

Student Complaints Procedure



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The International College of Musical Theatre (the ICMT) is committed to delivering the highest education and service for students. However, we understand that occasionally things do not go as planned, and students may have a legitimate reason to complain about the ICMT's academic provision, services, facilities or staff.
- 1.2 The ICMT aims to operate a fair and transparent complaints procedure for its students. All complaints will be treated seriously.
- 1.3 Any student wishing to make a complaint should bring the matter to our attention as early as possible. This allows us to resolve the issue before it escalates to formal procedures.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The ICMT will seek to make reasonable adjustments to allow anybody with specific requirements to use the Complaints Procedure.
- 2.2 Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be released to those who need it for investigating and responding to a complaint. In addition, individuals named in a complaint will be made aware of the allegations to ensure that they have an opportunity to put their case forward.
- 2.3 The procedure will be clear, transparent, and fair to all parties, and informal resolution will be promoted in as many cases as possible.
- 2.4 All complaints will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and made without fear of penalty.
- 2.5 Anyone accessing the complaints procedure and all staff involved in investigating and responding to a complaint should act reasonably and fairly towards each other, respecting the process at all times.

- 2.6 The ICMT will adhere to published deadlines; where this might not be possible, the student will be kept informed and provided with a revised deadline. The Student Complaints Procedure will normally be completed within 90 days of the complaint being made, with effect from stage one.
- 2.7 The ICMT will be accountable and will apologise if mistakes have been made or the ICMT has fallen short of reasonable expectations. Where necessary, action will be taken to ensure such mistakes do not happen again.
- 2.8 If what is requested as an outcome is more than the ICMT can reasonably provide or is not possible, we will let you know at an early stage.
- 2.9 Where complaints are considered to be vexatious or frivolous, the ICMT may terminate consideration of a complaint.

3. What is and what is not a complaint?

- 3.1 For this procedure, a complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction caused by an ICMT service either failing to match the standards of service promised or failing to match the standards that it would be reasonable to expect.
- 3.2 Complaints can be wide-ranging. Concerns raised might include, but might not be limited to:
- Quality of facilities provided by the ICMT.
 - Teaching and supervision.
 - Unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a staff member
 - Misleading or incorrect information.
 - The quality and standard of any service we provide or our failure to provide such a service.
 - Dissatisfaction with the ICMT policies or procedures.
- 3.3 Some issues cannot be considered through the Complaints Procedure. These include:
- A complaint about a student's behaviour: such issues would be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedures.

- Complaints about academic decisions made regarding assessments. Any student who disagrees with an academic decision should refer to the Academic Regulations.
- Those matters which the Office of the Independent Adjudicator is currently considering for Higher Education (OIA), a court or tribunal.
- Routine first-time requests for information.
- An attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where the ICMT has completed its procedures.
- Complaints from staff.

The above list is not exhaustive.

4. Who can make a complaint?

4.1 The Complaints Procedure is open to:

- a) An individual student studying either full or part-time on any ICMT courses.
- b) A group of students. In such cases, the group must nominate a spokesperson representing the group on all matters relating to the complaint.
- c) Former students of the ICMT are either complaining within three months of leaving the ICMT about a matter in relation to their study at the ICMT or complaining about a service offered by the ICMT.

4.2 Third parties acting for a student. We would always encourage students wishing to make a complaint to deal with us directly. However, when a complaint is received from a third party (including a parent), the student will be asked to provide written consent authorising the ICMT to deal with their representative.

4.3 Anonymous complaints. Complaints received from an anonymous source will be considered at the ICMT's discretion. The ICMT encourages students to raise concerns without fear of suffering any disadvantage. However, a complaint made anonymously could impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.

4.4 In exercising discretion, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The seriousness of the complaint.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

- Whether enough information has been provided to enable any further action.
- Whether anonymity can reasonably be maintained.

5. Procedure overview

5.1 The complaints procedure is divided into informal and formal stages:

- Conciliation or informal review directly with the individual/area concerned (informal)
- Stage 1 (formal)
- Stage 2 (formal)

5.2 If a complainant contacts the Principal or other member of the ICMT's Senior Management Team directly without using either the informal stage or stage 1 of the complaints procedure, the complaint will be referred automatically to the most appropriate complaint stage.

6. Time limits

6.1 Raising a concern as soon as possible after the problem occurs makes it easier to resolve issues. However, delays often mean it can be difficult to investigate properly.

6.2 Complaints received more than 3-months after the event(s) in question shall not usually be investigated.

6.3 The complainant will have 10 working days from receipt of the outcome of the Stage One investigation to submit a Stage Two complaint should they not be satisfied with the outcome.

6.4 The Complaints Procedure will usually be completed within 90 calendar days of the complaint being made, with effect from Stage One.

