of Dance
Faculty of Education

Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In compliance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance for Concerns, Complaints and Appeals, this policy accepts the definition of a complaint as being 'a specific query about an aspect of experience of the provider'. In this regard, the Faculty of Education view all complaints as positive opportunities to learn from and improve the learning experience of all students. This policy and procedure details the process by which these expressions of concern, otherwise known as complaints, are dealt with. The aim of the Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure is to:
- reach a resolution to the complaint / dispute as quickly as possible and as near as possible to the source of the complaint or dispute;
 - to record the nature and outcome of complaints;
 - to review practices and procedures in the light of this to inform improvements.
- 1.2. The Faculty of Education (FoE) undertakes to apply the Student Grievance and Complaints procedures equally, in a process that is fair, transparent and impartial, having due regard for the interests and well-being of students, staff and those who may be named or otherwise involved in the complaint or dispute. All parties concerned are expected to respect the confidentiality of the process and to seek a successful resolution of the issue at the earliest opportunity.

2. Royal Academy of Dance university-validated Awards and RAD Awards

- 2.1. The Faculty of Education of the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) delivers the following programmes of study and awards:
- 2.1.1. Royal Academy of Dance programmes validated by the University of Bath
- MA in Education (Dance Teaching) (including Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Dance Teaching), Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Dance Teaching))
 - BA (Hons) Ballet Education
 - BA (Hons) Dance Education (including Diploma of Higher Education: Dance Education, Certificate of Higher Education: Dance Education)

2.1.2. Royal Academy of Dance Awards

- Professional Dancers' Graduate Teaching Diploma
- Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Dance
- Certificate in Dance Teaching (Ballet)

3. Areas covered by Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure

- 3.1. This procedure applies to matters of concern raised by students regarding any aspect of the student learning experience and the learning opportunities provided by the Faculty of Education at the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). You may make a complaint about the nature of the learning opportunities you have received (for example, but not limited to, tuition, library provision, teaching and learning spaces, equipment).
- 3.2. The Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure does not apply to appeals specifically related to examinations and progression, for which there is a separate policy, the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*:

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/teacher-training/policy-procedures/>

or issues of equality which are dealt with as part of the *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*, a copy of which can also be found on the RAD website:

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/about-us/jobs/hr-policies/>

4. Informal and Formal Complaints Procedures

- 4.1. Complaints dealt with informally, at an early stage, have the best chance of being resolved effectively. A complaint or grievance should be raised at the earliest opportunity after the event. The Faculty of Education may choose not to accept a complaint or grievance made substantially after the time that the matter(s) complained about took place, unless a good reason for the delay can be demonstrated and/or evidenced.
- 4.2. It will normally be expected that an attempt will have been made to establish the desired outcome and to resolve the concern through informal avenues in the first place (see section 5.1, Informal Procedures below). Where Informal processes have been exhausted without achieving resolution, the matter may proceed to the Formal Complaints procedure (see section 5.3 Formal Procedures below).
- 4.3. Complaints may be made jointly by a group of students. In such cases paragraphs 1.2 regarding the fairness, transparency and impartiality of the process will also apply to joint complaints. The Informal Procedures

outlined above will also be applied to seek an early resolution, and where this is unsuccessful, the concern will be handled through the Formal Complaints procedure (see section 5.3 Formal procedures below).

4.4. Support from Student Representatives

4.4.1. Student Representatives can offer support to students who are encountering difficulties and have the opportunity to raise issues that affect a number of students at Programmes Meetings and informal meetings with the Director of Education.

4.5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4.5.1. The Royal Academy of Dance has a comprehensive policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This can be accessed from the RAD website:

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/about-us/jobs/hr-policies/>

5. The Process

5.1. Informal Procedures

5.1.1. In the first instance you should raise your concerns with an appropriate member of staff at the time, or as close to the time of the incident as possible, as they may be able to resolve the matter for you without further recourse to procedures. This may be your Module tutor, Module or Level Coordinator or Programme Manager. Complaints may also be channelled through Student Representatives.

5.1.2. Should you choose to make a complaint using the Informal Procedures, this should be made in writing using the Informal Complaints Form. Please record as concisely as possible details of the nature and circumstances giving rise to the complaint, and attach any supporting evidence. You should also indicate the desired outcome of your complaint. The completed form should be submitted to the Faculty of Education Registrar.

