# Complaints and Concerns Policy

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1. What does this Policy cover?

1.1 Scope
This Complaints and Concerns Policy (the Policy) is designed to cover complaints raised about a service or lack of service provided by UAL Awarding Body, or specific concerns about a centre delivering a UAL Awarding Body qualification (a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre).

UAL Awarding Body is committed to providing a high-quality service and will use the feedback from UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres and users of our qualifications to maintain its high standards and improve and monitor the quality of service we offer.

1.2 What are we aiming to achieve?
The aim of the Policy is to ensure that UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres and users of our qualifications (students and those delivering the qualification) are given the opportunity to raise concerns and complaints, and that there is a fair and effective system for handling them. This may be in relation to UAL Awarding Body directly, or as a result of a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre’s internal procedures in respect of the qualification.

This Policy sets out who can utilise it and what can be considered under this Policy, what processes UAL Awarding Body expects a complainant to have followed before contacting UAL Awarding Body, what to expect when submitting a concern or complaint and how to appeal a decision.

1.3 Who can submit a complaint or concern and what is covered?
This Policy applies only to the following complaints and concerns:

- concerns raised by (a) students currently enrolled at UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres (b) former students or (c) their parent or carers if they are under the age of 18 (or 25 for SEND), about the delivery or award of a UAL Awarding Body qualification. Such complainants must have already exhausted the UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre’s internal complaints procedure, and any concerns reported to UAL Awarding Body under this Policy must be received within three months of completion of that procedure;

- complaints raised by UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres about UAL Awarding Body, for example a dissatisfaction relating to service level agreements, systems and/or processes of UAL Awarding Body; or
• concerns raised by subcontractors or employees of UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres about UAL Awarding Body and/or the delivery of UAL Awarding Body qualifications.

1.4 Matters outside the scope of this Policy
This Policy is limited to the complaints and concerns set out in paragraph 1.3 above. If UAL Awarding Body deems a complaint or concern to fall outside of this Policy, the complainant will be notified and advised whether there is an alternative UAL Awarding Body process. Below are some examples of issues that fall outside the scope of this Policy:

• issues related to grievances by or against staff of UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres;
• issues raised more than three months after the completion of a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre’s internal procedures, unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced;
• anonymous complaints (In exceptional circumstance, an anonymous complaint may be investigated at the sole discretion of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team);
• enrolment or progression issues within a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre;
• issues from a parent, carer or third party representative of a learner over the age of 18 (or 25 for SEND) unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced;

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and is provided for guidance only. There may be other situations that fall outside of the scope of this Policy.
Complaints about grade appeals, and malpractice/maladministration will be dealt with under their own individual policy listed in section 5 of this Policy.

1.5 Communication of the Policy
UAL Awarding Body will ensure that this Policy is communicated to all UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres. This Policy will also be available on UAL Awarding Body’s website.

1.6 Data Protection
UAL Awarding Body is committed to protecting your privacy and being transparent about how your data is processed. Personal data is processed by UAL Awarding Body in accordance with the UAL Awarding Body Transparency Notice, sometimes referred to as a ‘Privacy Notice’). This sets out UAL Awarding Body’s data processing practices and your rights and options regarding the ways in which your personal information is used and collected. If you have a query about the way in which UAL Awarding Body
processes your data, contact information is provided at the end of the Transparency Notice.

1.7 Equality
UAL Awarding Body believes that equality and diversity is integral to our inclusive curriculum, our creative innovation, our global reputation and the richness of UAL Awarding Body. UAL Awarding Body is committed to addressing inequality and celebrating diversity in order to sustain an accessible and inclusive environment for all students, centres, governors, visitors, community and commercial partners with whom we engage. For more information about accessibility please review our accessibility statement.

2. Procedure

2.1 How to contact us
Complaints and concerns must be raised using the form found here. It must be sent to the UAL Awarding Body’s Quality Assurance and Enhancement team via the email address complaints.awarding@arts.ac.uk.

The details you provide on the form must include the following:

• full name and daytime contact number of the complainant;
• the UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre and the details of the UAL Awarding Body qualification the complaint/concern relates to;
• detailed statement of the complaint/concern and the reason for bringing it to our attention;
• documentary evidence to support the complaint/concern; and
• if the complaint/concern is from a student/former student, documentary evidence that the UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre’s internal procedures have been exhausted (copies of all relevant correspondence and the final outcome).

