



POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL

POLICY 046

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX

People in scope:					
All students	HE Students	Professional Students	All staff and students	Staff only	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sites in scope:			Publication:		
All	London	Online	Internal	Public	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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Document Revision History

Version Log

Committee / Approval Date	Author	Version	Publication Date	Page Reference & Summary
Quality and Standards Committee / 13.08.24	Registrar	3.1	October 2024	Page 5 – added additional information and clarity regarding the Formal Stage Review and Completion of Procedures Letters.

Related Documentation

Document Reference No. (Policy version / Supporting doc. #)	Document Type	Link or Dept. Owner	Document Title

POLICY 046. Student Complaints and Grievances

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy outlines Point Blank's approach to supporting students who wish to raise a complaint about its provisions and operations.
- 1.2 This policy explains in an open, accessible and transparent way, how Point Blank manages and handles student complaints.

2. POLICY DETAILS

- 2.1 Complaints made about Point Blank are taken seriously and, where justified, are acted upon in a way that ensures the student's interests are protected.
- 2.2 Point Blank is committed to delivering a high quality student experience and feeds all student feedback, including complaints, into its annual review framework(s). All students are encouraged to provide any feedback or raise any concerns in a timely manner to ensure swift resolution.
- 2.3 This policy is underpinned by the following guiding principles which stipulate complaints shall be:
 - Treated seriously, fairly and equitably;
 - Dealt with promptly, sensibly and at the appropriate level within Point Blank;
 - Treated and decided upon consistently across Point Blank.
- 2.4 Point Blank reserves the right to reclassify a complaint as an academic appeal or vice versa, if the submission is deemed to have been made under the incorrect procedure. Reclassification may also occur where 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.
- 2.5 The final decision regarding a matter raised under this Policy and its relating procedures will be considered to be the final decision of Point Blank. There is no right to consideration of the same matter under this or any other associated policy.
- 2.6 Each complaint will be considered on its own merit, subject to all legal and professional requirements.
- 2.7 A student will not be treated less favourably by Point Blank or suffer any detriment or disadvantage if they make a complaint in good faith, regardless of whether the complaint is successful. Frivolous or vexatious complaints may be considered under section 2.10.
- 2.8 Anonymous or vexatious allegations made against Point Blank, or made against a student or member of staff will not normally be considered under the complaints procedure. This does not include anonymous disclosures of harassment and sexual misconduct which are handled as per Point Blank's Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and related procedures.
- 2.9 Any member of staff mentioned in a complaint will not be treated less favourably by Point Blank than if the complaint had not been submitted. If, however, the complaint against a member of staff is upheld, that member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under Point Blank's Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

2.10 Frivolous or vexatious complaints:

- The Registrar (or designated nominee) may reject a complaint at any time if the complaint is found to have no serious purpose or is intended to cause disruption. We refer to these complaints as “frivolous or vexatious.”
- A frivolous or vexatious complaint can be characterised in a number of ways, including any or a combination of the following:
 - i. Complaints which are obsessive, harassing, persistent or repetitious;
 - ii. An insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/ or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
 - iii. An insistence upon pursuing any complaint in an unreasonable manner;
 - iv. Demands for redress that lacks any real purpose or merit.
- Point Blank are sensitive to the fact that there may be underlying reasons for a student repeatedly raising the same or similar issues despite receiving a full response.
- Deciding whether a complaint is frivolous or vexatious must assess a careful balance across the surrounding circumstances. The decision to reject a complaint will be taken jointly by the Complaints Panel. Point Blank’s main consideration will be the issues and matters raised in the complaint, rather than the behaviour of the complainant.
- If the Complaints Panel decides that a student’s complaint is frivolous or vexatious, they will confirm this in writing and explain that the complaint is terminated. This will be detailed in any relevant subsequent Completion of Procedures letter.

2.11 Point Blank encourages all students to raise any causes for concern they may have at the earliest opportunity. Most issues can be resolved at the early resolution stage.