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/teacher-training/policy-procedures/>

5.1.3. The Director of Education will nominate a member of the senior management team to review your complaint with you. Based on the information provided on the Informal Complaints Form, they may meet with you to clarify the issue(s), investigate the matter and seek to reach an early resolution, normally within ten working days of the date of submission of your form.

- 5.1.4. A record of any discussions, together with any correspondence, will be shared with all the person or persons who raised the concern(s) and a record will be kept in the event that the complaint proceeds to the Formal Stage of the Student Grievance and Complaints Policy (see section 5.3).
- 5.1.5. Where the matter proceeds to the Formal Procedures, the information contained in the original Informal Complaints Form will form the basis of the Formal Complaint.
- 5.1.6. If the complaint involves another person, mediation can often result in a positive outcome. Mediation seeks to bring both parties together with a third party who is impartial, to consider the issues giving rise to the complaint, the concerns raised and the desired outcomes. Where agreement is reached on the necessary actions to be taken to resolve the concerns, this will be recorded, shared with all parties concerned and the complaint will be closed.
- 5.1.7. Complaints directly relating to the content or delivery of the programme are normally taken by the Student Representative to the appropriate Programmes Meeting, and in such cases the time taken between the complaint being made and a satisfactory resolution reached will be determined by the date of the next meeting and the decision of the Programmes Meeting. Complaints directly relating to the services or facilities provided by the Royal Academy of Dance should be raised at the time using the Informal Complaints Form.
- 5.1.8. The final decision in the Informal stage of the Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure relating to the provision of services or facilities provided by the Royal Academy of Dance will, if appropriate, include a clear action plan and timetable for remedying the complaint.
- 5.1.9. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the original complaint can proceed to the Formal stage of the Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure (see 5.3).
- 5.2. Confidentiality
- 5.2.1. If information is to be kept confidential, you should make this clear to the person to whom the complaint is made. However, in exceptional circumstances (for example the disclosure of a criminal offence) it may be difficult for confidentiality to be maintained. It should be understood that in some circumstances the request for confidentiality may make it difficult for the Faculty of Education to assist you with your complaint.

5.3. Formal Procedures

5.3.1. As with the Informal Complaints handling process, the person making the complaint should complete and submit the appropriate form to the Registrar, providing as much detail as possible and as soon as possible after the event to permit an effective investigation to be undertaken. It is not necessary for complaints to go through the Informal process, but it is advisable in order that a resolution be sought at the earliest possible opportunity.

5.3.2. Where resolution has not been reached through Informal Procedures, the original complaint, as recorded on the Informal complaints form, will be passed to the Director of Education who will nominate a senior member of staff who has not been involved in the cause giving rise to the complaint, or in the handling of the complaint through the informal processes. In the case of an examination appeal, you are advised to read the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*:

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/teacher-training/policy-procedures/>

5.3.3. On receipt of a formal complaint, the person nominated by the Director of Education will arrange to meet with all parties concerned to establish the grounds for the complaint and the desired outcome. That person will also review any documented evidence submitted in support of the complaint, and will meet with you to explain the next steps. This might include advising you that the matter should be considered under a different procedure.

6. Grievance Panel Hearing

6.1. The purpose of a Grievance Panel Hearing is to give all parties concerned in the complaint the opportunity to have a panel hear their case. The Grievance Panel Hearing will be arranged in accordance with the Procedures for Hearings by Panel. The Director of Education or designate will normally chair the hearing. A servicing officer who has not been involved in any informal procedures or in the circumstances giving rise to the complaint will be appointed to record the hearing. The panel will normally consist of two other members, one of whom should be able to offer specific advice relevant to the nature of the complaint and another who has had no previous involvement in the issue to be heard. The Registrar will be available to provide information and advice at any stage.

6.2. The Chair of the meeting may request written witness statements or documents such as medical certificate to be produced in advance of a

hearing. They may also request written statements from anyone who witnessed the matter giving rise to the complaint.

