

LCCA

London College of
Contemporary Arts



LCCA Student Concerns & Complaints Policy and Procedure 2023-25

Contents

▪ Introduction	3
▪ Underlying Principles and Policy Remit	3
▪ Grounds for Complaints under this policy	4
▪ Complaints regarding bullying, harassment, or discrimination	4
▪ Exceptional Case Process	5
▪ Mediation/Conciliation	5
▪ Support and Advice	5
▪ The Complaints Procedure	6
Stage 1 – Local Level and Concerns	6
Stage 2 – College Level	7
Stage 3 – Review	8
▪ External Review	9
▪ Anonymous Reporting	10
▪ Process Flow Chart	11
▪ Appendix 1 – Student Complaints Form	12
▪ Appendix 2 – Student Concerns Form	13

1. Introduction

1.1 London College of Contemporary Arts (LCCA) is committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning, and we therefore encourage our students to give us feedback. LCCA recognises that things can go wrong and when they do students may have legitimate reasons to complain about LCCA's provision of academic courses, facilities, services, or staff.

1.2 LCCA aims to ensure that student complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly, and consistently.

1.3 We also aim to learn from the outcomes of complaint investigations to help improve our services and enhance the student experience.

1.4 Wherever possible, students' concerns about their course, services provided by LCCA or any other aspect of their experience at LCCA should be dealt with promptly at the earliest opportunity and through informal discussion.

1.5 Where students wish to raise a complaint, they must do so by following the steps outlined in this policy.

2. Underlying Principles and Policy Permit

2.1 Complaints are dealt with without recrimination. This means that students making complaints will not suffer disadvantage or reproach and their studies and will not be prejudiced because of making a complaint.

2.2 At LCCA, its students and staff have rights and responsibilities under this procedure. Consequently, students who have complaints must make them in good faith and without malice. Students who make complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, malicious, obscene, or abusive may be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

2.3 For the purpose of this procedure, a complaint is defined as an expression of concern, usually made or agreed in writing, about the provision of a course, or a related aspect of service, which is provided to students enrolled on, or recently graduated from an LCCA course, the service or course failing to match the standards of service promised or failing to match the standards that it would be reasonable to expect.

2.4 This procedure covers all aspects of the student experience except for the following where separate procedures apply:

2.4.1 Matters relating to academic judgement, academic performance and outcomes should be considered under the Academic Appeals Process.

2.4.2 Disciplinary issues, including complaints against another student will be dealt with by the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

2.4.3 Racist, sexual, and other forms of harassment are covered by the Harassment and Bullying Policy.

2.4.4 The approval of payments of refunds.

2.4.5 Any issue that may fall under the Safeguarding or Prevent Policies.

2.5 All complaints investigated under the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy will be treated confidentially. However, where necessary to conduct a fair investigation of the complaint, a copy of the written complaint (with any enclosures) will be forwarded to any member(s) of staff concerned in the complaint as part of the investigation.

2.6 Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered. However, in exceptional cases, anonymity may be granted to a complainant and/or witnesses. In all such cases, LCCA will be mindful of the need to act fairly in the interests of all parties concerned in the complaint. Concerns may be raised anonymously.

2.8 The Head of Quality will monitor and review the number, level and type of complaints that are made over the course of each academic year. This data will form part of the measures used to assess and enhance LCCA's services and the student experience. A report will be submitted annually to the Academic Board and Board of Governors.

3. Grounds for Complaints Under This Policy

3.1 Grounds for complaint may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A failing in an academic or support service.
- Failure to meet obligations including those outlined in course/student handbooks and other materials provided by LCCA.
- Direct or indirect discrimination arising from disability.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional materials or other LCCA publications.
- The conduct of a member of staff.
- Deficiencies in the quality of your learning experience or resources.

3.2 In order to raise a complaint, students must be registered on one of LCCA's courses. If they have completed their studies and are therefore no longer registered, they will normally be allowed one further calendar month from the last day of their last term in which to raise a complaint.

3.3 Consideration of late complaints will only be given very exceptionally and in extreme circumstances, such as serious illness or hospitalisation during the time from a student's last day present on the course, and where evidence of a valid reason for any delay is provided.

3.4 Complaints may be raised by an individual student or a group of students. Where a group complaint is raised, the group will normally be asked to nominate a lead correspondent as the main channel of communication between LCCA and the group. Complaints raised by third parties will only be accepted where express written consent has been given for the third party to act on behalf of the student(s).

4. Complaints regarding bullying, harassment, or discrimination

4.1 Where a complaint relates to or includes an allegation of bullying, harassment, or discrimination by a member of staff, the investigation will be informed by other relevant policies, including those that are managed by Human Resources and Academic Services.

4.2 Where a complaint includes an allegation of bullying, harassment or discrimination by another student, the investigation may fall outside the remit of the Student Complaints Policy and may instead be investigated under the Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure.

4.3 As part of any investigation, specialists from other departments may be consulted for advice.

5. Exceptional Case Process

5.1 For complaints regarding the provision of support for students with disabilities and/or specific learning needs, the Investigating Officer will seek appropriate support and guidance from other relevant specialists including the Wellbeing Service.

5.2 The investigation of these types of cases may also be informed by other relevant policies including Student Finance England's Exceptional Case Process.

5.3 It is recognised that complaints of this nature may be subject to time restrictions and, where possible, the University will always aim to work within given time limits so as not to disadvantage the student.

6. Mediation/Conciliation

6.1 Mediation and/or conciliation are voluntary processes where an impartial, independent third party is appointed to help parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution.

6.2 Where appropriate, LCCA may offer mediation and/or conciliation at both the local and formal level stages of complaint investigations (Stages 1 and 2) as we believe that it can often help each party understand what is driving the concern and may be more likely to result in a swift and mutually satisfactory solution.

6.3 Where all parties agree to mediation or conciliation the College stage (Stage 2) of considering a complaint, they should agree revised timescales. Prior to starting the process, all parties need to be clear about the scope of the mediation or conciliation process, how the arrangements may fit with other relevant policies and whether each party is expected to agree in advance to accept any solution that may be offered. It may be necessary to restart Stage 2 if agreement cannot be reached.

7. Support and Advice

7.1 If a student has any queries about this policy and how it might apply to them, they are able to seek advice from any of the following people/services:

- Student Services Team
- The Administration Team
- Quality Assurance/Complaints Team

8. The Complaints Procedure

8.1 LCCA has a three stage internal student complaints procedure in place. Once the procedure is completed external options are available with the validating body UCA (University of the Creative Arts) and the OIA (Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education). LCCA believes that most difficulties can be resolved at an early stage by talking informally with the individual(s) most concerned with the issue at a local level, at the earliest opportunity.

8.2 The student complaints procedure comprises three main stages:

- Stage 1: Local
- Stage 2: College
- Stage 3: Review

Stage 1 – Local Level and Concerns

8.3 A student can raise a concern about any element of their student experience before elevating to a complaint or following the complaints procedure. To do this, a student should contact the person in charge of the area where there is a concern (Course/Module Director, Head of Department etc). The Concerns form should be used (appendix 2). If a student is not comfortable with raising concerns directly or has already done so with no further action taken, then they should commence the local level complaints process.

8.4 Where a student has attempted to resolve matters by informal discussion, or through raising a concern and is not satisfied with the outcome, the student may wish to initiate Stage 1 of the complaints process. In the first instance, complaints should be raised locally with Complaints Team (complaints@lcca.org.uk). Complaints should be submitted in writing, but it is recommended that students discuss the situation with Student Support or Quality Assurance if students are unsure of how to begin the process.

8.5 So that LCCA have the best opportunity to address and, where appropriate, remedy concerns, the complaint should be raised within **1 month** of the actions or events that prompted the complaint. Late complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as described in section 5 above.

8.6 All complaints will be acknowledged by the Complaints Team within 5 working days and may offer any informal resolutions. Students are advised to keep a record of the complaint and keep any copies of correspondence. The complaint will be referred to a Local Investigation Officer (LIO), who is usually the relevant Head of Service or Course Director to which the complaint relates.

8.7 In responding to the student, the person who received the complaint may offer a mediation or conciliation meeting and inform the student where it may have been escalated to management for response. All correspondence should be copied to the Complaints mailbox (complaints@lcca.org.uk) for monitoring by the Complaints Team, ensuring that the complaint is logged, and timescales are adhered to.

8.8 The complaint will be investigated by a LIO. Following the investigation, the local officer will make one of the following determinations:

- That there is substance to all or part of the complaint.
- That there is no substance to the complaint.

8.9 The LIO will also determine what action(s) should be taken to address the cause of the difficulties that led to the complaint. This may include where there are findings of no substance, but the investigation identifies improvements to LCCA's services that would avoid similar future complaints.

8.10 Complainants will normally be provided with a proposed resolution to their complaint in writing (normally by email) within **one month** of raising a complaint. Where a complaint is resolved at this stage, the student will be provided with a written copy of the agreed resolution. The Complaints Team will also be notified of the resolution.

NB: This timescale may be extended due to vacation periods, where the complaint is complex or multiple parties are involved. In these circumstances complainants will be informed of any delay at the earliest opportunity, together with an indication of the anticipated timescale for response.

8.11 On occasion, LCCA may decide that due to the specific circumstances surrounding a complaint or due to the specific nature of the complaint, it should be escalated to Stage 2 of the student complaints process without having undergone a Stage 1 investigation. In these cases, all stakeholders, including the complainant(s) and any subject(s) of a complaint will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it.

8.12 Where the student is dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, or the complaint has not been dealt with locally following attempts to resolve the matter, the student can submit their complaint using the complaints form (appendix 1) to initiate stage 2 by contacting complaint@lcca.org.uk.

Stage 2 – College Level

8.13 College level complaints should be submitted to the email address outlined in 7.12 and should include the student complaints form (appendix 1) which can also be found on the Student Portal.

8.14 Stage 2 complaints should be received within 1 month of the completion of the local level (stage 1) process (and within one month from the last day of the student's last term). Late complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

8.15 When completing the Student Complaints Form, the following information should be provided:

- Details of the complaint.
- An outline of the steps that have already been taken to try and resolve the complaint and why the responses received are not considered satisfactory.
- The desired resolution.

8.16 The student should also provide evidence to support any allegations made, as well as any correspondence made during the local level process. Where a student fails to provide reasonable evidence, LCCA reserves the right not to progress the complaint further.

Evidence supplied could include witness statements, emails or written correspondence that support the complaint. Evidence must be provided at the time of submitting the Stage 2 complaint. Unless clearly stated that further evidence is to follow, Stage 2 investigation will not consider evidence submitted after this time. It is important for students to keep a copy of the form and any other documentation submitted for their records.

8.17 The Complaints Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. A Quality Officer will usually be allocated as the Investigating Officer (IO), however in certain circumstances the Head of Quality or an appointed senior member of staff may be appointed as the IO.

8.18 Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, a copy of the complaint (with any enclosures LCCA considers appropriate) will normally be sent to them for their response. Where a complaint is against a member of staff, any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the appropriate employment policies, which may take precedence over the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy.

8.19 Following the investigation, the IO will make one of the following determinations and will be detailed in a written report:

- That there is substance to all or part of the complaint; or
- That there is no substance to the complaint.

8.20 If the complaint is considered to have substance, the student(s) will be informed of the means to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is deemed to have no substance, the student(s) can expect to be given an explanation. In all cases the student(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, including an explanation of the rationale, of the complaint investigation.

Where financial reparation has been requested as a complaint outcome. The complaints report will be referred to a Senior Management Review Panel (which consists of three members of Senior Management Team from an area not related to the complaint for consideration and approval of any monetary reimbursement.

8.21 The IO will respond with the outcome of the complaint to the student within 3 months of receipt of the complaints. The IO will ask the student(s) to confirm their acceptance or rejection of the Stage 2 investigation outcome. This must be provided within one month of the report issue date. If the complainant(s) either confirms their acceptance of the outcome or do not respond within the stated timeframe, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (CoP).

Stage 3 – Review

8.22 If the response to the complaint resolution is not considered satisfactory to the student, they are able to request a Case Review. The student(s) may only request a Case Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- Any procedural irregularity which has materially disadvantaged the student in the investigation or outcome of the complaint.
- The emergence of new and relevant material that supports the complaint, that was not available at the time the complaint was first submitted.
- That the decision was unreasonable in all circumstances.

8.23 The Stage 3 review will not consider issues that were not cited for investigation in the Stage 2 process.

8.24 Any request for a review must be made in writing to the Complaints Review Panel within one month of the students receiving the letter outlining the outcome of the formal stage 2 investigation. The request must clearly set out the ground(s) in which the review is being requested. The request should be sent to complaints@lcca.org.uk.

8.25 The Complaints Review Panel will review the case against the grounds set out in paragraph 8.22, and will make one of the following determinations:

- That the complaint has been investigated in accordance with LCCA procedures, that no new and relevant material has been presented and a reasonable outcome has been recommended.
- That the complaint has not been investigated in accordance with LCCA procedures. In this case the complaint will normally be referred to Stage 2 of the process to be re-investigated.
- That new and relevant material has become known. In this case the Complaints Review Panel may either recommend a new outcome or refer the complaint back to Stage 2 to be re-investigated.
- That the recommended complaint outcome or resolution was not reasonable. In this case, the Complaints Review Panel may recommend an alternative resolution.

8.26 The student(s) should be notified of the outcome of the review within one month of initiating Stage 3. Where it is not possible to review a complaint within this timeframe, the student(s) will be informed of any delay at the earliest opportunity.

9. External Review

9.1 A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome after all internal processes have been completed may raise the complaint with the validating partner in accordance with the partner's specific requirements.

NB: Currently this will be referring to the review stage of [UCA's complaints procedure](#).

9.2 In such circumstances, LCCA will comply fully with the requests and requirements of the validating partner institution and their investigation procedures.

9.3 Where a complaint is upheld by the validating partner, the partner will communicate these findings to the student and LCCA's Head of Quality Assurance. This will be reviewed by the Complaints Review Panel, and any outstanding actions will be implemented within the specified timeframe. LCCA will take appropriate action where the experience of the wider student population may be affected, and this will be communicated to all students.

9.4 Once the review by the validating partner has been completed, a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued.

9.5 Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the LCCA and a validating partner's attempts to resolve their complaint, may refer the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of unresolved student complaints.

9.6 Students have 12 months from the date of issue of the 'Completion of Procedures' letter to refer their complaint to the OIA.

9.7 Further details about the OIA can be obtained from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> or by contacting the OIA at the following address:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
Second Floor
Abbey Gate,
57-75 Kings Road,
Reading, RG1 3AB
Telephone: 0118 959 9813 / Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

10. Anonymous Reporting

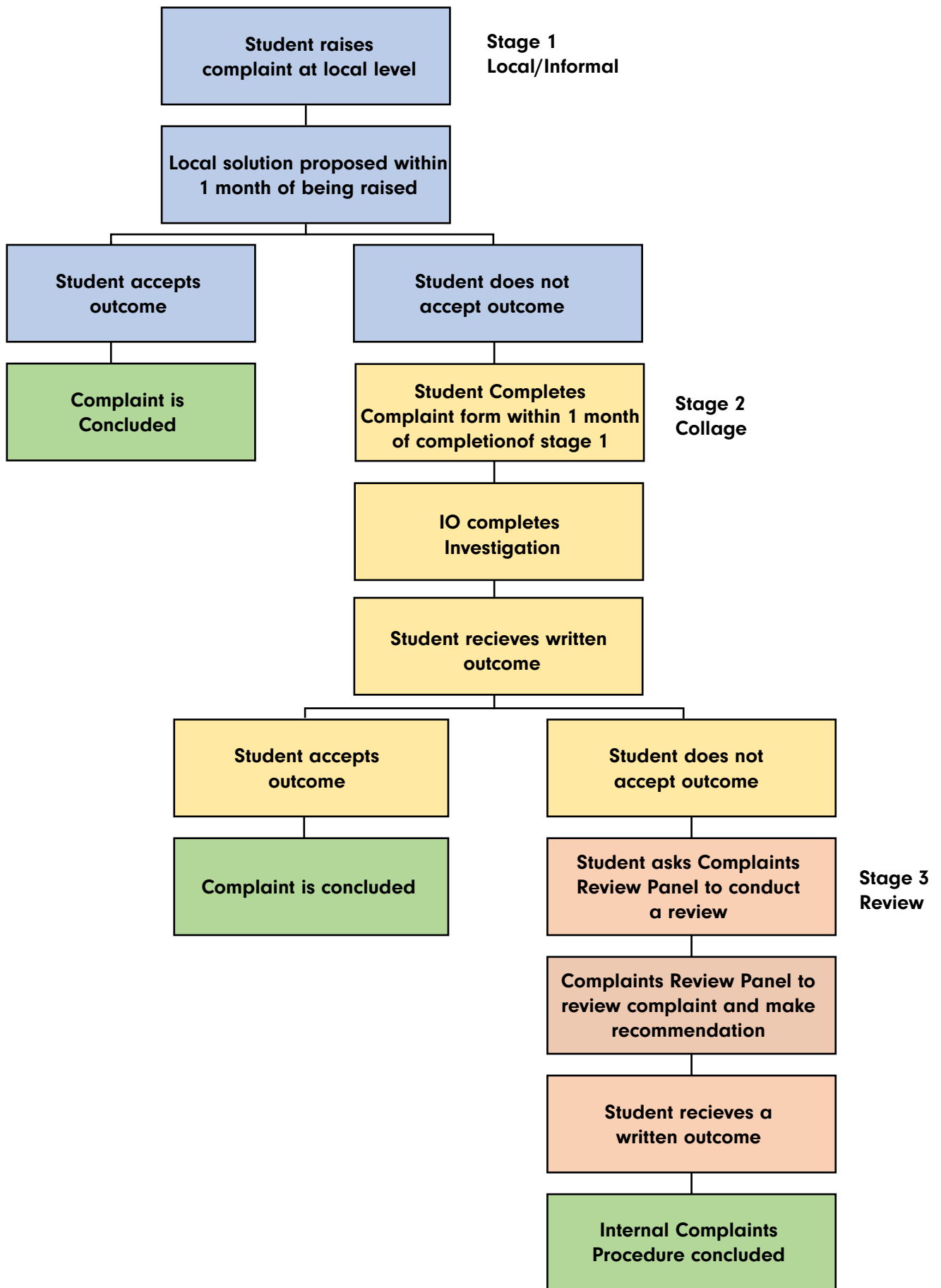
10.1 LCCA has a robust complaints process that aims to protect and support students. However, we recognise that sometimes people may not be confident or willing to reveal their identity when raising concerns. As LCCA endeavours to respond to all feedback, we allow students to submit anonymous reports.

10.2 These reports will be collated, reviewed, and fed into decision making groups that contain Student Representatives and LCCA management. This will help us identify and discuss any areas of concern that may not otherwise be identified through usual processes.

10.3 As the reports are anonymous, you will not be asked for any contact details and will be able to provide only general information about your area of concern. All anonymous complaints should be sent to complaints@lcca.org.uk or handed to a member of staff in the Complaints Team.

10.4 If students want to move a complaint forward personally or discuss issues in detail, then a formal complaint will need to be made.

11. Process Flow Chart



Appendix 1 – Student Complaints Form

Before completing this form, students are advised to read the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Please note that if local level discussions have not taken place the form will be referred to the local Course Director or Head of Service for action. The complaint will only be considered where stage 1 has been completed or the Head of Quality Assurance deems that there is a significant warrant to progress to stage 2.

Student Name	
Student ID Number	
Course Name	
Course Level	
<p>Please conduct a formal review of my complaint described below. I have read the LCCA Student Concerns & Complaints Procedure, and I confirm that I have already tried to resolve the matter informally. My complaint is (please describe the nature of the complaint as fully as possible):</p>	
<p>To resolve my complaint, I have done the following, and spoken to the following people:</p>	
<p>This is the outcome and the reason it did not resolve my complaint:</p>	
<p>Please detail the evidence that has been included to support the complaint, and evidence of the informal (stage 1) discussion:</p>	
<p>To resolve my complaint, I would like the following outcome:</p>	
<p>To support you with your complaint, please detail any additional support that you require and/or whether you would like any additional mediation/conciliation meetings.</p>	
<p>By signing this form, I am confirming that I have attached all the required evidence, that I have read and understand the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure, and that the statements I have provided are truthful to the best of my knowledge.</p>	
Student Signature	
Date	
For Office use only	
Receiving Officer Name	
Received Date	
Case Log Number	
Assigned IO	

Appendix 2 – Student Concerns Form

Before completing this form, students are advised to read the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

This form can be anonymous so please only complete the sections that you feel comfortable doing. Please ensure you include full details of the concern and any outcome you would like.

Student Name	
Student ID Number	
Course Name	
Course Level	
Please detail the nature of the concern, please be as specific as possible.	
To address my highlighted concern, the following should happen.	
For Office use only	
Receiving Officer Name	
Received Date	
Case Log Number	