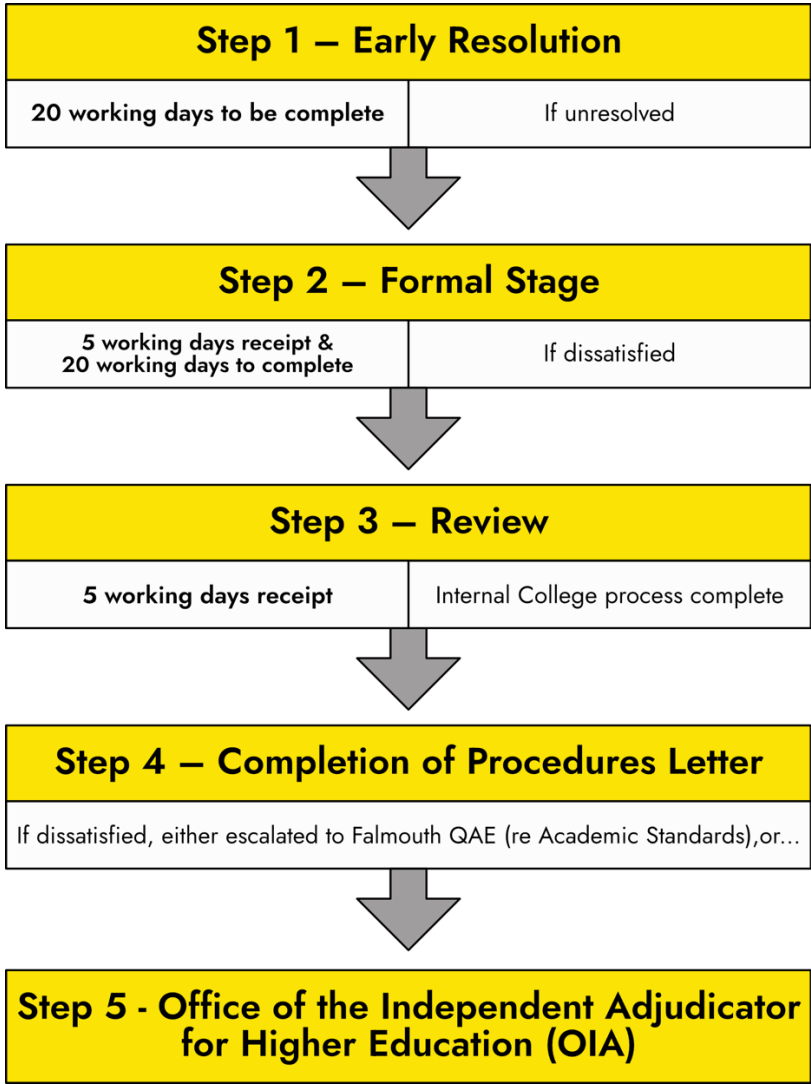




**The College of Music**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Student Complaints Procedure</b>
<b>Code:</b>	<b>WBSCP-01</b>
<b>Published:</b>	<b>January 2023</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Senior Management Team</b>
<b>Policy owner:</b>	<b>College Manager</b>





This procedure applies to any student, prospective student and applicant of WaterBear.

WaterBear is a College of Falmouth University and as such its students are students of Falmouth University, studying at WaterBear. All WaterBear policies and procedures have been tailored to best suit the specific requirements of the College, its students and staff. In some instances, Falmouth policies and procedures may be deferred to for additional guidance, or where Falmouth policy has been deemed to cover both the requirements of the University's operations and those of its academic partners.

#### Definitions

- You/Your refers to a student, prospective student or applicant of WaterBear
- We/Us/Our/The College refers to WaterBear

The Complaints Procedure is managed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) which is responsible for the effective development, implementation and management of the College's policies, procedures and processes.

### **1. Step 1 – Early Resolution**

- 1.1 In the first instance, you should discuss your complaint with the relevant member of staff directly concerned, where appropriate. If you do not feel comfortable approaching the person most directly concerned, you should speak your Programme Manager, Programme Officer or Tutor.
- 1.2 Timescale. You should initiate Step 1 – Early Resolution within eight (8) weeks of the incident that is the cause for complaint.
- 1.3 Within twenty (20) working days of raising your concerns, Step 1 should be considered complete. Should you wish to do so, you may then submit a formal complaint (Step 2) to escalate your concerns if you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of Step 1.