2.12 Point Blank recognises that students may wish to lodge complaints as a group. In such instances students are asked to nominate one spokesperson with whom Point Blank staff will liaise to address the complaint. The spokesperson should endeavour to gather the views of all the students who wish to lodge the complaint. Students may opt to have their elected Student Representative act as spokesperson for the group.

2.13 Complaints must be submitted by a registered or recently registered student of Point Blank. Complaints submitted by a third party (e.g. parent, guardian or other representative) will not normally be considered. Students may identify a representative to support them in writing and submitting their complaint.

2.14 Disabled students may request that adjustments are made to the complaints process, where reasonable. This may include timeline extensions, or submission of a complaint in an alternative format (e.g. a verbal submission).

2.15 Formal complaints must be submitted in writing using the Complaints Form (unless otherwise agreed under reasonable adjustments) along with any documentation/ evidence in support of the complaint.

2.16 Should there be any reason for Point Blank to doubt the authenticity of any evidence provided, Point Blank may need to take steps to verify the evidence. If it found not to be genuine, Point Blank may decide to terminate the complaint and/ or consider the matter under its disciplinary procedures.

- 2.17 A student or group of students (whether currently enrolled or recently enrolled) wishing to make a complaint must do so within 21 working days of the event which has given rise to the complaint or, if a series of events has given rise to a complaint, within 21 working days of the final event in the series. Complaints received outside of this timescale will not normally be considered.
- 2.18 Students can normally expect an outcome to a formal complaint within 21 working days of submission. Where necessary, this timeline may need to be extended but will not normally exceed 90 days. Should this occur, the student will be frequently updated on the progress of their complaint.
- 2.19 Complaint outcomes are determined by the Complaints Outcome Panel consisting of a combination of at least four of the following members of staff (or appropriate designated nominees):
- General Manager
 - Registrar
 - Head of Quality
 - Head of School and Facilities
 - Head of Education and Curriculum
 - Quality Manager
 - Student Experience Manager
- 2.20 Students may request a Formal Stage review within 21 working days of receiving their Formal Stage outcome. Reviews can be requested only in the following circumstances:
- The student believes there was a material error in the management and handling of the case; or
 - There is further or new information to be considered and there is a good reason why this was not able to be disclosed earlier in the process.
- 2.21 Formal Stage Reviews are carried out by a member of staff who was not involved in a previous stage of the complaint. This member of staff will carry out an independent review of the stage 2 processing of the case but will not necessarily reconsider the case itself.
- 2.22 Following the outcome of a Formal Stage review (or after the Formal Stage outcome if a review is not appropriate), the complainant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (CoP).
- 2.23 The CoP will confirm that Point Blank's internal procedures have been exhausted and the complainant may escalate their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Information and eligibility can be found at oiahe.org.uk.

3. POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to the following students at Point Blank:
- Students on Higher Education programmes at Point Blank London;
 - Students on Higher Education programmes via Distance Education (Online School);
 - Students on professional courses at Point Blank London;
 - Students on professional courses at the Point Blank Online School.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Academic Appeals Policy

- Student Disciplinary Policy

5. POLICY OWNER

This policy is under the responsibility of the Student Engagement and Experience Committee. The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this policy is carried out in line with Point Blank's Quality Assurance Framework.

The Student Engagement and Experience Committee delegates the operational responsibility of this policy to the following staff:

- General Manager
- Registrar
- Head of Quality
- Head of School and Facilities
- Head of Education and Curriculum
- Quality Manager
- Student Experience Manager
- Quality and Academic Support Officer.

6. PROCEDURES

The relevant procedure to accompany this policy is titled Procedure 046 Student Complaints and Grievances and can be found at www.pointblankmusicschool.com/legal/public-policies/.

7. EXHIBITS, APPENDICES AND FORMS

- Complaints Form

8. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

8.1 Internal
n/a

- 8.2 External
- Middlesex University Regulations;
 - OIA Good Practice framework.