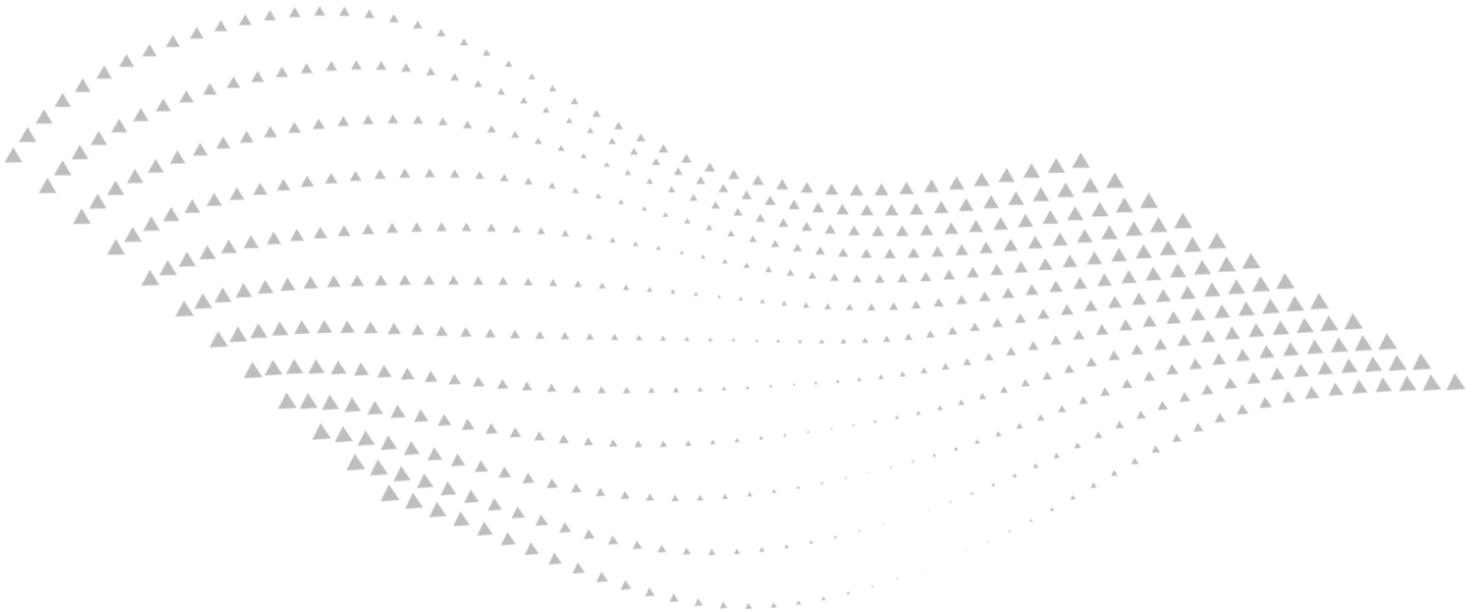




Student Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Procedure



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PART A - COMPLAINTS

1 Introduction

Your views are important to us. If you have a concern about an aspect of your student experience at MetFilm School, you can let us know. Submitting a complaint is one option but other options are available - we encourage you to consider all options.

You could try:

- Giving feedback – for example to relevant staff at the university, via Student Representation Forums (SRF) or university surveys.
- Speaking to a member of staff on site (for example, the student wellbeing team or academic administration team).
- Raising your concern informally with the team involved.

2 Making a complaint

2.1 What can be considered as a complaint?

Our student complaints procedure may be able to address your concerns.

It covers the following areas:

- The delivery of teaching and supervision.
- A non-academic University service, such as a front desk.
- Information in a handbook or advertising or promotional material.
- Facilities, such as buildings on campus.
- The conduct of a member of MetFilm School staff.

Important: You can only use this procedure for something that happened to you as a current student.

If your concern relates to the outcome of an assessment, or the outcome of a disciplinary or other procedure (including Fitness to Study), then this would be classed as an appeal. Your complaint may be rejected, and we may ask you to resubmit your complaint as an appeal if it falls within this category – details on the appeals procedure can be found [here](#).

2.2 Eligibility

You can follow the student complaints procedure if you're a current registered student studying at MetFilm School. You can also use it if you're a recent graduate, or have recently withdrawn, provided you meet the time limits outlined in [section 2.4](#).

Third parties (including Parents) cannot directly raise a complaint on behalf of a student - however students may nominate a third party to correspond with the University once a complaint has been raised. This option will be available on the [complaints form](#). In all cases, you're expected to raise your complaint within our time limits.

