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1 Policy

- 1.1. MetFilm School (the School) seeks to maintain the highest standards in its provision of courses, services and facilities to students. It is important that students receive a productive and rigorous learning experience, and the School endeavours to create an environment of trust, respect and the unprejudiced exchange of feedback in interactions with staff and students in the academic community.
- 1.2. The School recognises that on occasion students may have legitimate worries about their programme, availability or quality of facilities or other matters within the School. This policy provides guidance on the appropriate avenues for raising these concerns in a transparent and fair manner.
- 1.3. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the following MetFilm School policies and guidance documents:
 - MetFilm School [Complaints from Members of the General Public Policy](#)
 - MetFilm School [Student Handbook](#)
 - [MetFilm School Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
 - [Student Disciplinary Policy](#)
 - University of West London [Academic Regulations](#)
 - University of West London Academic [Appeal Regulations](#)

2 Definitions

- 2.1. It is important to draw a distinction between concerns, complaints and appeals:
 - **Concerns** are areas or issues which an individual student or groups of students may feel unhappy about and may wish to provide feedback on.
 - **Complaints** are an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the provision of their programme or related academic service or facility, or any other service provided by the School.
 - **Academic Appeals** are a request for a review of a decision of an academic body around a mark, outcome or decision. Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of evidence or procedure, but not on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement.
 - **Academic Judgement** is not any judgement made by an academic. It is defined (in line with the OIAHE's glossary) as a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. This could include, for example, but is not limited to a judgment about marks awarded, degree classification, research methodology.

3 Purpose & Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to and is for the benefit of all registered students on accredited and non-accredited programmes at MetFilm School. Students that

have recently completed a programme of study at MetFilm School may also use this policy, subject to the time limits set out in section 6.6.

- 3.2. MetFilm School Accredited, ScreenSpace and non-accredited courses each have their own complaints procedure as set out within this policy. Generally each process follows 3 stages:

Stage 1: Early Resolution

The initial stage in the complaints procedure allows for straightforward concerns or complaints to be resolved quickly and effectively at the point at which the issue occurred.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution

The second stage of the procedure may be used where a student is not satisfied with attempts to informally resolve their complaint. Alternatively this stage can be used if the complaint is so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome

If a student is not satisfied with a Stage 2 outcome then, if meeting the criteria below, the student may apply for a review of the Stage 2 process to include previously unavailable evidence or submit that incorrect processes were followed and that the Stage 2 decision was unreasonable.

- 3.3. This policy is not for invocation by past or current staff, other bodies or people working with or for the School (including partners and external examiners). Where appropriate, individuals must use the policies or regulations relating to employment, partnerships, external examining or public interest disclosures as is relevant.
- 3.4. There is a separate '[Complaints from Members of the General Public Policy](#)' for use by individuals not working or studying at MetFilm School but who wish to raise a concern in relation to services provided by the School or report incidents relating to our students or staff. See the full policy for details.

4 Principles

- 4.1. All concerns, complaints and appeals 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 and without bias.
- 4.2. Where there is a common complaint, it may be presented as a collective complaint. In this instance a spokesperson should be identified who will act on behalf of the group. If the complaint reaches a formal stage, each member must sign the statement of complaint for it to be valid as a collective complaint.

