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COMPLAINTS POLICY

Part A: RQF Level 3 and below courses: applies to Pre Programme, GCSE, UFP, A Levels, Extended Diploma courses and Music Foundation, and any other courses below RQF level 3

Part B: RQF Level 4 and above courses (HE): applies to Foundation in Art and Design, Drama Foundation, Degree courses, Graduate Diploma and Masters courses and any other courses above RQF level 4

Date of Policy	August 2018
Approved by Principal(s)	Yes
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Lead for Review	SLT, Student Services



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Complaints Policy PART A: RQF Level 3 and below courses

Introduction

We are committed to providing a high level of teaching and pastoral care for its students. However if a parent does have a complaint they can expect it to be treated with care and in accordance with this policy.

If a parent (or the parents' agent) or a guardian of a student has a complaint or a significant concern in relation to that student, we will seek to resolve that complaint promptly, fairly and, if possible, informally. This procedure will be used for that purpose.

Separate procedures apply if a student has been expelled or has been asked to leave (Exclusion Policy) or if a child protection issue has arisen (Safeguarding Policy).

In addition, a separate policy applies for HE students at CSVPA. CSVPA HE students should refer to Concerns and Complaints section of the CSVPA HE Student Handbook this can be found on Page 17 with in Chapter 9: "How do I raise an issue".

http://www.csvpa.com/ugc-1/1/3/0/he_student_handbook_2017-18.pdf

Any concern about the safety of a student should be communicated immediately via the emergency telephone:

- **++44 7860 586528**

This policy provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints. It takes account of Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. The procedures below may be adapted as necessary to meet the policy aims and circumstances of each case. Certain of the procedures can only be carried out during term time. Where the term "working days" is used this shall mean any day that is not a Saturday or Sunday or a bank holiday and which falls within term time as published on the website.

There were no formal complaints during 2017 -18.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

A parent with a complaint shall wherever possible, in the first instance, contact Student Services. The Student Services team shall alert the relevant members of staff who will do everything possible to resolve the matter straightaway to the parent's satisfaction.

If after 10 working days of a complaint being made a parent is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved they may proceed to stage 2 of this procedure.

A written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept.



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Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

A parent may complain to the Head of the school that their child attends, the Principal of CATS Cambridge or the Head of CSVPA. Whilst a parent may proceed directly to Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) without first seeking to resolve the complaint through Stage 1 (Informal Resolution), this is discouraged. Informal resolution, wherever possible, will always be in the best interests of all parties.

Any such complaint must be in writing, stating that it is made under stage 2 of the school's complaints procedure.

Wherever possible the recipient of the complaints, the Principal of CATS Cambridge or the Head of CSVPA will contact the parent within 5 working days of receiving the complaint in order to discuss the matter and achieve an acceptable resolution.

Where a resolution has not been reached, the recipient may ask a senior member of staff who has not been involved in the matter that is the subject of the complaint, to act as 'investigator'. The investigator may request additional information from the parent and may wish to speak to him or her and others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the recipient of the complaint, the Principal of CATS Cambridge or the Head of CSVPA.

The recipient's decision and the reasons for it shall be given in writing and sent to the parent within 15 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Where a parent is still not satisfied that the matter has been resolved they may proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

Complaints raised about the Principal or the Head of School

Formal complaints about the Principal or the Head of School should be sent to the Managing Director CATS Colleges:

- By post to: The Managing Director CATS Colleges, c/o CATS Cambridge, 1, High Street, Chesterton, CB4 1NQ
- Or via e-mail to: studentservices@catscambridge.com, FAO Managing Director, CATS Colleges.

The Managing Director may deal with the complaint in the same manner as described for other complaints, or may recuse himself at this stage and pass the complaint to another Governor to be addressed in the first instance, so that the applicable Managing Director is then free to sit on the Panel in Stage 3.



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Stage 3- Panel Hearing

A parent may request a panel hearing by sending details of a complaint which they believe has not been resolved at stage 2 within seven days of the date of the decision complained of to the Managing Director of CATS Colleges:

The Managing Director CATS Colleges, c/o CATS Cambridge, 1, High Street, Chesterton, CB4 1NQ

Or via e-mail to: studentservices@catscambridge.com, FAO Managing Director, CATS Colleges.

The parent's letter should give full details of the complaint and state the outcome which is sought. The letter will be acknowledged by the recipient managing director within five working days of receiving the complaint, indicating whether any further information is required, the action that will be taken and the likely timescale.