2.3 What you can't complain about

We will not pursue complaints:

- Regarding the behaviour of another student - this is covered under our [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).
- Relating to the application or Admissions process - these are covered under 'Applicant appeals and complaints' in the MetFilm School Admissions Policy

2.4 Time limits

The time limits for each element of the procedure are provided here for reference – please refer back to these when submitting your complaint.

Section of procedure	Type	Complaint to be raised	We seek to resolve within
4.1	Stage 1 - Informal (Early Resolution) complaints.	As soon as possible, or within 28 days of the incident.	28 days.
4.2	Stage 2 – Formal (Investigation) complaints.	Within 90 days of the informal resolution, or the date of the incident if not raised informally.	28 days.
4.3	Stage 3 – Review.	Within 21 days of your formal (stage 2) outcome.	21 days.
5	Independent Review by the OIA	Within one year of receiving your completion of procedures letter.	N/A

We may exceptionally consider complaints outside of our time limits, at the discretion of the University. If you submit a complaint outside of our time limits, you must explain why it is late, preferably with evidence, and if we don't consider it exceptional, we will issue you with a letter explaining that you're out of time. This is called a Completion of Procedures letter. You can use this to contact the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) (see section 4).

We may sometimes take longer to look into your complaint, which means we can't get back to you within the response times indicated above. If this happens, we'll send you an email letting you know.

3 Principles of the Complaints Procedure

3.1 As a general principle, MetFilm School expects that Complaints will be dealt with informally in the first instance. Many Complaints can be dealt with quickly and effectively in this manner without the need to follow formal procedures, and the Complaints Procedure has been designed with this in mind.

3.2 MetFilm School expects that you will not engage in frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints. This could include:

- complaints which are harassing, repetitive or pursued in an unreasonable manner.
- insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes.
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- demands for redress which lack any purpose or value.

- 3.3 In such cases, MetFilm School reserves the right to terminate consideration of the complaint. You will be given an explanation, in writing, of why your complaint has been terminated and details of any further right to complain. Furthermore, where a complaint is found to have been brought with frivolous, vexatious or malicious intent, this may itself prove grounds for disciplinary action against you under the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).
- 3.4 No student will be disadvantaged by having raised a Complaint.
- 3.5 Your Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in the handling of Complaints, except where disclosure is necessary to progress the Complaint. It is MetFilm School's expectation that the confidentiality of any documentation generated by a Complaint will be respected by all parties.
- 3.6 If you wish for the School to communicate with a representative throughout the process, you must provide written permission to do so – third parties (even parents) cannot raise a complaint on your behalf without this permission, which can be given via the [complaint form](#).
- 3.7 The Complaints Procedure is an internal process, and that MetFilm School will not normally communicate or meet with legal representatives as part of proceedings.
- 3.8 All individuals interacting with this procedure are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner that reflects dignity and respect.

4 Making a complaint

4.1 How to submit your complaint

If you have a concern, the first thing to do is tell us. Our complaints process comprises three stages:

- Level 1 – informal (early resolution).
- Level 2 – formal (investigation).
- Level 3 – review.

We aim to resolve all complaints as soon as possible, typically at the informal stage. The level of complaint does not reflect the severity of a complaint (e.g., we may still expect you to aim to resolve even major complaints informally in the first instance).

4.2 [Level 1 – Informal \(Early resolution\)](#)

To submit your initial complaint, get in touch with the relevant department or team. For example, if the complaint is about your course, contact your Course Leader or Head of School in the first instance. If you are unsure, please speak to a member of staff on campus, or contact met-complaints@metfilm.ac.uk for assistance.

You can raise your complaint verbally, or via email to the team or person you would like to complain about. When raising your complaint, state clearly what you are dissatisfied with, and how you would like your complaint to be resolved.

A Level 1 (early resolution) outcome can be verbal or written. You can request your preference.

We strongly urge you to try and resolve your concerns informally where possible. However, if for any reason you wish to engage with the alleged offending party or you do not believe this be appropriate given the nature of the complaint, you can raise your complaint at Level 2 instead.

4.3 Level 2 – Formal (Investigation)

If you have received a response to your early resolution complaint, and the outcome hasn't addressed your concerns, you can ask for it to be investigated further. This is known as a Level 2 (formal) complaint.

You should submit your formal complaint **within 90 days** of receiving your early resolution (or informal) outcome or from the date of the incident if your Complaint is not lodged informally.

If you do not submit a complaint within the above timescale, then you will need to provide good reason (for example, a health reason) for the delay on your form, otherwise we may reject your complaint.

Stages

- 1) You should submit your [complaint form](#) to met-complaints@metfilm.ac.uk along with any supporting evidence and documentation.
- 2) MetFilm School receives your complaint. We will:
 - Send an auto-reply email to your form submission (so you'll know we received your form).
 - Send an email within 5 working days confirming whether we're investigating your complaint at Level 2 (We may contact you after you initially submit your complaint, if we need more details to fully understand your concerns).
- 3) MetFilm School will appoint an Investigating Officer to look into your complaint.
 - This will be someone who has had no involvement with the complaint prior to formal submission.
 - You may be contacted by the Investigating Officer for more information during this process.
- 4) MetFilm School will write you a letter on behalf of the Investigating Officer to conclude your Level 2 complaint, taking into account the Investigating Officer's findings, within 28 days of submission. There will be 3 possible outcomes:
 - i. Your complaint is **upheld**: We find this complaint in your favour, meaning we overrule the original complaint outcome, and provide a solution.
 - ii. Your complaint is **partially upheld**: This can sometimes happen if there is not enough evidence to support your complaint, or if we agree but are not able to provide the solution you seek.
 - iii. Your complaint is **not upheld**: We do not uphold your complaint – this will normally mean that we agree with the original outcome, and do not find the complaint to be in your favour.

4.4 Level 3 – Review

If you have received an investigation response, and you continue to have concerns, you can ask for a review. A review **is not a reinvestigation** but considers complaints on three grounds. These are:

1. There were circumstances, or *new evidence has come to light*, which affects the student's complaint that could not reasonably have been made known to the investigators at the time the complaint was originally considered.
2. There was a *procedural error* in the complaints process which could have produced a different outcome would had the error not occurred.
3. There was *evidence of bias* in the complaints process which could have produced a different outcome would had the bias not occurred.

You should not request a review simply because you do not like the outcome of your complaint - but if you consider any of the above grounds to be relevant to your complaint, you can request a review within 21 days of resolution of your formal complaint.

4.4.1 Level 3 Review

Requests for review must be submitted on the [Internal Review Request form](#). Level 3 reviews will be referred to the Director of MetFilm School for investigation. Where the Director is unavailable or has been involved in an earlier stage of your complaint, we will pass the review over to a suitably senior nominee.

Before we conduct a review, we will:

1. send an autoreply email to your review submission.
2. contact you about your review request, usually within five working days, and may ask for more details.
3. confirm whether we're reviewing your complaint within five working days of submission. If it doesn't meet the grounds for review, or it's late without good reason, we'll normally send you a completion of procedures letter at this stage.
4. You will be notified of the outcome of your review, and the reason for the decision, normally within 28 days of the date your request was accepted.

This will be written notification, via what is known as a Completion of Procedures letter. This confirms that your complaint has been through all of MetFilm School's complaint procedure stages.

4.4.2 Level 3 – Review for University of West London subcontracted provision

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.

As per its Student Complaints Procedure¹, 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.

You will be provided with written notification, via what is known as a Completion of Procedures letter. This confirms that your complaint has been through all of the relevant complaint procedure stages.

4.4.3 Level 3 – Review for BIMM University subcontracted provision

¹ [University of West London Student Complaints Procedure](#)

Requests for review must be submitted on the [Internal Review Request form](#) to cap@bimm.co.uk. Level 3 reviews will be passed to the Deputy Provost for investigation. Where the Deputy Provost is unavailable or has been involved in an earlier stage of your complaint, we will pass the review over to a senior member of the Provost's Office.

Before we conduct a review, the Academic Services team will:

5. send an autoreply email to your review submission.
6. contact you about your review request, usually within five working days, and may ask for more details.
7. confirm whether we're reviewing your complaint within five working days of submission. If it doesn't meet the grounds for review, or it's late without good reason, we'll normally send you a completion of procedures letter at this stage.
8. You will be notified of the outcome of your review, and the reason for the decision, normally within 28 days of the date your request was accepted.

This will be written notification, via what is known as a Completion of Procedures letter. This confirms that your complaint has been through all of the relevant complaint procedure stages.

5 Independent Review

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of university student complaints and appeals. If you have exhausted our complaints process, and have received a Completion of Procedures letter, you may wish to contact the OIA – they have their own rules and requirements for investigating student complaints which can be found on their [website](#).

To request a review by the OIA, you will need to contact them within 12 months of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter.

PART B - APPEALS

1 Academic Appeals

Academic Appeals are considered by our awarding bodies:

University of West London (UWL):

If you are a student on a course awarded by UWL, you can submit an appeal via their procedure. This can be found here: <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-regulations/appeal-regulations>

BIMM University:

If you are a student on a course awarded by BIMM University, you should follow the academic appeals process [outlined here](#).

You should seek feedback whenever possible and to try to resolve the matter you are concerned about informally before submitting a formal appeal. You could seek further information, clarification or explanation. An informal approach could be made to a lecturer, course leader, academic administrator or the Student Wellbeing team. You should do this as soon as possible to ensure that you can meet the deadline for applying for a formal appeal, if required. Should this not resolve the matter, you may submit a formal academic appeal. You can seek guidance for your Course Leader, Head of School or by contacting met-complaints@metfilm.ac.uk in the first instance.

All academic appeals have the right to an internal review (by the awarding body) and an external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Full details are outlined in the relevant appeals procedure.

2 Procedural Appeals

2.1 You have the right to appeal against the decision of a number of other procedures as outlined in the table below:

Procedure	Deadline for Appeal	Possible Grounds
Fitness to Study Procedure	Within 21 days of receiving the outcome of a Fitness to Study Panel.	<p>A) New evidence has become available that could not be presented at the time of the investigation or hearing which could have materially affected the decision, and there is good reason why this new evidence could not have been presented previously.</p> <p>B) There is evidence of procedural irregularity, including administrative doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such an irregularity; those who determined the outcome were not aware when they made their decision, and which could not reasonably have been presented to them.</p> <p>C) There is evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of those making the decision.</p>
Student Engagement Policy	Within 14 days of being withdrawn as a result of non-engagement or attendance.	
Student Criminal Convictions and Charges Procedure	Within 14 days of receiving the Criminal Convictions & Charges Panel outcome.	<p>As above – also:</p> <p>D) Irrationality: the findings of fact in support of the decision were manifestly unreasonable.</p>

Procedure	Deadline for Appeal	Possible Grounds
Student Disciplinary Procedure ²	Within 14 days of receiving the Disciplinary Panel outcome.	E) The sanctions imposed were disproportionate.

- 2.2 Our commitments and principles, outlined in [section 2](#), still apply for procedural appeals (where applicable).
- 2.3 You should always talk to an appropriate member of staff, before making an appeal based on the above procedures – while this won't change the outcome, being able to discuss the matter informally may help you understand the reasons for the outcome. You can also be advised on how to formally submit an appeal.
- 2.4 If you decide to submit an appeal, you should use the [appeals form](#).
- 2.5 Once you submit your application, we'll get back to you within 5 working days to let you know whether we are able to investigate your appeal. If so, we aim to undertake the review within 28 days of receiving your request. In some circumstances it may take longer – we will tell you if this is the case.
- 2.6 If your request is late (without good reason) or doesn't meet the grounds for appeal, it may be rejected. If it is rejected, we'll let you know within 5 working days of submission and supply you with a completion of procedure letter.
- 2.7 Appeals of the above procedures will be considered as a review of the decision, and will be undertaken similarly to a Review, undertaken by a senior member of MetFilm School (this may sometimes be someone from the Partner Institution). This will be a desk-based review and the original panel that reached the outcome will not reconvene.
- 2.8 The Reviewer can reach the following outcomes:
- To overturn the original decision and make a new decision on behalf of the University.
 - To uphold the original decision made by the University (no change to original outcome).
 - To partially uphold the appeal – this may mean reaching a middle ground, to be determined by the reviewer.

NB - Student route Visa (SRV) Students

- 2.9 If you are a student on a Student Route Visa (SRV) and wish to appeal against withdrawal from any procedure outlined above, where possible, we will aim to prioritise investigation of these appeals. As per Home Office reporting requirements for SRV students we are required to report any change of circumstances within 10 working days of being notified. SRV students should therefore try and submit their appeal within **7 days** of the outcome to assist the University to fairly manage their appeal while balancing off the duty to report SRV change in student circumstances promptly.

PART C – INDEPENDENT REVIEW

² This includes breaches of our Sexual Misconduct Policy; Bullying and Harassment Policy; Student Code of Conduct and other policies where breaches are processed via the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

3 Office of the Independent Adjudicator

If we can't take your appeal any further and you have a Completion of Procedures letter, you may wish to contact the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA).

The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of university student complaints and appeals. To request a review by the OIA, you will need to contact them within 12 months of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter. You are entitled to contact the OIA about any appeal outcome which is covered under this procedure, as well as the complaints procedure.

You have one year to submit a complaint to the OIA from the date that the appeal was concluded – this will be made clear on your completion of procedures letter.