2.2 Evaluating the request
The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will make an initial evaluation to ensure that it falls within the scope of this Policy. After reviewing the details, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team may recommend that it will be dealt with under an alternative process, for example, a grade appeal. It will also be reviewed as to whether the complaint has been fully progressed through UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre’s internal procedures. The complainant will be notified within 5 working days if the matter is outside of the scope of the Policy.
2.3 Stages

Stage 1 – Review

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will evaluate the grounds of the concern/complaint and the evidence provided. If the grounds are found to be valid and appropriate, we will pursue the concern/complaint with the parties concerned. In more complex cases it may be necessary for us to contact the complainant to request additional information.

Within 5 working days, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will check that all of the required documentary evidence has been supplied and that the concern/complaint falls within the time limits, scope and definition specified above in paragraph 1 above. We will then write to the complainant confirming whether we will be progressing the complaint/concern to Stage 2.

If we require additional information or evidence, we will request this to be provided by a given date. If we do not receive this additional information by the set date, the matter may not be progressed and we will confirm this decision in writing.

Stage 2 – Investigate

An investigating officer from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will be allocated to the case and it will be reviewed within 20 working days. For concerns/complaints that are about a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre, we will need to work with the UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre in order to investigate the concern/complaint. If a complainant wishes any matter to remain private and confidential, this must be stated clearly in the email, otherwise we will assume permission has been granted to disclose any information provided, as deemed appropriate and necessary. However, if the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team are unable to disclose the nature of the concern/complaint, and in relevant cases the identity of the complainant, to the relevant UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre, this could limit the effectiveness and potentially the ability to continue with the investigation.

Stage 3 – Outcome

The investigating officer aims to send an outcome response to the complainant within 28 working days, via email. The investigating officer will usually be the final decision-maker. In complaints of a complex or serious nature, a senior manager may be involved in determining the final outcome.

There are two possible outcomes:

- the concern/complaint is upheld on the basis that the grounds and evidence justify all or part of the concern/complaint. Our follow up action will vary according to the nature of the concern/complaint. In the case of complaints/concerns about a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre we will, in all instances, refer the matter back to the UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre indicating the actions we expect to see taken and reported upon; or
• the concern/complaint is not upheld on the basis that the grounds and evidence do not justify it.

In some circumstances where concerns are raised against UAL Awarding Body Approved Centres or their staff members it may not be appropriate to disclose outcomes of actions taken against a UAL Awarding Body Approved Centre or an individual. In these circumstances, the complainant may only be informed of any corrective action that has been put in place to prevent any issues reoccurring.

In all circumstances we will endeavour to finalise an investigation within 28 working days from the start of our investigation, however, if a concern/complaint is complex in nature then this timeframe may need to be extended. In this case, investigating officer will inform the complainant of the expected completion date.

**Stage 4 – Appeal**

The complainant has a right to appeal the outcome of an investigation. The complainant has 10 working days to request an appeal, see further details in section 3.

### 2.4 Timeframes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Review, evaluate, acknowledge via letter/email</td>
<td>5 working days from receipt of concern/complaint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>20 working days from receipt of concern/complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>28 working days from receipt of concern/complaint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Appeal request</td>
<td>10 working days from receipt of outcome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appeal eligibility acknowledged</td>
<td>5 working days from receipt of appeal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appeal outcome</td>
<td>20 working days from receipt of appeal</td>
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### 3. Appeal Stage 4

The request to appeal the outcome of a complaint must be made within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. The request to appeal the outcome must be sent via email to complaints.awarding@arts.ac.uk.

An appeal of a complaint outcome can only be requested on one or more of the following grounds:
• the procedures through which the original issue was investigated were not followed;
• the outcome is considered unreasonable;
• new material evidence is produced, which the complainant not able to disclose for valid reasons during the original investigation.

The request for an appeal will be reviewed by a Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer that has not been connected to the original complaint investigation in any way. Within 5 working days the complainant will be notified if the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, they will carry out a review of the case. At the end of the review the Quality Assurance and Enhancement officer will write to the complainant outlining their final decision. The following outcomes are available:

• the original outcome is upheld; or
• the Officer recommends that the matter is referred back to Stage 2 for reinvestigation.

The outcome of the appeal will be notified in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal request.

4. Where to go next
Complainants who have followed and exhausted this Policy and are still dissatisfied with the outcome may contact the following regulatory authorities:

• The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) for all students of regulated qualifications in England
• Council for Curriculum Examination and Assessment (CCEA) for all students of regulated qualifications in Northern Ireland
• Qualifications Wales (QW) for all students of regulated qualifications in Wales

5. Related documents
The following are UAL Awarding Body policies which relate to this Policy:

• Malpractice and Maladministration policy
• Appeals Policy
• UAL Awarding Body Transparency Notice
• UAL Accessibility Statement
• Reasonable Adjustments Policy
• Special Considerations Policy