### **2. Step 2 – Formal Stage**

- 2.1 If you are unable to resolve your concerns through Step 1, you may make a formal complaint in writing, which must be submitted to The College Manager along with supporting evidence.



- 2.2 Timescale. You should initiate Step 2 – Formal Stage within 10 working days of the conclusion of Step 1.
- 2.3 Your written complaint should include as much information as possible, in particular, the following:
- 2.3.1 full details of the cause for the complaint, including its impact;
  - 2.3.2 any action you have taken so far and the date(s) of that action;
  - 2.3.3 the response you have received;
  - 2.3.4 the reason for your dissatisfaction or disagreement with that response;
  - 2.3.5 the remedy you are seeking.

Please be aware that where there is no evidence of Step 1 – Early Resolution having been sought, or where there are no compelling reasons as to why early resolution was not possible and/or appropriate, you may be referred back to Step 1 of this procedure.

Where a complaint is under consideration at Step 2, the case will be referred to the most appropriate member of staff for a response. Where possible, this person will be someone who has had no previous involvement in the matter.

Where a complaint involves alleged misconduct of a WaterBear student, it will be referred to the student support team to determine whether any immediate action is required under the Student Disciplinary Policy. In some instances, it may be necessary to make this referral at Step 1, for example, when the allegation is considered to be serious, but a student does not wish to put their complaint in writing.

2.4 Where a complaint involves alleged misconduct of a member of staff, it will be referred to the Chief Financial Officer or Chief Executive Officer to determine whether any immediate action is required under the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy (WBDIPP-01). In some instances, it may be necessary to make this referral at Step 1, for example, when the allegation is considered to be serious, but the student does not wish to put their complaint in writing.

2.5 Once received, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your complaint within five (5) working days.



2.6 Whilst it is anticipated that the investigation will be completed and a formal response issued within twenty (20) working days, this period may need to be extended in College vacations and/or depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint.

### **3. Step 3 – Review**

3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Step 2 you may request a review of the procedure undertaken at Step 2, on the following grounds:

3.1.1 a material error or irregularity in the conduct of Step 2 of the Complaints Procedure; and/or

3.1.2 you have material new evidence that has become available since the commencement of Step 2 that you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide by the original Step 2 complaint deadline.

3.2 You should make your request for a Step 3 – Review by completing a request in writing, to be submitted to the College Manager within ten (10) working days of the completion of Step 2.

3.3 Once received, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your Step 3– Review request within five (5) working days.

3.4 Step 3 – Review requests will be considered by an appropriate member of staff who has not previously had any involvement in your complaint. If you submitted your request outside of the specified deadline, and have not provided a valid reason for the delay, your Step 3 review request will be considered out of time, and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (see section 4)

### **4. Completion of Procedures Letter**

4.1 The completion of Step 3 marks the conclusion of the College’s internal processes and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

A Completion of Procedures letter will also be issued in the following circumstances:

4.1.1 Where your Step 1 or Step 2 complaint was submitted outside of the specified time-scales and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for this; or

4.1.2 Where your Step 3 – Review request was submitted outside of the specified deadline and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for missing the deadline.



In such cases the letter will confirm that the College's procedures have not been completed, and that you are now out of time to do so.

**If your case concerns academic standards, you can upon the conclusion of WaterBear's procedure escalate the matter to Falmouth University's QAE (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) department. This can be done via your Programme Manager or directly at [qae@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:qae@falmouth.ac.uk)**

## **5. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)**

- 5.1 WaterBear subscribes to an independent scheme for the review of student complaints provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). If, following receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may be able to apply to the OIA for a review of your case.
  - 5.2 Please be aware that prospective students and applicants are not able to have recourse to the OIA under their rules.
  - 5.3 Should you decide to raise your case with the OIA, you must do so within 12 months of receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, using the OIA's complaint form. The OIA will normally only consider cases which have been through the College's own procedures first.
  - 5.4 Further details can be found on the OIA website at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). The OIA's contact details are: Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading RG1 3AB, Tel: 0118 959 9813 Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk).
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