

**KM Music Conservatory: Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures**  
**Foundation Certificate in Music**  
**Diploma in Higher Education Music**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 The institution is committed to providing a high quality experience for each student and encourages students to inform it where there is any cause for concern. The institute's Student Complaints and Grievances Procedures therefore exist to enable students to make complaints about such matters.

1.2 These procedures seek to ensure that complaints made by students are treated seriously and, if found to be valid, are acted upon to ensure that the student's interests are protected as far as it is possible for the institute to do so.

**2 Definition and Scope**

2.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about matters that affect the quality of the student's learning experience, or about a standard of service provided by or on behalf of KM Music Conservatory

2.2 These regulations cover all students registered on programmes at KM Music Conservatory validated by Middlesex University while attending the campus in Chennai, and members of staff who are involved with the provision of these programmes.

2.3 As a programme validated by Middlesex University, the procedures for escalating complaints to the partner institute will be laid out below. This can only occur after the local procedures have been exhausted.

2.4 The regulations on Student Complaints does not cover the following (as separate procedures exist for these as listed in the Programme Handbooks):

- a) appeals against Assessment Board decisions
- b) complaints relating to a case of alleged misconduct by the complainant
- c) complaints relating to areas of KM Music Conservatory that are not part of the Middlesex University affiliation (part-time and preparatory programmes, student body activities)

2.5 The institute reserves the right to reclassify a complaint as an academic appeal of vice versa, if the submission is deemed to have been made to the incorrect procedure, or the submission falls properly within the remit of one procedure rather than the other. The outcome of an appeal cannot be made the subject of a complaint except where there is possible material error in arriving at the decision.

2.6 The final decision regarding a matter raised under this Complaints Regulation or any of the associated procedures shall be considered to be the final decision of the Institute. There is no right to further consideration of the same matter under a different associated policy.

2.7 Each complaint will be considered on its own merits, subject to all professional requirements.

2.8 A student will not be treated less favourably by the Institute or suffer any detriment or disadvantage if they make a complaint in good faith, regardless of whether the complaint is successful. Anonymous or vexatious complaints will not normally be considered and the latter may lead to action under institute code of conduct procedures.

2.9 Any member of staff mentioned in a complaint will not be treated less favourably by the institute than if the complaint had not been brought. If, however, the complaint against a member of staff is upheld, that member may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under institute faculty policy.

2.10 Complaints will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality. There is an expectation that students and staff members will treat both the complaints processes and each other with respect.

### **3 Timeframe for making a complaint**

3.1 A student who is, or was recently a registered student, or a group of students wishing to complain should do so within 3 months of the event which has given rise to the complaint or, if a series of events has given rise to a complaint, within 3 months of the final event in the series.

### **4 Delegation of Responsibility**

4.1 The Executive Director delegates responsibility for dealing with student complaints as follows:

- Stage 1 (Early Resolution) student complaints are dealt with by the appropriate unit leaders/programme leaders

- Stage 2 (Formal Stage) student complaints are handled by the appropriate programme leaders with oversight by the Academic Studies and Misconduct Committee

- Stage 3 (Institute-Level Review) investigations are handled by the Institutional Management and Grievances Board

### **5 Complaints Procedure Stages**

#### **5.1 Stage 1: Early Resolution**

- i. Initially, a student should seek to deal with their complaint at the level at which the event leading to the complaint occurred, most likely at the unit or programme level, or within the relevant institutional service (library, labs).

- ii. A student should, if at all possible, address their complaint to the member of staff most directly involved in the event leading to the complaint, in order to give that person the opportunity to address their concerns.

- iii. If for any reason the student does not feel that this is possible, they should seek advice from their programme leader or the academic coordinator in order to identify an appropriate alternative mechanism of early resolution.

- iv. Every effort will be made by the Investigating faculty member to enable the clear articulation of the issue and to resolve the complaint simply and quickly. the investigating faculty may invite the student to a meeting to discuss the matter in an attempt to reach resolution.

iv. Stage 1 complaints will be dealt with in a timely fashion. Those involved in investigating the complaint will establish appropriate timescales based on its nature and complexity. These timescales should be communicated to the student and the student kept informed of any changes. Where possible, the investigation should be completed within 28 working days.

vi. At the end of stage 1, a student will be provided with a written response to their complaint which will either:

-Detail the proposed resolution; OR

-If no resolution has been proposed, explain why resolution has not been considered to be possible.

## 5.2 Stage 2: Formal Complaint

i. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they may choose to submit a Stage 2 complaint in writing to the Programme Leader or Academic Coordinator. This should be done within 21 working days of the stage 1 response. A stage 2 complaint will normally only be considered following the completion of the early resolution stage.

ii. If the Programme Leader or Academic Coordinator was involved in the case at stage 1, one of the others in this role will be assigned to consider the case.

iii. The receipt of the complaint form will normally be acknowledged within 7 working days.

iv. The assigned faculty member will consider the case appropriately. This will normally involve discussions with the student and/or the subject of the complaint.

v. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely fashion. The investigating faculty will establish appropriate timescales based on the nature and complexity of the complaint. These timescales should be communicated to the student and the student kept informed of any changes. Where possible, complaints should normally take no more than 21 working days to investigate from the acknowledgement being sent.

vi. The investigating faculty will inform the complainant, the subject of the complaint and the administrative manager, in writing, the outcome of the investigation.

vii. Following the outcome of stage 2: Formal Complaint, the student may request an internal review under section 5.3 of these regulations.

## 5.3 Stage 3: Institutional-level Review

i. If a student considers that:

a) there have been a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Stage 2 investigation; OR

b) new information has come to light, which the student was unable to disclose previously and which would have had a material impact upon the investigation previously undertaken; OR

c) the decision reached was unreasonable based on the information that has been available to the institution when the case was considered.

Then they can request a review of the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation. A student wishing to request a review must do so within 21 working days of the written response to Stage 2. The review request must be submitted in writing to the Manager of Administration.

ii. This is not a reopening of the original complaint. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the appeal is not alone a valid reason for requesting a review.

- iii. The receipt of a review request will normally be acknowledged within 7 working days.
- iv. The review will be carried out by the Institutional Management and Grievances Board. The review will consider whether the outcome of Stage 2 was reasonable, or should be reconsidered in the light of new information, rather than reconsider the original case and its evidence.
- v. Further discussions may be held with the student and/or subject of the complaint and with members of staff involved at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2
- vi. where possible, reviews should normally take no more than 21 working days to investigate from the acknowledgement being sent. The secretary of the Institutional Management and Grievances Board will establish appropriate timescales based on the nature and complexity of the case. These timescales should be communicated to the student and the student kept informed of any changes.
- vii. The secretary of the Institutional Management and Grievances Board will inform the complainant, the subject of the complaint and the Executive Director, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation.
- viii. Reporting of student complaints are disclosed with Middlesex University as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

- 5.4 Where students have exhausted the internal Students Complaints and Grievances procedure they can approach the partner institution Middlesex University under the provision of Appendix A of their Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure where appropriate. These can be found at [www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations)

## NOTES

These complaints procedures and any decisions made under them are not intended to give rise to legal rights, or obligations on the Institution to pay compensation either in respect of a decision made pursuant to the procedures or for a breach of these procedures. Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered. The institution will hear and consider a complaint only if lodged by a student or a group of students themselves and will not deal with third parties, even with the permission of the student(s), unless in exceptional circumstances which prevent a student representing themselves. The student(s) is(are) entitled, however, to be supported in any complaint hearing by an individual who will be a staff or student member of the institution. Legal representation is not allowed at meetings other than in exceptional circumstances and with the express permission of the Executive Director.