7. Stage 1 complaints procedure

7.1 The complaint must be made in writing, preferably via the ICMT's Complaints form. Using the complaints form or making a written complaint in any form will assume consent to data processing under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The complaint should include:

- Full name.
- Student ID number (if a student).
- Email address (current students should use their ICMT email address).
- Details of the complaint being made.
- Steps taken to resolve the complaint so far.

7.2 The complaint should be written clearly and tell the ICMT what the issues are and how the complaint could be resolved satisfactorily.

7.3 If the complaint covers several different issues, it would be helpful to separate them under different headings.

7.4 The ICMT will acknowledge a complaint in writing as promptly as possible, generally within 2 working days.

7.5 The complainant will also be asked to provide evidence to support their complaint generally within 5 working days.

Evidence might include but is not limited to:

- Relevant emails from staff members/students.
- Photographs.
- Independent statements from witnesses.
- Contract/agreement.

7.6 In order to progress the investigation, it may be necessary to obtain further information, which may be arranged either in writing or in the form of a meeting.

7.7 If a complaint is made about a staff member, that individual will be informed that a complaint has been made and the nature of the complaint.

7.8 If the normal time limit does not allow for a full or appropriate investigation and response to the complaint, the time limit may be extended, and the student will be notified.

7.9 Once a comprehensive investigation has been carried out, the student will be advised of the outcome in writing.

8. Stage 2 complaints procedure

8.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they should submit a written request addressed to the Principal. This must be done within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the investigation.

8.2 The written request should include:

- The reasons why the student remains dissatisfied by the outcome of the stage one complaint response.
- Any new evidence.
- The outcome being sought.

8.3 Upon receipt of a stage two complaint, the Principal may elect a senior member of the ICMT staff to investigate as nominee on their behalf.

8.4 The ICMT will acknowledge the complaint as promptly as is practicable, normally within 2 working days.

8.5 The Principal (or nominee) will carry out a full review of the complaint, examine all evidence and conduct any further enquiries as appropriate. The Principal (or nominee) may decide at this point that no further action is required or to overturn the original Stage One decision. In either case, the Principal's (or nominee's) decision is final.

8.6 The final decision will be conveyed via email or letter. For complaints from students, it will also represent a Completion of Procedures letter.

8.7 This concludes the ICMT complaints procedures.

9. External resolution (higher education students)

- 9.1 If a complainant on a higher education course is not satisfied with the final decision and has exhausted all internal options, they have the opportunity to appeal to Coventry University.
- 9.2 The ICMT will submit a summary of any complaints, appeals and disciplinary proceedings to Coventry University's Assistant Registrar (Academic Partnerships) within 30 days of receipt.
- 9.3 Students enrolled on and studying a course leading to a Coventry University award may submit their complaint/appeal, including full supporting documentation, to the Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer at Coventry University, should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome within ten (10) days of completing the internal process. The Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer (or nominee) shall consider the referred matter related to academic quality and/or the academic standards of its awards. Non-academic matters will be considered on the grounds of procedural irregularity only.
- 9.4 The Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer shall endeavour to complete the review within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. However, given the requirement to investigate the case thoroughly with the collaborating institution, additional time may be required. The informant shall be informed accordingly.
- 9.5 At the end of the Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer's review, the student will receive a letter setting out the findings and outcome, and will additionally be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter to enable the student to take their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- 9.6 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ("OIA") operates an independent student complaints scheme pursuant to the Higher Education Act 2004. Students or former students may take their complaint relating to a final decision reached under the University's review and appeal process to the OIA once all internal processes have been exhausted. The OIA cannot look at complaints relating to matters of academic judgement. A "Completion of Procedures" letter will be issued from the office of Coventry University's Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer when it has been determined that

all internal processes have been completed. The OIA must receive a completed Scheme Application Form within 12 months of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

10. Unreasonable behaviour

10.1 The ICMT expects all participants of the complaints procedure to act with respect towards any other party(ies). Where the behaviour of a student/complainant or their representative becomes unreasonable and adversely affects the ability of staff to carry out their duties, the ICMT reserves the right to restrict contact with the student/complainant and invoke its disciplinary procedure. Wherever possible, the ICMT strives to allow the complaint to progress to completion.

10.2 Examples of unacceptable behaviour might include:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour. This could include the threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff. This is likely to end all direct contact with the complainant and could result in a report being submitted to the police.
- Unreasonable demands. This includes instances where a complainant continues to demand responses within an unreasonable time scale; insists on seeing or speaking to a particular staff member; makes continual contact, repeatedly changes the complaint's substance, or raises unrelated concerns.
- Unreasonable persistence. This could include a persistent refusal to accept a decision made in relation to a complaint, persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what can or cannot be done about the complaint, and continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information.
- Vexatious or frivolous complaints. The ICMT regards complaints to be vexatious or frivolous where:
 - The complaint does not have any serious purpose or value or is not severe or sensible in attitude.
 - It is designed to cause disruption, annoyance, unnecessary inconvenience or expense.
 - Has the effect of harassing any of the ICMT's staff, or can be fairly characterised as obsessive or unreasonable.