- 6.3. You will be invited to attend the meeting to give an account of the issues giving rise to the complaint and to indicate your desired outcome. You will be given a full opportunity to describe the nature of your complaint, and will be able to respond to any evidence presented once it has been heard.
- 6.4. Where an acceptable way forward is reached, the Chair of the panel will confirm this in writing to all those involved within five working days of the meeting, notifying the Director of Education of the outcome and any recommendations.
- 6.5. Where appropriate, the Director of Education will take any further action required to prevent a recurrence. Where this is not possible, the Director of Education will provide a full explanation. Where the Director of Education is of the view that the matter should be considered under other Faculty of Education procedures, such as the Academic Misconduct and other Disciplinary Offences, due consideration will be given to confidentiality in the recording and reporting of the outcome to protect all parties concerned.
- 6.6. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you are entitled to request a review of the decision of the Panel (see Section 7).
- 6.7. A record of all grievances and complaints will be kept by complaint reference number.
- 6.8. If you wish to pursue an academic appeal, you should contact the Registrar to request advice on the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

7. Review

- 7.1. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you can request a review of the decision reached by the panel at the hearing. The review procedure to follow will depend on whether you are enrolled on a university-validated programme of study or a RAD award.
- 7.2. University-validated programmes of study
 - 7.2.1. Reviews of decisions for students enrolled on university-validated programmes are undertaken by the University of Bath. Strict timescales apply and should you choose to request a review of the decision of the panel, you are advised to act as quickly as possible in accordance with the link to the Complaints procedures given below. The Faculty of Education Registrar may also be able to advise you how to proceed.

7.2.2. You will find guidance on the University's Student Complaint Procedure on the University's website:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/student-complaints-form/>

Requests for a review of the decision reached by the Faculty of Education panel will be handled under Stage 3 of the University's Complaints procedure.

7.2.3. A request for review must be submitted to the University of Bath within **five** working days of notification of the outcome of your complaint.

7.2.4. As the awarding body, the University of Bath retain the right to hear the complaint under its own procedures, or it may choose to review how your complaint was handled by the Faculty of Education, and if the decision reached was justified. In line with guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, the University will issue you with a Completion of Procedures letter (see paragraph 7.2.5. below).

7.2.5. A student who remains dissatisfied after receiving a Stage 3 outcome from the University of Bath has the right to request an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Guidance can be found on the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's website:

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

7.3. RAD programmes of study

7.3.1. Students enrolled on RAD programmes of study (detailed in section 2.1.2 above) may seek a review of the decision reached by the Faculty of Education panel, undertaken by the Director of Education or a senior member of Faculty of Education staff nominated by the Director of Education.

7.3.2. A request for review must be submitted to the Director of Education within five working days of notification of the complaint outcome using the Faculty of Education's Review of Grievance Outcome form (<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/teacher-training/policy-procedures/>). You can request a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage and/or whether the outcome was reasonable.

7.3.3. If the request for review includes evidence that was not part of the initial complaint, a valid explanation must be given as to why the evidence was not presented at the time.

7.3.4. The complainant will normally be notified in writing of the outcome of the review within 15 working days from the date the request for review was lodged with the Director of Education.

7.3.5. The Director of Education or nominated senior member of Faculty of Education staff will issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the complainant once the review has been completed.

7.4. A record of all reviews will be kept by review reference number.

8. Policy Implementation

8.1. The *Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure* is referenced in Learning and Teaching Handbook and is available on the RAD website: <https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/teacher-training/policy-procedures/>.

8.2. Students will be made aware on induction to a programme of study of the Faculty of Education policy on complaints and grievances and will be directed to consult the Learning and Teaching Handbook.

8.3. Staff will be made aware on induction of the Faculty of Education policy on complaints and grievances and will be directed to consult the handbook.

8.4. Staff will be fully conversant with the policy and be competent in its operation.

9. Policy Monitoring and Review


9.1. The *Student Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure* will be reviewed annually by the Education Sub-committee of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Dance or when external legislation necessitates a review of Faculty of Education practice.

9.2. The outcome of all complaints and grievances will be considered at the end of each semester and formally reported within Annual Programme Reviews. The data produced may also be formally considered at programme level and through the committee structure, where patterns have been identified.

9.3. With respect to university-validated programmes, complaints will be formally reported through the Annual Monitoring Reports to the University of Bath and monitored by the twice-yearly Programme and Partner

Management Committee meetings to ensure that information derived from complaints is used effectively to improve the student learning experience.

- 9.4. Anonymised records of complaints and grievances together with the outcomes will be used to determine trends and these trends reported to the Royal Academy of Dance Education Sub-committee.

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