The recipient Managing Director will then convene a panel as soon as is reasonably practicable to deal with the complaint but the panel will not normally sit during half-terms or school holidays. The panel shall be made up of at least three persons each of whom is not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the panel shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The other two members of the panel shall be drawn from the relevant school's governing body.

(If the complaint was made against the Principal or the Head of School, and the individual's Managing Director addressed the original formal complaint during Stage 2, then he must not, himself, sit on the Panel).

The recipient Managing Director shall then acknowledge the complaint, inform the parent of the composition of the panel and schedule a hearing date which will be as soon as possible and within 15 days from receipt of the complaint, though this may not be possible if the complaint is received outside term time.

Where a parent has requested a panel hearing, the panel hearing will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

Unless such notice is given, the panel hearing will proceed whether or not the parent decides to attend. If the parent decides not to attend the panel will consider the parent's complaint in their absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint.

The panel may decide to require additional material or further particulars of the complaint, or any related matter, in advance of the hearing. Any such additional material or further particulars shall be supplied to all parties at least 5 working days before any hearing to consider the complaint and, if necessary, the hearing date shall be deferred.

A parent may attend the hearing of the panel and be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is neither necessary nor appropriate but if the parent wishes to be accompanied by a



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legally qualified person, acting in his or her professional capacity, the school must be notified at least 5 working days before the hearing.

The hearing will be a private proceeding chaired by one member of the panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the chair. If the hearing is terminated for this reason, the original decision will stand. Any parent who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and their comment will be minuted. The role of the panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the parties at the hearing. The panel is not empowered to make any financial award nor impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. At the hearing the panel will attempt to achieve a resolution.

Where a resolution has not been reached and where the panel is satisfied that it has established all the relevant facts (if necessary having carried out further investigations) and has duly considered all that the parent and the school has said, the panel shall make its findings and recommendations (if any). If the panel considers that the complaint has been proven, it will uphold the complaint. If the panel does not consider that the complaint has been proven, it will dismiss the complaint. These decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities.

The panel's findings and any recommendations (which shall be made not later than fourteen days from the date of the final hearing) and its reasons for them, shall be recorded in writing and sent to the parent, the relevant head of school and, where relevant, the person complained about. The decision, findings and any recommendations will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher.

Confidentiality and Records

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The record of complaints must state whether the complaint has been resolved following a formal procedure or whether it has proceeded to a panel hearing. It must also give details of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld.

In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.



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Complaints Policy PART B: RQF Level 4 and above: Higher Education (HE) Courses

1. Introduction

1.1. CATS and CSVPA are committed to providing a high level of teaching and pastoral care for students. The levels of service that students and prospective students can expect are outlined in course information and other publications and on the College websites.

1.2. If a student or prospective student has a concern relating to a specific issue regarding their educational experience or other services provided by the College (and they are a Level 4 or above student), then they should submit a complaint, following the formal complaints procedure detailed below.

1.3. Stage One concerns can be raised up to three months after the date of the incident causing concern.

1.4. This procedure does not apply to students appealing an academic decision such as assessment and examinations. If a student believes that there has been a material error or irregularity in the assessment process, they should refer to the 'Appeals Procedure: HE Courses'. Staff can advise you of this process if required.

1.5. Students will not be discriminated against or suffer any recrimination as a consequence of making a complaint.

1.6. This complaints policy is part of the College process of quality review any complaint is therefore valued as useful feedback rather than criticism.

1.7. Whatever the nature of the complaint, complainants can expect it to be dealt with promptly and fairly and in accordance with the College policies and procedures. The time limits set out in the procedure below will normally be followed. However, where for good reason, this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

1.8. We expect everyone who works and studies at the College to respect the rights of individuals and groups to hold their own views and values. However we will not tolerate these views or values to be presented in a way that intimidates, degrades or is hostile to others.

1.9. For further information about how the College work to ensure an inclusive environment or to discuss your concerns about behaviour that is discriminatory to yourself or others please contact our Welfare Team.



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2. Stage One: Informal Resolution of Complaints

2.1. Wherever possible, the College wishes to see any issue resolved informally. A student with a concern shall wherever possible, in the first instance, contact Student Services (via studentservices@csvpa.com). The Student Services team will alert the relevant members of staff who will do everything possible to resolve the matter straight away to the student's satisfaction. A prospective student may prefer to direct their complaint to admissions@csvpa.com.