- It is reasonable to assume that there is no intention for the complaint to be seen as severe or sensible but not to the extent that it can be considered vexatious or malicious.

If the investigation reveals the complaint to be vexatious or frivolous, the ICMT reserves the right to dismiss the complaint and take disciplinary action against the student.



Student complaints form

Privacy Notice

Student complaints are considered confidential by the ICMT. Therefore, such details will not be shared with persons other than those named within the regulations as essential to the investigation and final decision-making process. The ICMT will securely retain and process information sent by you in connection with your complaint during the investigation period and for five years after that.

When you have completed the form, please email it to john@theicmt.com or send it to the Student Liaison Manager, The International College of Musical Theatre, 68 Wallis Road, London, E9 5LH. Standard communication will be via your student ICMT email address.

Your details

Full Name	
Preferred Email Address	
Contact Number	
Address for any correspondence	
Course you are registered on	
College Location	

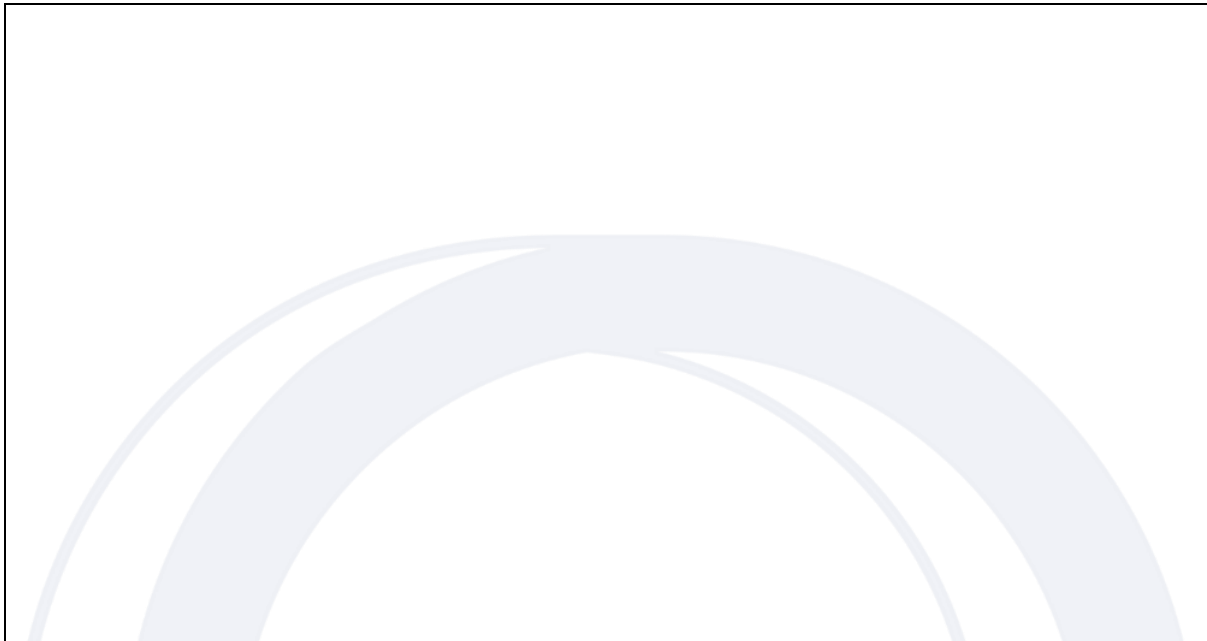
Previous Discussions

Please outline what has already taken place to try and resolve your complaint. Please include dates and staff from the ICMT who have been involved in those discussions.

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Your Complaint

Please set out below the main points to your complaint, including why you consider the earlier attempts to resolve it has been unsatisfactory.



What resolution are you seeking?



Please include the following documentation with this form as applicable:

- A copy of all relevant correspondence and other documentation.
- Signed statements from any third parties who can provide evidence related to your complaint

Authority for the Student Services Manager to arrange for the investigation of your complaint

I would like the Student Services Manager to consider my complaint and appoint an impartial senior staff member to investigate.

I understand that:

- The ICMT will share the information contained in this form with persons relevant to the investigation process. This may include any persons who may be the subject of the complaint, named witnesses and the ICMT staff members essential to the final decision-making process.
- Following the investigation into my complaint, the complaint investigation report may contain details of the personal information I have divulged during the investigation process. The outcome

will be shared with persons essential to implementing any resulting actions. In addition, if the complaint is about one or more named individuals, I understand that the investigation outcome will normally also be shared with them.

I agree with the above and confirm that I believe the facts stated in this application to be true. Furthermore, I am aware of the regulations regarding fictitious, malicious or frivolous complaints.

Signature _____ Date _____

You should keep a copy of this form and all documentation you submit as you will not receive the originals back.

Document control

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