

## **Istituto Marangoni London Student Complaints Procedure**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Istituto Marangoni recognises there may be occasions where students wish to raise legitimate complaints relating to their course, or the facilities and services provided by the School. It is important for both students and staff to know that such complaints will be dealt with seriously, transparently, and without fear of recrimination. To ensure this, Istituto Marangoni London has in place a Student Complaints Procedure which details the process and parameters for making a complaint, alongside how complaints may be responded to.
- 1.2. This procedure is designed to ensure that all student complaints are heard and responded to in a manner that is fair, transparent, timely and based on the consideration of relevant evidence. It will safeguard, as far as is reasonably practicable, the interests and well-being of any student making a complaint and of Istituto Marangoni London staff who may be named or otherwise involved in a complaint.
- 1.3. The management of student complaints at Istituto Marangoni London is guided by the Office for Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education's (OIA) Good Practice Framework.
- 1.4. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Istituto Marangoni, London is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may be able to ask the OIA to review your complaint or appeal. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

## **2. PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE**

- 2.1. Through this policy, the School commits to:
  - 2.1.1. **Timely and transparent procedures:**
    - 2.1.1.1. All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and through processes which are clear, straightforward, and transparent.
  - 2.1.2. **Anonymity or third-party complaints:**
    - 2.1.2.1. Istituto Marangoni London expects that persons with concerns should be responsible for making these concerns known themselves. Complaints made by a third-party will only be admitted to these procedures under exceptional circumstances and with the student's written consent.
    - 2.1.2.2. Complaints require investigation to enable resolution. For practical reasons therefore, normally no action will be taken in the event of complaints made anonymously.
  - 2.1.3. **Submission in good faith:**

2.1.3.1. The School presumes that all complaints are submitted in good faith and will not disadvantage any student for bringing forward a complaint.

2.1.3.2. Complaints that Istituto Marangoni London considers to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious will not be considered and could result in action through the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

**2.1.4. Impartiality in investigation:**

2.1.4.1. All complaints are investigated by staff who have no material interest in the complaint.

**2.1.5. Privacy:**

2.1.5.1. Staff investigate complaints with due regard for the privacy of all parties. The complaint is only disclosed to those immediately involved and/or those whose participation is necessary for a resolution. All parties are required to respect the confidentiality of the process.

**2.1.6. Confidentiality:**

2.1.6.1. Confidentiality will be respected in conducting all aspects of the complaints procedures. However, any student or member of staff about whom a complaint is made will have the right to be informed of the complaint and its nature and have access to any relevant evidence.

2.1.6.2. If a student requests that their identity be kept confidential, this is respected up to the point where disclosure is necessary to progress or resolve the issue, in which case the complainant is informed in advance of the disclosure.

2.1.6.3. The School will not disclose any information to third parties regarding investigations and outcomes from student complaint cases unless legal exceptions under the Data Protection Act apply.

**2.1.7. Student Representation:**

2.1.7.1. Students involved in a student complaint shall have the right to be accompanied to any discussions, meetings, or hearings by a friend or student representative. At least 48 hours before the discussion, meeting or hearing, the student should advise the Quality Assurance Team of the name and status of the person accompanying them.

2.1.7.2. The Istituto Marangoni London complaints procedure is an internal process and does not have the same degree of formality as a court of law. As such, legal representation is not permitted at any discussion, meeting, or hearing.

**2.1.8. Advice and Guidance**

2.1.8.1. Complainants may wish to consult with the following sources of advice when considering their complaint:

- Programme Leader
- Student Services – are able to offer information and guidance on many aspects of student life and can signpost to appropriate specialist services

- Quality Assurance – the team can provide information and guidance on the complaints procedure.

**2.1.9. Complaints Including Elements of Appeal**

2.1.9.1. Where a complaint also contains within it an element of an academic appeal, it is not possible for the academic appeal to be dealt with under this procedure. A separate Appeal must be lodged in line with the procedures outlined in the Academic Appeals Policy or Procedures.

**2.1.10. Complaints including a request for a reimbursement of fees**

2.1.10.1. When a complaint includes a request for a reimbursement of fees, the investigating officer will review the complaint in line with the Compensation and Refund Policy.

**2.1.11. Complaints against Istituto Marangoni staff**

2.1.11.1. Where a complaint is against a member of staff the following principles apply:

- an assumption of no fault until the balance of evidence from the investigation demonstrates otherwise;
- the right of the member of staff to be informed of the complaint and have access to any relevant evidence presented;
- the right of the member of staff to be accompanied to any discussions, meetings, or hearings by a colleague;
- the right of the member of staff to know the outcome of the complaint; and
- confidentiality of the process will be respected.

2.1.11.2. Where a complaint involving an allegation of misconduct by a member of staff is upheld, this may form the basis of further action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

**2.1.12. Staff involvement in the Complaints Process:**

2.1.12.1. It may be appropriate for a member of staff to be called as a witness or provide information as part of a complaint investigation. In these circumstances it is expected that staff will support the operation of the procedure.

**3. WHAT IS COVERED BY THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE?**

3.1. As guided by the OIA's Good Practice Framework, Istituto Marangoni London defines a student complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a Provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.

- 3.2. Istituto Marangoni London Student Complaints Procedure covers learning opportunities for registered students and actions by the School or failures by it to act on services it provides for its students, or which are provided by others on its behalf.
- 3.3. All information submitted in relation to complaints shall be dealt confidentially, and only disclosed as necessary to progress the complaint.
- 3.4. The School confirms that making a complaint in good faith about any aspect of the learning opportunities or services it provides for students will not compromise or otherwise affect their standing with the School, prejudice their progress, or how they are treated by it or its staff.
- 3.5. A complaint may include, but is not limited to:
- perceived failure by Istituto Marangoni London to follow an appropriate administrative process or satisfactorily apply an institutional policy;
  - perceived failure of Istituto Marangoni London to meet obligations outlined in Programme / Student Handbooks;
  - concerns about the quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided by Istituto Marangoni London;
  - concerns about organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of Istituto Marangoni London (including placement providers);
  - perceived deficiencies in academic provision (e.g., scheduling of classes; amended submission dates; submission procedures for assessed work; inconsistent advice; provision of feedback; quality or frequency of supervision);
  - perceived deficiencies in standards of service, for example, support facilities or administrative services;
  - perceived misinformation about an academic programme;
  - inappropriate behaviour or conduct by a member of staff or contractor;
- 3.6. The Complaints Procedure does not cover the following
- 3.6.1. **Academic Appeals:** Appeals against the decision of an assessment board is handled under the Academic Appeal processes and procedures.
- 3.6.2. **Bullying or Harassment:** Allegations of bullying or harassment by a student or member of staff fall under the Student or Staff Disciplinary Policies; students believing they are being harassed in any way should first seek the advice of the Student Services Team.
- 3.6.3. **Whistleblowing:** Matters of public interest should be dealt with under the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.
- 3.7. Where a student submits multiple complaints relating to the same issue, the School reserves the right to treat the matter as a single complaint.

- 3.8. Complaints relating to staff conduct will be referred to HR as a disciplinary matter where appropriate.

#### **4. TIMESCALES**

- 4.1. Complaints should be raised as soon as possible to ensure prompt investigation and swift resolution. Students who wish to make a complaint must invoke the informal (stage one) complaints procedure within one calendar month of the incident that has given rise to the complaint.
- 4.2. Students who wish to make a formal complaint must do so within 10 working days of the stage 1 response or alleged incident if the matter is escalated directly to stage 2.
- 4.3. Students who have left the School (including recent graduates) may make a formal complaint within the same time period.
- 4.4. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with supporting evidence, will complaints be considered outside of these timescales.
- 4.5. Student complaints will normally be dealt with within 20 working days from receipt of a formal (stage two) complaint, but the School reserves the right to make a reasonable extension to this timescale during student vacation periods. For complaints that are about serious matters (for example, involving the health, well-being, or personal security of a student and / or other students or staff) the School may consider whether to take the matter immediately to the formal (stage two) of the complaints procedure.

#### **5. WHO CAN SUBMIT A COMPLAINT?**

- 5.1. Student complaints can be made by existing students including students undertaking placement, students on approved periods of suspension, or recent graduates.
- 5.2. Student complaints may be raised by individual students, or a group of students can raise a collective complaint if they have experienced the same problem. In such instances, the group should identify a single spokesperson. Each member of the group must provide their student ID number and consent to participate in the group complaint. They must also be able to demonstrate that they have been personally affected by the matter.
- 5.3. Separate complaints procedures are available for applicants – IML Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy

#### **6. SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF A COMPLAINT**

- 6.1. If a student's complaint overlaps with other School regulations or policies, advice should be sought from the Registrar about how to progress the complaint, if at all. The progress of a complaint through any stage of this procedure may be suspended for a reasonable period. The School reserves the right to suspend a complaint's investigation in the event of the complainant pursuing the case through legal proceedings during or prior to engagement with this procedure. The investigation will resume upon completion of any legal proceedings and where outcomes of the proceedings are known.
- 6.2. The School may, in exceptional circumstances, terminate a complaint at any stage where a student's behaviour in relation to the complaint or investigation is deemed unacceptable or disruptive, or where a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or malicious. In such cases, the School may also invoke the disciplinary procedures in the Student Code of Conduct.
- 6.3. Examples of unacceptable or disruptive behaviour could include (but not limited to):
- audio/visual recording of meetings without written permission;
  - threatening, intimidating or abusive behaviour towards any member of staff connected with the investigation process;
  - any attempt to interfere with the investigation process;
  - sending excessive communications, via any medium, to the school team;
  - providing false or manufactured evidence or information as part of the investigation process.
- 6.4. In the event of the potential complaint termination, students will be given 14 days' notice with a final chance to respond.

## **7. MAKING AN INFORMAL (STAGE ONE) STUDENT COMPLAINT**

- 7.1. An informal complaint is defined as a concern that is raised by a student either verbally or in writing with a member of staff.
- 7.2. Complaints should normally be raised within one calendar month of the event.
- 7.3. Where possible students should seek to resolve their concerns with the person directly responsible for the subject of their complaint as soon as the issue arises.
- 7.4. Similarly, Staff, Services and Facilities should seek to address any complaints on an informal basis as soon as they are drawn to their attention.
- 7.5. In either case, the member of staff is required to keep a written record of the meeting and send a copy to Quality Assurance.
- 7.6. The member of staff will also consider whether it would be appropriate to seek to



resolve the complaint by means of an alternative dispute process such as mediation or conciliation.

- 7.7. It is anticipated that it will be possible to resolve many concerns at this stage before it becomes necessary to take a complaint to a formal investigation. The outcome of the complaint and any agreed actions will be confirmed to the student in writing.
- 7.8. If a student's concern has not been resolved to their satisfaction, they have the right to proceed to a formal investigation.

## **8. MAKING A FORMAL (STAGE TWO) STUDENT COMPLAINT**

- 8.1. Stage 2 involves the submission of the Stage 2 Complaints Form to Quality Assurance, [complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com). Complaints should be submitted within 10 working days of the written response from Stage 1.
- 8.2. On receipt of a formal complaint, the QA team will review the submission to check that the complaint is submitted under the correct procedure, within the set deadline, and in the required format. If the complaint is rejected, the complainant will be notified and given reasons for this decision. The complainant may request a review of this decision, as described in Section 10.
- 8.3. Where a complaint is submitted without consideration through the informal proceedings, the complaints team will refer the complaint back to the informal stage.
- 8.4. In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to initiate the formal procedures without having attempted informal resolution.
- 8.5. The complaint at this stage will be assigned an investigating officer (appendix 2) who will seek to resolve the complaint within ten working days unless the complexity of the complaint requires additional time. In such circumstances, the complaints team will be kept informed of any delays by the investigating officer and will communicate the reason for any delay to the complainant.
- 8.6. The student may be invited to meet with the investigating officer to discuss the complaint. Where the investigating officer considers it necessary or beneficial to meet the student, the student will be notified and informed of their right to be accompanied by a friend or student representative.
- 8.7. The investigating officer shall determine whether the complaint is justified and will put forward any suitable resolutions based upon their findings. The investigating officer will also put forward any recommended alterations to IML practice to reduce the risk of a similar situation occurring.

- 8.8. Following completion of the investigation, the investigating officer's report and suggested outcomes will be presented to the complaints team who will ensure the outcomes are communicated to the complainant and that the Complaints Tracker is updated. The outcome will be provided to the complainant by the complaints team within twenty working days of receipt of the complaint, unless the complexity of the complaint has resulted in delays requiring additional time. Where the complaint has been found unjustified, the reasons for the outcome will be clearly explained to the complainant.
- 8.9. Once the outcome of the investigation and any proposed solutions are communicated to the complainant, they have ten working days to respond to IML to confirm whether they are willing to accept the outcome or would like to seek to have their complaint outcome reviewed. All complaint outcomes related to Learning and Teaching/Academic Standards will be reviewed by Regent's University London. This will be considered the end of IML internal procedures in those cases. All other complaints will be reviewed by Istituto Marangoni London. Please see Section 10 below for further details.

## **9. MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION**

- 9.1. As part investigation, it may be appropriate to use mediation and conciliation to help understand the concern and assist with producing a swift and mutually satisfaction for all parties.
- 9.2. Mediation and conciliation are voluntary processes where an impartial independent third party helps parties to a dispute resolve issues confidentially.
- 9.3. If mediation is agreed during the formal stages of a complain investigation, revised timescales will be agreed. It may be necessary to restart the formal process if agreement cannot be reached.
- 9.4. Whilst the mediation service is in confidence, the complaints team will retain appropriate records of the meeting.
- 9.5. If, having sought to use an informal approach, the student considers that the complaint is not being resolved in a timely or suitable manner, they have the right to proceed to a formal investigation.

## **10. REQUESTING A REVIEW (STAGE THREE) STUDENT COMPLAINT**

- 10.1. Depending on the nature of the complaint, a student complaint will either be reviewed by the School or Regent's University London. If a student complaint is related to Learning and Teaching or Academic Standards, please refer to Section 12 of this

document.

10.2. If a student complaint is not related to Learning and Teaching or Academic Standards and the response issued at the conclusion of Stage 2 is not considered by the student to be satisfactory, the student may request a review in writing within ten working days from the date of the notification of the outcome of the Formal Complaint.

10.3. A request for review can only be considered in the following circumstances:

10.3.1. The complainant has evidence that there has been a material procedural irregularity;

10.3.2. That there is evidence that all of the relevant information was not considered during the informal and formal stages;

10.3.3. There is additional evidence that has not previously been considered and could not reasonably have been made available at an earlier stage.

10.4. The request for review should be submitted to [complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com) using the Student Review Complaints Form in order to determine whether the student has grounds under which their complaint can be considered.

10.5. If the investigating officer determines that there are valid grounds for a review, the responsible officer shall review the case and may take one of the following actions:

10.5.1. Uphold the outcome of the Formal Complaint; or

10.5.2. Refer the case back to relevant department with recommendations for reconsideration.

10.6. A decision will be made within 20 working days of receipt of the request for a review.

10.7. The decision of the responsible officer is final. This is considered the end of Istituto Marangoni London's internal procedures.

## **11. COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES (COP) LETTER**

11.1. The London School will issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter after the internal School complaint procedure has been completed (at all stages)

11.2. The issue of a COP letter serves the following purposes:

- it fixes the date when the student completes the School's internal complaints procedures;
- it clarifies the issues considered by the School under those procedures;

it advises the student of the possibility and timescales of bringing a complaint to Regent's University London review if the complaint is about Learning and Teaching or Academic Standards in nature.

## **12. REVIEW (STAGE 3) BY REGENT'S UNIVERSITY LONDON**

- 12.1. Where a student complaint is related to Learning an Teaching or Academic Standards and the response issued at the conclusion of Stage 2 is not considered by the student to be satisfactory, the student may request a review be conducted by Regent's University London by following their Stage 3 procedures within their [Student Complaints Policy on their website](#).
- 12.2. Following the outcome of the review stage the complainant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter by Regent's University London.

## **13. THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR**

- 13.1. Following the issue of a Completion of Procedures letter by the London School or Regent's University London (as relevant) the complainant may lodge a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. Details of the OIA and the relevant information in relation to the Scheme can be accessed at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Quality Team, [qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com) or Regent's University.
- 13.2. The grounds, eligibility for review and outcomes shall be determined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 13.3. A report on the findings of cases considered by the Independent Adjudicator will be received by the Istituto Marangoni London Quality Committee and Academic Board.

## APPENDIX 1: STAGE 2 STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

### IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

This form is designed for use with Istituto Marangoni student complaints procedure.

Please ensure that you have read and understood the Student Complaint Procedures before completing this form. If you require any advice on using the Student Complaint Procedure you should contact [qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com).

Where possible students should seek to resolve their concerns as soon as the issue arises, through meeting with the member of staff most directly concerned with the matter, such as the Programme Leader, before proceeding to submit a formal complaint.

You must set out what attempts you have made to resolve the complaint informally and explain why you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal resolution.

When you have completed this form, please return it by e-mail to [complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com).

### SECTION ONE – YOUR DETAILS

<b>First name</b>	
<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Programme</b>	
<b>Year of study</b>	

### SECTION TWO – YOUR COMPLAINT

<b>Please provide a brief summary of your complaint</b>

<b>Details of any evidence submitted to support your complaint e.g., e-mails, handbook, etc</b>

<b>Who did you approach to resolve your complaint informally?</b>	
<b>Name</b>	

<b>Action taken</b>	
<b>Approximate date</b>	

<b>Who else have you discussed this complaint with?</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Department</b>	
<b>Approximate date</b>	

<b>How do you propose that your complaint could be resolved to your satisfaction?</b>

**SECTION THREE – DECLARATION**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 we are required to obtain your consent for the following:

- a) to hold the information that you have provided on an electronic database;
- b) to disclose the information that you have provided to authorized members of IML staff, as necessary for the reasonable purposes connected with the investigation of your complaint.
- c) be aware that where a complaint relates to specific individuals, those named have the right to be shown the complaint.

Please sign below to confirm that the information you have provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge, and to indicate your consent for the information provided to be used as detailed above.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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## APPENDIX 2: STAGE 3 STUDENT COMPLAINT REVIEW FORM

### IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

If the response issued at the conclusion of Stage 2 is not considered by you to be satisfactory, you may request a review in writing within ten working days from the date of the notification of the outcome of the Formal Complaint.

The request for review can only be considered in the following circumstances:

- The complainant has evidence that there has been a material procedural irregularity;
- That there is evidence that all of the relevant information was not considered during the informal and formal stages;
- There is additional evidence that has not previously been considered and could not reasonably have been made available at an earlier stage.

If you have read and understood the Student Complaint Procedures before completing this form. If you require any advice on using the Student Complaint Procedure you should contact [qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:qa.london@istitutomarangoni.com).

When you have completed this form, please return it by e-mail to [complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com](mailto:complaints.london@istitutomarangoni.com).

### SECTION ONE – YOUR DETAILS:

<b>First name</b>	
<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Programme</b>	
<b>Year of study</b>	

### SECTION TWO – REQUEST FOR REVIEW

For your review to be considered you must tick at least one of the following options and provide details why you have selected this option.

a) Evidence that there has been a material procedural irregularity <input type="checkbox"/>
Please give details why you have considered this and reference any further supporting documentation.

b) Evidence that all of the relevant information was not considered during the informal and formal stages

Please give details why you have considered this and reference any further supporting documentation.

c) Additional evidence that has not previously been considered and could not reasonably have been made available at an earlier stage

Please give details why you have considered this and reference any further supporting documentation.

What outcome are you seeking?

Details of any evidence submitted to support your request for review

### SECTION THREE – DECLARATION

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 we are required to obtain your consent for the following:

- d) to hold the information that you have provided on an electronic database;
- e) to disclose the information that you have provided to authorized members of IML staff, as necessary for the reasonable purposes connected with the investigation of your complaint.
- f) be aware that where a complaint relates to specific individuals, those named have the right to be shown the complaint.

Please sign below to confirm that the information you have provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge, and to indicate your consent for the information provided to be used as detailed above.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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## **APPENDIX 3**

### **THE INVESTIGATING OFFICER**

- 1.1. A relevant member of the London School academic or professional staff who has had no material contact with the student or the matter under investigation will be assigned to act as the Investigating Officer for the complaint. – nominated by the Registry Team.
- 1.2. The Investigating Officer must be able to undertake the investigation without actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- 1.3. The Investigating Officer will, in the first instance:
  - contact the student to confirm that they will be conducting the investigation;
  - advise any relevant members of staff of the nature of the complaint;
  - obtain any relevant documentation from Stage 1;
  - invite the student to a meeting to review and clarify the terms of the complaint;
  - if the student chooses not to attend a meeting, confirm to the student in writing the issue to be investigated.
- 1.4. The purpose of conducting an investigation is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint and to provide a full, objective, and proportionate response to the student representing the School's clear position.
- 1.5. All parties shall be given at least 3 working days' notice of a meeting with the Investigating Officer. A meeting may be postponed if a student can provide good reason for nonattendance. Failure or inability of a student to attend a rearranged meeting will not preclude the Investigating Officer from reaching a conclusion.
- 1.6. Audio and/or visual recording of meetings is not normally permitted. If, due to exceptional circumstances, it is agreed in advance that a student is permitted to record a meeting, the recording is confidential and must not be copied or disseminated in any way.
- 1.7. The possibility of engaging in mediation to seek early resolution may be proposed by any party at any point during a Stage 2 investigation. Mediation provides both parties with an opportunity to understand what is driving the complaint and may be more likely to result in a swift and mutually satisfactory conclusion.
- 1.8. Following completion of an investigation, the Investigating Officer shall produce a written report outlining the process followed, details of any evidence gathered and any additional information for consideration. – someone from the Registry team will take notes of all meetings the Investigation Officer conducts

- 1.9. Where a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be informed of the reasons in writing.
- 1.10. Where a complaint is upheld, the outcome will confirm what actions the School will take to resolve the issue and any timescales for implementation.