

APPENDIX X

Student Complaints Policy and Procedures

10.1 POLICY

10.1.1

Dublin Institute of Design is committed to providing education and services and of the highest quality. However, we realise that on occasion students or prospective students may feel that we have not met appropriate standards and that they have legitimate cause for complaint.

Dublin Institute of Design staff regards student feedback, both negative and positive, as an opportunity to improve our provision of education and related services.

10.1.2

This Complaints Policy and the Procedures laid out within, aim to enable students to bring to our attention, matters of concern about their experiences at Dublin Institute of Design and to provide the Institute with the opportunity to investigate those concerns with the aim of a satisfactory resolution. The procedure to be followed seeks to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved.

10.1.3

All complaints will be taken seriously and, as far as possible, be treated in a consistent fashion throughout the Institution. Students who make complaints will not suffer disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making a complaint. Only where complaints are proven to be malicious may there be any recourse to disciplinary investigation and possible action against a student.

10.1.4

All complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to protect the confidentiality of students and staff. Any person named in a complaint will be informed of the complaint and will have a right of reply as part of the investigative process. Anonymous complaints may not be investigated since a thorough investigation would not be possible in these circumstances. Generally, third party complaints will not be investigated, however, complaints that are severe or very serious in nature will be investigated, especially in cases that infringe on law or legislation.

10.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

10.2.1

The procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- Standards of service, courses or facilities provided by the Institution
- Actions or lack of action by Dublin Institute of Design and/or its staff

The procedure does not cover the following:

- Requests for new or different services or provisions
- Matters where there are separate policies or procedures, specifically:
 - Academic appeals
 - Disciplinary matters

The complainant will have the right to be afforded an interview as part of the investigative process.

The complainant may be accompanied at any interview as a result of the complaint by a person of his or her choosing. Such persons may speak for the complainant.

10.3 COMPLAINTS STAGES

10.3.1 Stage 1 - Informal Stage

10.3.1.1

People with a concern are encouraged to raise complaints informally in the first instance with the member of the Institute's staff who appears to be most directly involved in the matter giving rise to the complaint. Many causes for concern are a result of a misunderstanding, which can be quickly resolved.

10.3.1.2

Informal complaints will normally be responded to within 7 days of receipt of the complaint. Records of such complaints will not normally be retained or recorded centrally at this stage, unless the complaint and the member of staff dealing with it wish to do so.

10.3.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

10.3.2.1

Where the informal stage of the complaints procedure has not produced an acceptable resolution of the complaint, a formal complaint may be made. A formal complaint should normally be lodged within 14 days of the act or omission giving rise to it. Only in exceptional circumstances will a complaint be considered outside this timescale.

To enter a formal complaint the complainant must:

- Put the complaint in writing using the Institutes Formal Complaints Form (QAF10), which can be obtained from Student Services or online
- Lodge the complaint with Student Services **or**, where the complaint is about services which are the responsibility of the administration, with a Director of the Institute

Student Services will enter the complaint in the Complaints Log.

10.3.2.2

Student Services will forward the complaints form to the relevant party who will then:

1. Provide a written acknowledgment of the complaint to the complainant within 10 working days
2. Inform any members of staff concerned within 3 working days that a complaint has been submitted
3. Investigate the complaint, including interview with complainant
4. Identify appropriate courses of action in an attempt to resolve the complaint
5. Provide a written response to the complaint

It is expected that almost all complaints should be capable of resolution by following this procedure and that the matter will be resolved within 30 working days.

If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, the complainant will be invited for interview with the Institute Director. A witness may be present at this stage.

10.4 MONITORING AND REPORTING TO DIRECTORS AND ACADEMIC COUNCIL

10.4.1

The Institute recognises that the majority of complaints will be heard and resolved under the initial complaints procedure and that it would not be possible to monitor this effectively in detail. However, an indication of the success of these procedures can be deduced from student feedback received as part of annual course monitoring process and from the number of formal complaints coming forward.

10.4.2

The overall responsibility for monitoring the use and operation of the formal procedure set out above lies with the Institute Director

10.4.3

The Director shall ensure that an annual report on the operation of this procedure and on the number and nature of formal complaints received under ‘Section 3 Complaints Procedures’ above in the preceding year is made to the Management Board.

Support Documentation:

- **Form QAF10** Dublin Institute of Design’s Formal Complaints Form