- 4.3. The School will not normally consider complaints made on behalf of students by third parties including parents, guardians or friends of registered students. This policy encourages students to put their name to any complaints they make formally. However, the School will consider anonymous complaints if there is a compelling case – supported by evidence – for the matter to be investigated. Students raising a concern anonymously should note that doing so may impede the investigation and communication of the outcome in a timely fashion. Anonymous complaints can be made by completing the anonymous [incident reporting form](#).
- 4.4. A student may be accompanied by another student or a representative from the University of West London (UWL) Students' union in any meeting that takes place in connection with a complaint they have lodged. Students are not normally permitted to have representatives from the legal profession employed to work on their behalf at such meetings. The School does not imitate the legal justice system, therefore the School believes that legal representation is unnecessary for both students and the School.
- 4.5. Students under the age of 18 or identified as an At Risk Adult¹ may receive additional support in raising a concern, complaint or appeal.
- 4.6. Where a complaint made by a student is believed to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, the School reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the student for breach of the Student Charter and Code of Conduct as set out in the [MetFilm School Student Handbook](#)
- 4.7. In the event that there are allegations of a criminal offence, the School may refer the matter to the police. This would result in the suspension of School proceedings until the outcome of any criminal proceedings are known.
- 4.8. All concerns, complaints and appeals will be dealt with in confidence. Details of complaints will remain confidential to all parties concerned. Students that are party to a complaint are entitled to view all evidence related to the complaint to be considered.
- 4.9. If disclosure is necessary to progress a complaint, the student will be notified in advance.

5 Raising a Concern

- 5.1. The School encourages all students to discuss any concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity to avoid delays and unnecessary escalation of matters. Most issues can normally be resolved quickly at the lowest level, without going through a formal complaints procedure.

¹ As defined in the [The Care Act 2014](#).

- 5.2. A concern can be raised by a variety of means including email, letter, phone call and in person. The School welcomes all feedback and will endeavour to address concerns as quickly as possible at local level.
- 5.3. Key points of contact if there is a concern are:
- Programme Leader;
 - The relevant Course Manager/Coordinator who will direct you to the relevant documentation, academic staff or information source;
 - Reception Staff who will direct you to the appropriate department;
 - Student Services & Administration staff who will direct you to the relevant department or regulations, policies and documentation.

6 Complaints

6.1 What is a complaint?

- 6.1.1. A complaint under this policy may relate to:
- the quality and standard of service provided by the School, including teaching and learning provision;
 - failure to provide a service;
 - unsuitable facilities or learning resources;
 - inappropriate behaviour or treatment by a staff member, student or individual associated with the School;
 - failure of the School to follow an appropriate administrative process.
- 6.1.2. Although the above list is not exhaustive, not every concern raised with the School can be categorised as a complaint. The following examples **are not** complaints and would not be eligible for consideration under this policy:
- A routine, first-time request for a service;
 - An appeal against an academic decision (please see Appeals below)
 - Public interest disclosure by students or staff such as a Subject Access Request;
 - Matters that are the subject of criminal investigation or legal proceedings until those proceedings end;
 - Complaints about matters already under consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (“OIA”), a court or tribunal.

6.2 MetFilm School Accredited Programme Complaints

Stage 1: Early Resolution

- 6.2.1. Early resolution is the opportunity to address matters with appropriate MetFilm School staff without needing to complete and submit a [Student Complaint Form](#).

- 6.2.2. Most problems and issues are straightforward and can be resolved very quickly (usually within 10 working days). Issues should be raised at the time they arise and be resolved with the member of staff most directly involved with the concern raised.
- 6.2.3. Students can identify the appropriate person to submit their complaint to by liaising with the Key Contacts outlined in section 5 of this policy.
- 6.2.4. Sometimes the resolution sought might not be feasible or appropriate, or the School may not be able to make changes straight away. Where a student feels their concern has not been resolved, they may wish to move to Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution

- 6.2.5. The second stage of the procedure may be used where a student is not satisfied with informal attempts to resolve their complaint. This stage may also be used if the complaint is so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate.
- 6.2.6. The School will not normally hear a complaint made more than 20 working days after the event or circumstances that are its cause. If the concern relates to a series of events, the student should normally inform the School within 20 working days of the most recent event.
- 6.2.7. Complaints submitted after the timing set out above (6.2.6.) will only be accepted where it would be deemed unreasonable and unavoidable, in the circumstances, for the student to have adhered to this time scale.
- 6.2.8. Complaints will only be considered up to 90 days after the end of a student's programme of study unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Complaints outside this timeframe are at the School's absolute discretion.
- 6.2.9. Students must complete the MetFilm School Complaint Form which is [available online](#) or from any of the Key Contacts names in Section 5. This form and any supporting evidence should be sent via email to complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk
- 6.2.10. The complainant will receive acknowledgment of their complaint within 5 working days of receipt by the School.
- 6.2.11. The complaints mailbox is monitored by a quality and governance staff team who on receipt of a complaint will clarify the subject of the complaint, the desired outcome and align the complaint to the correct procedure; for example, the disciplinary procedure or the appeals procedure.
- 6.2.12. Complaints made about the Head of Quality and Governance will be escalated for handling to the CEO who will refer them to a suitably senior investigator (the Dean, or other suitably senior nominee).

