

SUMMARY

This policy outlines the process for submitting and dealing with:

- Complaints about the standard of services provided by OELS, and
- Appeals against decisions of an OELS academic body.

PART 1: Preliminary Information

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OMNES Education London School (OELS) is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for all students. However, the institution recognises that there are times when problems do arise and welcomes the opportunity to correct mistakes and to respond constructively when students are dissatisfied with a particular service or other aspects of OELS provision. Where an appeal or complaint is upheld, we will seek to put things right for a student whenever possible. If an appeal or complaint is not upheld, we will give reasons for the decision.

1.2 The procedure is not a legal process. It serves primarily as the formal mechanism through which consideration can be given: whether or not OELS has applied its regulations and/or procedures correctly and/or delivered its services to students satisfactorily, and whether any decision reached was both reasonable and proportionate.

1.3 Legal representation is not permitted at any meeting held under this procedure. If a student initiates legal proceedings against OELS, any appeal or complaint on the same or a related matter will normally be paused until those proceedings are complete.

1.4 Where appropriate, we will make reasonable adjustments at any stage of the proceedings to accommodate the needs of students with protected characteristics. Students with any specific requirements should write to the Quality Manager so that we can discuss any adjustments that may be necessary.

1.5 Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this procedure lies with the Quality Manager of OELS.

1.6 Where an appeal or complaint has been submitted, any ongoing actions or decisions shall stand until the outcome of the procedure is known.

2. SCOPE

2.1 The scope of this policy encompasses all procedures related to the handling of student appeals and complaints within OELS. It applies to all formal complaints and appeals lodged by students concerning academic and non-academic issues that affect a student's experience at OELS., including but not limited to:

- the administration of academic programmes,
- services provided by the institution,
- actions or inactions by staff or faculty

2.2 This policy outlines the mechanisms through which students can raise concerns, seek resolutions, and ensure their rights to fair treatment are protected, upholding the standards of transparency and accountability across the institution.

2.3 This policy is applicable to all students currently enrolled at OELS, ensuring they have access to a structured process for addressing their grievances. This policy complies with the standards set out in the Student Privacy and Data Protection Policy.

2.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with OELS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

PART 2: Process

3. COMPLAINTS

3.1 Many complaints can be resolved at an informal and/or local level. In the first instance, the most effective approach is usually for the student to take the matter directly to the lecturer or member of staff best able to deal with it.

3.2 Students are encouraged to pursue appropriate informal resolution before bringing a formal complaint. If an informal resolution does not resolve the issue, students may enter the formal procedure.

3.3 If a) the complaint is too serious to seek informal resolution, or, b) after seeking informal resolution the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, then please continue with the complaints process as outlined in section 5 of this policy.

3.4 The following matters **cannot** be considered under this procedure:

- Complaints submitted by someone acting on behalf of the student.
- Anonymous complaints.

4. APPEALS

Grounds for appeals:

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4.1 Students can appeal against the decisions made by a board, committee or panel e.g. the Exam Board, a Mitigating Circumstances panel or an Academic Misconduct panel

4.2 Appeals can be made against clear irregularities in grading, unfair treatment or assessment procedure. These include:

- Incorrect or misleading information about assessment tasks and requirements in assessment briefs
- Lack of information about the presentation of work for assessment (word counts, format, etc.)
- Uncertainty about submission deadlines
- Inappropriate management of continuous assessments/exams (disturbance, not following exam procedures, uncertainty over the time and material allowed)
- Failure to meet the needs of students eligible for special arrangements in assessment.

4.3 Appeals may address circumstances that were not reported at the time of assessment, provided there is evidence to support these claims.

4.4 Appeals submitted in cases of a student's disagreement with academic judgment in respect of their work. In cases where a student wishes to appeal based on academic judgement they must first:

- Request to view the exam script and/or feedback to understand how and why the grade they received was given by the lecturer.
- If the student still wishes to challenge the academic judgement, they must then submit an appeal. This will result in a remark, by a different academic, of the assessment in question. **Please note that the new grade will overrule the original grade, irrespective of whether it is higher or lower.**

The term "Academic judgment" refers to decisions made by qualified academic experts regarding a student's assessment or progression

5. SUBMISSION AND CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL OR COMPLAINT

5.1 If, a student wishes to pursue a formal complaint or appeal, they must complete [an Appeal and Complaint Form](#) that will be received directly by the Quality Manager who will ensure further actions are taken. We are not able to initiate this procedure until a signed form has been received.

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5.2 Students are encouraged to submit an appeal or complaint as soon as possible after the event in question, as this facilitates timely investigation and enables OELS to take prompt corrective action where necessary.

5.3 Appeals and complaints must be **submitted within 10 working days** of the event giving rise to the appeal or complaint. Appeals or complaints submitted beyond this time frame will be deemed to be expired and will not be considered unless there is independent evidence to show compelling reasons as to why the appeal or complaint was not raised in a timely manner.

5.4 In submitting an Appeal and Complaint Form, the student is requested to specify the nature of the matter complained about according to the following:

- An appeal may include any matter affecting the academic status of a student such as progression, results, perceived maladministration of an academic procedure, etc.
- A complaint relates to any matter which affects a student's experience at OELS.

