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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](#)
 - 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: Informal 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 anonymous complaints, or complaints by third parties including parents, guardians or friends of registered students. The School will only consider such 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.
- 4.4. A student may be accompanied by another student or their student representative 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 Code of Conduct as set out in the [MetFilm School Student Handbook](#)

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

- 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 strict 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.
- 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:
 - Reception Staff who will direct you to the appropriate department;
 - The relevant Module or Course Leader;
 - The relevant Course Manager who will direct you to the relevant documentation, academic staff or information source;
 - 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: Informal 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 about 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 on Moodle and 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 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. 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.
- 6.2.13. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 20 working days of receiving the Complaint Form. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.2.14. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.2.15. 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.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome

- 6.2.16. 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 20 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their case.
- 6.2.17. 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.
- 6.2.18. 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.
- 6.2.19. 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.

Referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 6.2.20. 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: Informal 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 which is available on Moodle and 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

6.3.12. 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 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. 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.
- 6.3.15. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 20 working days of receiving the Complaint Form. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.3.16. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.3.17. 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 will be undertaken by University of West London.

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

- 6.3.18. 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 20 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their reasons.
- 6.3.19. 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.
- 6.3.20. 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

- 6.3.21. 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.

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

6.4 MetFilm School Non-Accredited Course Complaints

Stage 1: Informal 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.
- 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 which is available on Moodle and 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
- 6.4.10. 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 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. 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.

- 6.4.13. The School aims to complete the investigation and come to a conclusion within 20 working days of receiving the Complaint Form. Students will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and advised of any delays.
- 6.4.14. At the conclusion of the necessary investigations, the student will receive a written decision addressing the points made and reasons for the decision.
- 6.4.15. 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.

Stage 3: Review and Final Outcome

- 6.4.16. 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 20 working days of the Stage 2 outcome letter, setting out their case.
- 6.4.17. 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.
- 6.4.18. 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.
- 6.4.19. 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.

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 the University's Appeal Regulations (the Appeal Regulations)³. Copies of the Appeal Regulations are also

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

available on Moodle or from the Student Services & Administration Team at MetFilm School.

7.3. Under the Appeal Regulations "a student may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. procedural error: where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with the School's procedure. Procedural error shall include alleged administrative or clerical error, and bias in the operation of the procedure; for example failure to apply SpLD marking guidance in line with an agreed Individual Support Plan
- b. that exceptional circumstances, illness, or other relevant factors were not made known at the time for good reason*, or were not properly taken into account.

*Good reason - requires a student to demonstrate that circumstances beyond their control prevented the disclosure of the relevant facts at the appropriate time.

The following shall not be deemed legitimate grounds for appeal. Any appeal founded exclusively on one or more of these grounds shall be rejected automatically:

- a. appeals against academic judgement, for example the mark awarded by examiners;
- b. appeals based upon the informal assessment of a student's work by academic staff;
- c. retrospective reporting of mitigating circumstances that might reasonably have been made known at the proper time;
- d. marginal failure to attain a higher classification of award;
- e. in the case of student disciplinary matters, the provision of an apology by a student for their actions;
- f. lack of awareness by a student of the relevant procedure or regulations;
- g. vexatious or frivolous appeals;
- h. where no fresh evidence is submitted or there has not been a material change of circumstances since the last decision on the matter.

In all cases, the original outcome of the appropriate Panel or Board, which is the subject of the appeal, is final and not varied until and unless a successful appeal results in an alternative decision. For example, where a student is withdrawn due to academic failure, and the appeal is upheld, the student shall not be reinstated until the appeal process is complete."

Submitting an Appeal

7.4. Students wishing to submit an appeal as set about above, should contact the Student Services & Administration Team or their Course Leader in the first instance.

7.5. Students will be then advised on the University of West London process and documentation required for submitting such an appeal.

7.6. Students wishing to discuss an indicative mark should contact their Course Leader or Course Manager in the first instance.

7.7. Please note that appeals against an academic body 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 Legal & Regulatory Context

- 8.1. 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 UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKQC) (Concerns, Complaints, Appeals) as developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on behalf of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment. The UKQC is the definitive reference point for all UK Higher Education Institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning and teaching is assured and enhanced.