- 6.2.13. Within 10 working days of receipt of the Complaint Form, the investigator appointed to investigate the case will contact the student to discuss in further detail the issues raised. The concerns will be investigated as quickly as possible while recognising the need for a thorough investigation.
- 6.2.14. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 25 working days of receiving the full complaint from the student. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.2.15. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.2.16. If a student is not satisfied with a Stage 2 outcome, the student may apply for a review of the Stage 2 outcome under one (or more) of the following grounds:
- The student has new supporting evidence that the student was reasonably unable to submit before the decision at Stage 2 was reached;
 - The student can evidence that the complaint was not handled in line with the policy; or
 - the Stage 2 decision was unreasonable and not in line with the facts of the case, in which case the detailed reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the Stage II investigation and the outcome should be provided.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome

- 6.2.17. If a student believes that their review request meets the grounds above, the student may write to the Complaints team (complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk) within 15 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their case.
- 6.2.18. The complaint will be referred to the MetFilm School Director or nominee, who will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The MetFilm School Director or nominee may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in light of this report. A written reply will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.
- 6.2.19. If the complaint relates to the MetFilm School Director, the review request will be referred to the CEO or nominee for consideration. The CEO or nominee will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The CEO or nominee may confirm or rescind the earlier decision in light of the report. As above, a written reply will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.
- 6.2.20. A Completion of Procedures letter will normally be issued to the student, which exhausts the School's internal procedures. There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the School. Where the complaint has not been upheld, the School will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter

automatically with the review outcome. Where the complaint has been upheld and the School has offered some resolution to the student, the student may request a Completion of Procedures letter if they do not wish to accept the resolution offered.

Referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

6.2.21. If the student remains dissatisfied with the written response they have received at Stage 3, the student may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for external review. Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: www.oiahe.org.uk

6.3 ScreenSpace Programme Complaints

6.3.1. Screenspace programmes are programmes sub-contracted by the University of West London to MetFilm School for their delivery.

6.3.2. Students registered on a ScreenSpace programme should follow the procedure set out below:

Stage 1: Early Resolution

6.3.3. Early resolution is the opportunity to address matters with appropriate MetFilm School / ScreenSpace staff without needing to complete and submit a Student Complaint Form.

6.3.4. Most problems and issues are straightforward and can be resolved very quickly (usually within 10 working days). Issues should be raised at the time they arise and be resolved with the member of staff most directly involved with the concern raised.

6.3.5. ScreenSpace students can identify the appropriate person to submit their complaint to by liaising with the Key Contacts outlined in section 5 of this policy.

6.3.6. Sometimes the resolution sought might not be feasible or appropriate, or the School may not be able to make changes straight away. Where a student feels their concern has not been resolved, they may wish to move to Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution

6.3.7. The second stage of the procedure may be used where a student is not satisfied with informal attempts to resolve their complaint. This stage may also be used if the complaint is so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate.

- 6.3.8. The School will not normally hear a complaint made more than 20 working days after the event or circumstances that are its cause. If the concern relates to a series of events, the student should normally inform the School within 20 working days of the most recent event.
- 6.3.9. Complaints submitted after the timing set about above (6.3.8.) will only be accepted where it would be deemed unreasonable and unavoidable, in the circumstances, for the student to have adhered to this time scale.
- 6.3.10. Complaints will only be considered up to 90 days after the end of a student's programme of study unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Complaints outside this timeframe are at the School's absolute discretion.
- 6.3.11. Students must complete the MetFilm School Complaint Form [available online](#). This form and any supporting evidence can also be sent via email to complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk
- 6.3.12. The complainant will receive acknowledgment of their complaint within 5 working days of receipt by the School.
- 6.3.13. The complaints mailbox is monitored by a quality and governance staff team who on receipt of a complaint will clarify the subject of the complaint, the desired outcome and align the complaint to the correct procedure; for example, the disciplinary procedure or the appeals procedure.
- 6.3.14. Complaints made about the Head of Quality and Governance will be escalated for handling to the CEO who will refer them to a suitably senior investigator (the Dean, or other suitably senior nominee).
- 6.3.15. Within 10 working days of receipt of the Complaint Form, the investigator appointed to investigate the case will contact the student to discuss in further detail the issues raised. The concerns will be investigated as quickly as possible while recognising the need for a thorough investigation.
- 6.3.16. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 25 working days of receiving the Complaint Form. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.3.17. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.3.18. If a student is not satisfied with a Stage 2 outcome then, if meeting the criteria below, the student may apply for a review of the Stage 2 process to include previously unavailable evidence or submit that incorrect processes were followed and that the Stage 2 decision was unreasonable. This review may be undertaken by the University of West London.
- 6.3.19. A review of the Stage 2 outcome can be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. The student has new supporting evidence that the student was reasonably unable to submit before the decision at Stage 2 was reached;
- b. The student can evidence that the complaint was not handled in line with the policy; or
- c. the Stage 2 decision was unreasonable and not in line with the facts of the case -, in which case the detailed reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the Stage II investigation and the outcome should be provided.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome (University of West London)

6.3.20. If a student has reason to believe that their complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, the student may write to the University Secretary (university.secretary@uwl.ac.uk) within 15 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their reasons.

6.3.21. As per its Student Complaints Procedure², the University of West London will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The University may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in light of this report. A written reply will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.

6.3.22. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued to the student, which exhausts the University's internal procedures. There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the University.

Referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

6.3.23. If the student remains dissatisfied with the written response they have received, the student may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for external review. Further information on the procedure can be found on the OIA's website: www.oiahe.org.uk Guidance can also be sought from the University of West London Students' Union.

6.4 MetFilm School Non-Accredited Course Complaints

Stage 1: Early Resolution

6.4.1. Early resolution is the opportunity to address matters with appropriate MetFilm School staff without needing to complete and submit a Student Complaint Form.

6.4.2. Most problems and issues are straightforward and can be resolved very quickly (usually within 10 working days). Issues should be raised at the time they arise and be resolved with the member of staff most directly involved with the concern raised.

² [University of West London Student Complaints Procedure](#)

- 6.4.3. Students can identify the appropriate person to submit their complaint to by liaising with the Key Contacts outlined in section 5 of this policy.
- 6.4.4. Sometimes the resolution sought might not be feasible or appropriate, or the School may not be able to make changes straight away. Where a student feels their concern has not been resolved, they may wish to move to Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation and Resolution

- 6.4.5. The second stage of the procedure may be used where a student is not satisfied with informal attempts to resolve their complaint. This stage may also be used if the complaint is so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate.
- 6.4.6. The School will not normally hear a complaint made more than 20 working days after the event or circumstances that are its cause. If the concern relates to a series of events, the student should normally inform the School within 20 working days of the most recent event.
- 6.4.7. Complaints submitted after the timing set about above (6.4.6.) will only be accepted where it would be deemed unreasonable and unavoidable, in the circumstances, for the student to have adhered to this time scale.
- 6.4.8. Complaints will only be considered up to 90 days after the end of a student's programme of study unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Complaints outside this timeframe are at the School's absolute discretion.
- 6.4.9. Students must complete the MetFilm School Complaint Form [available online](#). This form and any supporting evidence should be sent via email to complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk
- 6.4.10. The complainant will receive acknowledgment of their complaint within 5 working days of receipt by the School.
- 6.4.11. The complaints mailbox is monitored by a quality and governance staff team who on receipt of a complaint will clarify the subject of the complaint, the desired outcome and align the complaint to the correct procedure; for example, the disciplinary procedure or the appeals procedure.
- 6.4.12. Complaints made about the Head of Quality and Governance will be escalated for handling to the CEO who will refer them to a suitably senior investigator (the Dean, or other suitably senior nominee).
- 6.4.13. Within 10 working days of receipt of the Complaint Form, the investigator appointed to investigate case will contact the student to discuss in further detail the issues raised. The concerns will be investigated as quickly as possible while recognising the need for a thorough investigation.

- 6.4.14. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 25 working days of receiving the Complaint Form. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.4.15. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.4.16. If a student is not satisfied with a Stage 2 outcome the student may apply for a review of the Stage 2 outcome under one (or more) of the following grounds:
- The student has new supporting evidence that the student was reasonably unable to submit before the decision at Stage 2 was reached;
 - The student can evidence that the complaint was not handled in line with the policy; or
 - the Stage 2 decision was unreasonable and not in line with the facts of the case -, in which case the detailed reasons for the student's dissatisfaction with the Stage II investigation and the outcome should be provided.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome

- 6.4.17. If a student believes that their review request meets the grounds above, the student may write to the Complaints team (complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk) within 15 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their case.
- 6.4.18. The complaint will be referred to the MetFilm School Director, who will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The MetFilm School Director may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in light of this report. A written reply will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.
- 6.4.19 If the complaint relates to the MetFilm School Director, the review request will be referred to the CEO or nominee for consideration. The CEO or nominee will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The CEO or nominee may confirm or rescind the earlier decision in light of the report.. As above, a written reply will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.
- 6.4. 20. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued to the student, which exhausts the School's internal procedures. There will be no further opportunity to pursue the complaint within the School. Where the complaint has not been upheld, the School will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically with the review outcome. Where the complaint has been upheld and the School has offered some resolution to the student, the student may request a Completion of Procedures letter if they do not wish to accept the resolution offered.

7 Academic Appeals (University of West London Accredited Courses Only)

- 7.1. As noted at section 2.1. an appeal is the request for a review of a decision of an academic body around a mark, outcome or decision. Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of evidence or procedure, but not on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement.
- 7.2. MetFilm School and ScreenSpace accredited programmes are validated by the University of West London and as such are subject to the University's Appeal Regulations (the Appeal Regulations)³. Appeals are only allowable under a limited number of grounds and will be automatically rejected if they do not meet these grounds. This includes appeals against matters of academic judgement (see 'Definitions' in section 2.1). Full details of the grounds (and circumstances under which appeals are not allowable) can be found in the [Appeals Regulations on the University of West London website](#).

Submitting an Appeal

- 7.3. Students wishing to submit an appeal as set about above, should contact the Student Services & Administration Team or their Programme Leader in the first instance.
- 7.4. Students will be then advised on the University of West London process and documentation required for submitting such an appeal.
- 7.5. Students wishing to discuss an indicative mark should contact their Programme Leader or other relevant member of the programme team in the first instance.
- 7.6. Please note that appeals against an academic body decision around a mark, outcome or decision must be received within 10 working days of the formal notification of the Board or Panel decision being appealed against. This shall normally be the date given on the decision letter, or the official publication of results date. The University Secretary may exercise discretion to consider a late appeal where a student demonstrates good reason for the delay.

8 Appeals Against Disciplinary Panel Outcomes

- 8.1 Appeals against Disciplinary Panel Outcomes will be heard in accordance with the appeals section of the [MetFilm School Student Disciplinary Policy](#).

9 Legal & Regulatory Context

- 9.1. This policy has been informed by the OIA Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Appeals and the OIA Good Practice Framework for Delivering Learning Opportunities with others, as well as the OfS conditions of

³ [University of West London Appeal Regulations](#)

registration, and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKQC) advice and guidance section on Concerns, Complaints, Appeals.