2.2. If after 10 working days of a complaint being made a student is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved they may proceed to Stage Two of this procedure. A written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept.

3. Stage Two: Formal Resolution

3.1. Formal complaints must be in writing to the CSVPA Rector (the recipient) via studentservices@csvpa.com, stating that it is made under stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

3.2. You may, if you wish, involve a person independent of the College. However the College cannot deal with third party complaints without the written permission of the student.

3.3. The College will confirm receipt of the complaint to the student, normally within two working days.

3.4. Wherever possible the recipient will contact the student within 10 working days of receiving the complaint in order to discuss the matter and achieve an acceptable resolution.

3.5. Where a resolution has not been reached, the recipient may ask a senior member of staff who has not been involved in the matter, to act as 'investigator'. The investigator may request additional information from the student and may wish to speak to him or her and others who have knowledge of the circumstances.

3.6. Following an investigation a full written response will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days of receiving the initial Stage 2 complaint.

3.7. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Where a student is still not satisfied that the matter has been resolved they may proceed to Stage Three of this procedure.



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4. Stage Three: Review of Outcome

4.1. If a student or prospective student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage Two investigation, he/she may request a review of the outcome within 10 working days of the written response to the complaint being received.

4.2. A request for a review should be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors (the recipient) via studentservices@csvpa.com. Students should provide full details on the grounds on which the review is being requested and why they do not consider the outcome of Stage Two to be satisfactory.

4.3. The letter will be acknowledged by the recipient within five working days of receiving the complaint, indicating whether any further information is required, the action that will be taken and the likely timescale.

4.4. The Chair of Governors will then convene a panel as soon as is reasonably practicable to deal with the review process. The panel shall be made up of at least three people, each of whom is not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school. The other two members of the panel will be drawn from the governing body. The meeting may be held in person or remotely via telephone or videoconference if necessary.

4.5. The Chair of Governors shall then acknowledge the complaint, inform the student of the composition of the panel and schedule a hearing date which will be as soon as possible and within 15 working days from receipt of the review request, though this may not be possible if the complaint is received outside term time.

4.6. The panel may decide to require additional material or further particulars of the complaint, or any related matter, in advance of the hearing. Any such additional material or further particulars shall be supplied to all parties at least 5 working days before any hearing to consider the complaint and, if necessary, the hearing date shall be deferred.

4.7. The student may attend the hearing of the panel and be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is not allowed during the internal review stage.

4.8. The hearing will be a private proceeding chaired by one member of the panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner. No notes or other records or oral



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statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

4.9. The decision of the panel is final. The outcomes available are as follows:

- That the complaint be upheld in whole or in part;
- That the complaint will be rejected

5. Completion of Procedures

5.1 The response from the hearing of the panel will be the conclusion of the internal processes and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

5.2 The student will receive the Completion of Procedures Letter within 10 working days of the panel hearing.

5.3 In the event of a complaint being upheld whole or in part, recommendations should be made in respect of remedial action required. The complaint will be reviewed in full by the CSVPA Executive Team as a part of the ongoing quality review process.

5.4 An annual report on complaints is prepared for the Governing Body and will include any complaints received at Stage 2 or Stage 3 and their conclusion.

6. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education

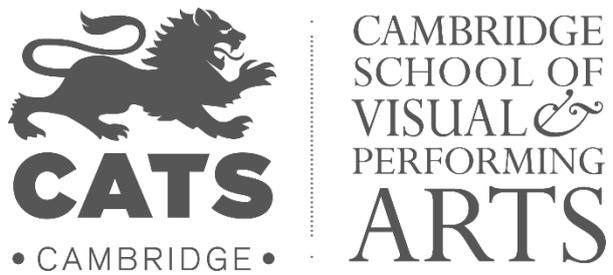
6.1. If, after following all of the internal complaints procedures and having received a Completion of Procedures letter, students feel the response is not satisfactory, they can refer the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

6.2. OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints. Free to students, the OIA deals with individual complaints against Higher Education in England and Wales.

6.3. OIA will only look at complaints from students and former students. Prospective students are unable to complain via OIA.

6.4. Before OIA can look at a complaint you will need to take your complaint through the internal complaints or appeals procedures.

6.5. Students must apply to the OIA within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter.



6.6. Further details can be found on the OIA website at www.oiahe.org.uk. The OIA's contact details are: Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB, Tel: 0118 959 9813 Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk.

7. Data protection

7.1. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances