

# Complaints Procedure Policy





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*to offer excellent face to face and online academic courses with the aim of providing students with a learning experience comprising of quality of teaching, learning facilities and a positive education experience.*

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# Preamble

21 Academy is committed to monitoring and evaluating its services to enhance their quality and ensure that they meet the standards it strives to achieve. The Academy therefore has in place mechanisms to ensure that students have the opportunity make their views known. Regular student feedback is also gathered at the end of each course to help us to use our resources in the best way possible to meet student needs.

We understand and appreciate that there may be instances where such mechanisms are not sufficient to deal with problems that may occur from time to time. Therefore, this Complaints Procedure Policy outlines the method for the making of informal and formal complaints to ensure that grievances and comments are dealt with in an efficient and professional manner.

This procedure is intended to be easily accessible for all students, and aims to resolve complaints informally, if possible. Efficiency and promptness in reviewing and deciding on complaints is encouraged, and the Academy intends to provide effective replies and, where possible, appropriate modes of redress. The Academy guarantees that it shall ensure a full and fair investigation whilst guaranteeing confidentiality, if the complainant so requires, while doing its best to ensure that any such complaints are considered in the long-term in order to amend, change or improve the Academy in order to provide its students and staff with the highest level of education possible.

# 1. General Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1 A student complaint (“Complaint”) is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the Academy’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Academy.
- 1.2 Examples of Complaints include, but are not limited to, grievances relating to standards of service, actions or lack of actions by the Academy or its staff or any other thing affecting individuals, students, customers or clients of any group for which the Academy is responsible.
- 1.3 This Policy does not cover requests for new or different services or provision, and review of extenuating circumstances decisions, or any staff grievance procedures.
- 1.4 The following are the persons who are entitled to lodge a Complaint with the Academy:
  - 1.4.1 Current or previous students (attending a course at the Academy within the 3 months prior to the filing of the Complaint), individually, in a group, or under the auspices of a separate entity; or
  - 1.4.2 Anyone seeking or receiving a service from the Academy or anyone who is affected by the activities of the Academy.
- 1.5 Anonymous Complaints are only accepted and considered in exceptional circumstances. If a complainant reasonably and justifiably requires the submission of a Complaint through a third party, the Complaint must include all details of the complainant and written permission for the third party to act in the matter. The Academy may still require that, in order for such complaint to be processed, the complainant be spoken to directly.
- 1.6 If a group of students file a Complaint, then it is expected that one person shall act as a group representative and all communication will be made through this representative. All students wishing to be considered as part of such group Complaint will need to provide their name, and sign the Complaint, effectively agreeing to the details therein.
- 1.7 All Complaints are given full consideration and students will in no way be disadvantaged for making a genuine Complaint. The Academy expects that complainants will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints. Where a complainant fails to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate allegations, the Academy reserves the right not to progress the complaint further.

- 1.8 Examples of frivolous or vexatious Complaints may include, but are not limited to:
  - 1.8.1 Obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious Complaints;
  - 1.8.2 Complaints which are unmeritorious and/or seek unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
  - 1.8.3 Meritorious Complaints being pursued in an unreasonable manner;
  - 1.8.4 Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
  - 1.8.5 Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

## 2. Receipt of Complaints

- 2.1 Upon receiving a Complaint, the Academy shall:
  - 2.1.1 Handle it in a quick, polite and straightforward way;
  - 2.1.2 investigate it thoroughly and impartially;
  - 2.1.3 Endeavour to keep the complainant informed at all stages of the process;
  - 2.1.4 Ensure that students, in particular, are not disadvantaged in any way by reason of raising the Complaint.

## 3. Informal Proceedings

- 3.1 Complaints are to be raised informally and directly at the point at which the problem to which such Complaint relates to arose. In the first instance, complaints should be raised directly with the person concerned, if applicable. This can be done by discussing the matter with a member of staff within the Academy (such as the course leader or the Academy Head).

## 4. Formal Proceedings

- 4.1 If, having attempted to resolve the Complaint informally, the complainant considers that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, one should complete a Complaints Form which is available from here. This must be done within twenty (20) working days of the incident giving rise to the complaint. Complaints received after this time will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The complainant clearly indicate on the form what remedy is sought as a result of the Complaint and what the key issues are.
- 4.2 The completed Complaint Form should will be received by the Academy Head, who shall acknowledge its receipt within five (5) working days. If a formal Complaint is received prior to any attempt to resolve the matter informally, the Academy Head shall reserve the right to request the complainant to pursue an informal resolution prior to acting upon the Complaint in a formal manner.
- 4.3 If it is decided that a complaint requires a formal investigation, the Academy Head shall act as an investigating officer, who shall reserve the right to meet with and interview any person referred to in the Complaint.
- 4.4 If the Complaint refers to the actions and/or behaviour of an individual, that individual shall retain the right to defend oneself in response to such allegations or submit a written statement outlining such defence and reply.
- 4.5 The Academy shall endeavour to take a decision and send a reply to the complainant within twenty-five (25) working days. If the Complaint is likely to take longer than this to investigate, the Academy shall keep the complainant informed of progress on a regular basis.
- 4.6 If a Complaint is upheld, the response will set out what action the Academy intends to take, which may include, but is not limited to:
  - 4.6.1 A formal apology
  - 4.6.2 A warning or reprimand
  - 4.6.3 A statement on proposed future system changes

## 5. Review Request

- 5.1 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the response delivered, s/he may submit a request for a review of the decision.
- 5.2 A request for review must be based on one or more of the following grounds:
  - 5.2.1 New evidence has come to light which could not have reasonably been made available when the Complaint was submitted, and which could have significantly affected the outcome had it been known;
  - 5.2.2 There was a material procedural irregularity with regard to the formal Complaint which demonstrably affected the outcome of the claim;
  - 5.2.3 The decision in relation to the formal Complaint was manifestly perverse, meaning that it was not a possible conclusion that a similar investigation procedure might have reached.
- 5.3 The request for review must be submitted to the Academy Head within ten (10) days of the decision being sent via electronic means to the complainant, together with the following documentation:
  - 5.3.1 A letter outlining the grounds for challenging the Stage 2 outcome;
  - 5.3.2 Any new evidence and an explanation about why it was not available at the time of the original complaint.
- 5.4 Upon receipt of a valid review request, the Complaint and any previous documentation will be reviewed. Following completion of the review, the Academy Head shall appoint two (2) external reviewers who are not employed or affiliated with the Academy in any way, in order to review the initial complaint and decision, together with the appeal application lodged under this section.



## 6. Appeal of Assessment Results

- 6.1 If a student wishes to appeal an assessment result, whether such assessment was taken in a written examination, assignment or oral method, or any other form of examination, such student shall fill in the form relating to this policy, but shall also write a letter or email to the Academy Head (to be sent on [info@advisory21.com](mailto:info@advisory21.com)) requesting a review of their mark, and giving reasons behind the request if they think that the space available on the form is not enough..
- 6.2 The Head of Academy shall confirm receipt of this letter or email within five (5) days.
- 6.3 The Head of Academy shall review the student's assessment appealed together with a competent individual appointed specifically for this purpose. If they feel the need, they may also request feedback from the assessor or ask an external assessor to independently assess the appealed assessment method.
- 6.4 Irrespective of the result of the second assessment, whether or not the mark has been amended or has been retained as given by the initial examiner, the Head of Academy shall reply back to the student with the result of the re-assessment.

## 7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 As far as is practicable, confidentiality shall be preserved in the investigation of a Complaint. Such an approach is in the interest of both the complainant and any individual members of staff involved. If, however, an individual is named in a Complaint, the Academy reserves the right to inform them against the allegations brought against them in order to allow such person to legitimately defend oneself.



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