

Resolving Complaints Informally

Head Policy	Student Complaints Policy
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Related documents	Formal Complaint Procedure Internal Appeal Procedure External Review Procedure Privacy Policy Student Charter

1. Introduction

The Media Design School (MDS) encourages students and staff to create a positive communication process that both benefits MDS and the classroom. MDS wishes to foster an environment of continuous improvement and expects both staff and students to raise concerns early to allow preventative measures to be put into effect.

This document should be read in conjunction with the MDS 'Student Complaints Policy' for full policy context and definitions.

2. Scope

These procedures apply to students who have identified issues and have not raised these formally within the formal internal avenues as described under the *Student Complaints Policy*.

There is no compulsion to resolve complaints informally. Students have the option of requesting a formal complaint as the first step in the complaint resolution process.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this process is to:

- establish if the issue is a misunderstanding or an error
- seek a prompt and informal resolution of the issue raised.

4. Media Design School's approach to complaint management

- 4.1. Informal discussion
- 4.2. Formal complaint
- 4.3. Internal appeal
- 4.4. External review

5. Process for resolving a complaint informally

	Steps
Step 1	<p>Any student (either enrolled or considering enrolling) who has a complaint or concern should first approach the person or persons responsible for the matter of the complaint; such matters may include action, behaviour, course delivery, facilities, policy or services.</p> <p>MDS staff will work with the student to ensure an informal discussion process is the appropriate course of action and if so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• resolve the issue immediately where possible• involve an appropriate staff member or manager who can assist in resolving the issue raised. <p>Students who have complaints about the facilities on campus are strongly encouraged to use this avenue as a means of suggesting improvements. Complaints of this nature are often due to the availability of resources, and a quicker resolution is more likely through an informal channel.</p> <p>If the matter is serious, staff will direct the student to the <i>Student Complaints Policy clause 6.2 (Formal Complaint) and Formal Complaint Procedure</i>.</p> <p>Informal student complaints or concerns will be dealt with in a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that in some circumstances, students may not feel comfortable raising their complaint directly with the person who is the subject of the complaint. Advice on taking the first steps towards resolving a complaint informally is available from the Programme Director and/or Academic Programme Leader (academic complaints) or Campus Director (non-academic complaints).</p>
Step 2	<p>If the complaint or concern is resolved, staff will implement required changes or recommend changes to the appropriate staff or department.</p> <p>If the complaint or concern has not been resolved, the student may lodge a formal complaint. Refer to the <i>Formal Complaint Procedure</i>.</p>

Students may contact Student Services at any stage during the process if they require further clarity on the process.

6. Important notes

A student who raises a complaint informally must remain enrolled during the process and is encouraged to continue attending classes and working towards their qualification, unless otherwise advised.

At any point, the student may decide to refer the matter to an external agency. However, in most cases, MDS strongly encourages students to exhaust all internal processes before they contact an external body. Some external agencies also require that before a student lodges a complaint with them that said student has attempted to resolve the matter internally. For information on how to make an external complaint, refer to the *External Review Procedure*.

7. Record keeping and confidentiality

Records of all complaints handled under this procedure and their outcomes will be recorded in the Student Records Management System and will be maintained for at least five years. This is to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Vice President, Governance, Strategy and Student Administration.

All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the *Privacy Policy*.