5.5 Once the filled and signed Appeal and Complaint Form is received by the Quality Manager, the Quality Manager will inform the student that it has been received, and the matter will be initially assessed within 10 working days of confirmation of receipt.

5.6 The student should receive an outcome within 20 working days of submitting the form. In cases where investigation may take longer, the student will be informed before the 20 working day period is over.

5.7 Consideration of Appeal

Level 1 If there is sufficient evidence to merit consideration of the appeal on the ground of the assessment, material, marking errors or evidence, there will be an immediate rectifying action by the relevant staff and the student will be notified immediately.

Level 2 Otherwise, the appeal is referred to an Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee. In this case the Committee will be convened within 10 working days of the outcome of the initial scrutiny.

5.8 Consideration of Complaint

Level 1 The Quality Manager will proceed with a full investigation, liaising with relevant staff members and gathering necessary information. The focus will be on understanding the nature of the complaint, the context, and any precedents.

Based on the findings of the investigation, the Quality Manager will propose a resolution to address the complaint, which may include corrective actions, changes to policies or practices, or other appropriate responses to prevent future occurrences.

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Level 2 If dissatisfied with the outcome from the level 1 consideration, the student may appeal the decision. In this case the Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee will be convened within 10 working days of the outcome of the initial scrutiny.

5.9 Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee

5.9.1 The Committee members will include two staff members who have not been involved in the previous stages of the case and a secretary who may have been involved previously but is not part of the decision making.

- For cases when the student is invited, the student will receive an invitation by email at least 5 working days before the hearing, and the student can choose to be accompanied by one other person, who may observe and take notes, but may not contribute in anyway on behalf of the student. The student must notify the committee by email at least 24 hours in advance if he/she chooses to be accompanied.
- In cases when the student is invited, and the student chooses not to attend the Committee meeting or fails to attend without submitting in writing valid reasons for a postponement, the panel may meet in the student's absence.
- The Committee will consider the appeal and make a recommendation either to:
 - For academic appeals: permit the student to resit some/all failed assessments as a first or additional attempt, reinstating them on the programme if necessary.
 - Refer the case to the relevant Board or Committee with commentary.
 - May review or rescind the penalty or the sanction imposed.
 - Reject the appeal, accompanied by clear reasons that will be provided to the student.
 - Refer the matter back to an earlier level for reconsideration, e.g., if the correct process had not been followed, or if material, new information or evidence was made available.
 - Reject the appeal; If there is insufficient evidence to merit consideration of the appeal on either of the grounds set out, the appeal will be rejected.
 - The process and outcomes of the initial scrutiny will be documented and recorded.

5.9.2 The Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee decision will be final. The student may be able to submit a revised application only if s/he has new evidence to make known.

5.9.3 The student will be informed by the Quality Manager of the decision of the Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee in writing within 5 working days of the hearing unless special circumstances arise.

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6. TIME LIMITS

6.1 We are committed to dealing with all appeals and complaints as quickly as reasonably possible and will seek to follow the time limits set out in this procedure. Students can expect that OELS will normally have completed its consideration of an appeal or complaint within 20 working days of its submission. However, from time to time there may be valid reasons for a delay, particularly in more complex cases. In such circumstances, students will be informed of any delay and the reason for it.

7. ADVICE AND SUPPORT

7.1 Students are welcome to seek advice and clarification on the operation of the procedure from the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager is not in a position to provide support with the drafting of the appeals or complaints as this would conflict with their role in the process.

7.2 Where appropriate, a student may at any stage request mediation to help resolve their appeal or complaint. This can be done by contacting the student representative of their group.

7.3 request that students personally liaise with the Quality Manager about their case unless there is a good reason preventing them from doing so. We cannot accept appeals or complaints made on behalf of a student by another student, parent or a third party.

7.4 The sole purpose of any inquiries made under this procedure will be to investigate the grounds of the appeal or complaint by the student; the procedure will not in any way constitute or be seen to constitute a disciplinary process against the staff of OELS or a lecturer however in cases where an appeal or complaint raises a disciplinary concern any member of the process may refer it to the Director. This will be a wholly separate and independent process to the appeal or complaint.

8. INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY

8.1 The appeals and complaints procedure seeks to ensure fairness both to individual students and to the student body as a whole. We have set clear procedural boundaries to avoid any conflicts of interest. This ensures that individuals who might have a personal or professional stake in the outcome of an appeal or complaint are excluded from the decision-making process.

8.2 The Appeal and Complaint Handling Committee members are selected based on their expertise and/ or experience in the issues under investigation.

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9. DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 We will deal with appeals and complaints discreetly and sensitively and students will be treated without discrimination or disadvantage. It is nevertheless necessary to provide a copy of the written appeal or complaint and supporting evidence to any members of staff or lecturers whose response is required in order to address the appeal or complaint fully. Where a complaint is taken forward and concerns the actions of an individual member of OELS staff, that individual will be given the opportunity to respond.

9.2 The outcome of the procedure will be communicated to anyone who has been deemed the subject of the appeal or complaint by the Quality Manager, following the issue of the decision to the student.

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