

**LCCA**

**London College of  
Contemporary Arts**



**LCCA Student Concerns & Complaints  
Policy and Procedure 2021-22**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The London College of Contemporary Arts (LCCA) is committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning, and we therefore encourage our students to give us feedback. We believe it is important for students to be able to express their concerns and ideas for improvement, complaints, and compliments to enable us to improve the quality of our services and academics. Students may do this in a variety of ways including this procedure.

1.2 LCCA recognises that things can go wrong and when they do students may have legitimate reasons to complain about LCCA's provision of academic courses, facilities, services, or staff.

1.3 LCCA aims to ensure that student complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly, and consistently. We also aim to learn from the outcomes of complaint investigations to help improve our services and enhance the student experience.

1.4 Wherever possible, students' concerns about their course, services provided by LCCA or any other aspect of their experience at LCCA should be dealt with promptly at the earliest opportunity and through informal discussion.

1.5 LCCA is committed to ensuring that complaints are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner, are treated fairly and transparently, promote information conciliation where possible, and ensures that feedback and lessons learned are incorporated into practice.

## 2. Underlying Principles and Policy Remit

2.1 Complaints are dealt with without recrimination. This means that students making complaints will not suffer disadvantage or reproach and their studies and will not be prejudiced because of making a complaint.

2.2 LCCA, its students and staff have rights and responsibilities under this procedure. Consequently, students who have complaints must make them in good faith and without malice. Students who make complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, malicious, obscene, or abusive may be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

2.3 For the purpose of this procedure, a complaint is defined as a written expression of concern about the provision of a course, or a related aspect of service, which is provided to students enrolled on, or recently graduated from an LCCA course, the service or course failing to match the standards of service promised or failing to match the standards that it would be reasonable to expect.

2.4 This procedure covers all aspects of the student experience except for the following where separate procedures apply:

2.4.1 Matters relating to academic judgement, academic performance and outcomes should be considered under the Academic Appeals Process.

2.4.2 Disciplinary issues, including complaints against another student will be dealt with by the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

2.4.3 Racist, sexual, and other forms of harassment are covered by the Harassment and Bullying Policy.

2.4.4 The approval of payments of refunds.

2.4.5 Any issue that may fall under the Safeguarding or Prevent Policies.

2.5 All complaints investigated under the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy will be treated confidentially. However, where necessary to conduct a fair investigation of the complaint, a copy of the written complaint (with any enclosures) will be forwarded to any member(s) of staff concerned in the complaint as part of the investigation.

2.6 Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered. However, in exceptional cases, anonymity may be granted to a complainant and/or witnesses. In all such cases, LCCA will be mindful of the need to act fairly in the interests of all parties concerned in the complaint. Concerns may be raised anonymously.

2.7 Timelines for resolution are outlined in the process details below, all complaints should be submitted within 1 month of the incident.

2.8 The Head of Quality Assurance will monitor and review the number, level and type of complaints that are made over the course of each academic year. This data will form part of the measures used to assess and enhance LCCAs services and the student experience. A report will be submitted annually to the Academic Board and Board of Governors.

2.9 The complaints procedure operates on the principles of natural justice including:

- The notion that there are two sides to every dispute.
- All parties are given the opportunity to provide evidence.
- Full disclosure of allegations will be given to all parties involved in the complaint.
- All parties involved in the complaint have the right to be accompanied by a friend or non-legal representative.
- It is assumed that all parties will act in good faith and provide information, which is true, complete, and not misleading. This may include information that may not support their position.

### 3. Grounds for Complaints under this policy

3.1 Grounds for complaint may include the following:

- A failing in an academic or support service
- Failure to meet obligations including those outlined in course/student handbooks and other materials provided by LCCA
- Direct or indirect discrimination arising from disability
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional materials or other LCCA publications
- The conduct of a member of staff

- Deficiencies in the quality of your learning experience or resources.

3.2 In order to raise a complaint students must be registered on one of LCCA's courses. If they have completed their studies and are therefore no longer registered, they will normally be allowed one further calendar month from the last day of their last term in which to raise a complaint.

3.3 Consideration of late complaints will only be given very exceptionally and in extreme circumstances, such as serious illness or hospitalisation during the time from a student's last day present on the course, and where evidence of a valid reason for any delay is provided.

3.4 Complaints may be raised by an individual student or a group of students. Where a group complaint is raised, the group will normally be asked to nominate a lead correspondent as the main channel of communication between LCCA and the group. Complaints raised by third parties will only be accepted where express written consent has been given for the third party to act on behalf of the student(s).

3.5 Students are expected to have met their obligations and responsibilities as a member of the LCCA community in line with the Student Code of Conduct, including behaving with reasonable consideration for other staff and students at the time of submitting the complaint.

### 4. Exceptional Case Process

4.1 Where a complaint relates to the LCCA's provision of support for students with disabilities and/or specific learning needs, the Investigating Officer will seek appropriate support and guidance from other relevant specialists including Student Support Services. The investigation of these types of cases may also be informed by other relevant policies including Student Finance England's Exceptional Case Process.

4.2 It is recognised that complaints of this nature may be subject to time restrictions and, where possible, LCCA will always aim to work within given time limits so as not to disadvantage the student.

### 5. Mediation/Conciliation

5.1 Mediation and/or conciliation are voluntary processes where an impartial, independent third party is appointed to help parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution.

5.2 Where appropriate, LCCA may offer mediation and/or conciliation at both the local and formal level stages of complaint investigations (Stages 1 and 2) as we believe that it can often help each party understand what is driving the concern and may be more likely to result in a swift and mutually satisfactory solution.

5.3 Where all parties agree to mediation or conciliation in the formal stage (Stage 2) of considering a complaint, they should agree revised timescales. Prior to starting the process,

all parties need to be clear about the scope of the mediation or conciliation process, how the arrangements may fit with other relevant policies and whether each party is expected to agree in advance to accept any solution that may be offered. It may be necessary to restart Stage 2 if agreement cannot be reached.

## 6. Support and Advice

6.1 If a student has any queries about this policy and how it might apply to them, they are able to seek advice from any of the following people/services:

- Student Services Team
- The Administration Team
- Quality Assurance

## 7. The Complaints Procedure

7.1 LCCA has a three stage internal student complaints procedure in place. Once the procedure is completed external options are available with the validating body UCA (University of the Creative Arts) and the OIA (Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education). LCCA believes that most difficulties can be resolved at an early stage by talking informally with the individual(s) most concerned with the issue at a local level, at the earliest opportunity.

7.2 The student complaints procedure comprises three main stages:

- Stage 1: Local
- Stage 2: Formal
- Stage 3: Review

### Stage 1 – Local Level

7.3 Where a student has attempted to resolve matters by informal discussion but is not satisfied with the outcome, the student may wish to initiate Stage 1 of the complaints process. In the first instance, complaints should be raised locally with the relevant Tutor, Course Director, or Head of Service. Complaints must be submitted in writing, but it is recommended that students discuss the situation with Student Support or Quality Assurance if students are unsure of how to begin the process.

7.4 The complaint should be raised within 1 month of the actions or events that prompted the complaint. Late complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

7.5 Students are advised to keep a record of the complaint and keep any copies of correspondence. The student should expect to receive a written response or email acknowledgement within 5 working days of the initial correspondence by the person who the complaint has been addressed to, and full response within 15 working days.

NB: This timescale may be extended due to vacation periods, where the complaint is complex or multiple parties are involved. In these circumstances complainants will be informed of any delay at the earliest opportunity, together with an indication of the anticipated timescale for response.

7.6 In responding to the student, the person who received the complaint may offer a mediation or conciliation meeting and inform the student where it may have been escalated to management for response. All correspondence should be copied to the Complaints mailbox (complaints@lcca.org.uk) for monitoring by the Quality Assurance Team, ensuring that the complaint is logged, and timescales are adhered to.

7.7 The complaint will be investigated by a local officer (a nominated member of staff, who is usually the manager responsible for the area the complaint relates to). Following the investigation, the local officer will make one of the following determinations:

- That there is substance to all or part of the complaint.
- That there is no substance to the complaint.

7.8 The local officer will also determine what action(s) should be taken to address the cause of the difficulties that led to the complaint. This may include where there are findings of no substance, but the investigation identifies improvements to LCCA services that would avoid similar future complaints.

7.9 Complainants will normally be provided with a proposed resolution to their complaint in writing (normally by email) within 15 working days of raising a complaint. Where a complaint is resolved at this stage, the student will be provided with a written copy of the agreed resolution. The Quality Assurance Team will also be notified of the resolution.

7.10 On occasion, LCCA may decide that due to the specific circumstances surrounding a complaint or due to the specific nature of the complaint, it should be escalated to Stage 2 of the student complaints process without having undergone a Stage 1 investigation. In these cases, all stakeholders, including the complainant(s) and any subject(s) of a complaint will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it.

7.11 Where the student is dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, or the complaint has not been dealt with locally following attempts to resolve the matter, the student can submit their complaint to initiate stage 2 by contacting [complaint@lcca.org.uk](mailto:complaint@lcca.org.uk).

### Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

7.12 Formal complaints should be submitted to the email outlined in 7.11 and should include the student complaints form (appendix 1), details and evidence of where local resolution has taken place and the reasons that the solutions were not agreed upon.

7.13 Stage 2 complaints should be received within 1 month of the completion of the local level (stage 1) process (and within one month from the last day of the student's last term). Late

complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

7.14 When completing the Student Complaints Form, the following information should be provided:

- details of the complaint.
- an outline of the steps that have already been taken to try and resolve the complaint and why the responses received are not considered satisfactory.
- the desired resolution.

7.15 The student should also provide evidence to support any allegations made, as well as any correspondence made during the local level process. Where a student fails to provide reasonable evidence, LCCA reserves the right not to progress the complaint further.

Evidence supplied could include witness statements, emails or written correspondence that support the complaint. Evidence must be provided at the time of submitting the Stage 2 complaint. Unless clearly stated that further evidence is to follow, Stage 2 investigation will not consider evidence submitted after this time. It is important for students to keep a copy of the form and any other documentation submitted for their records.

7.16 The Quality Assurance Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and appoint an impartial senior member of staff to act as the Investigating Officer (IO) who will be unrelated to the area under investigation.

7.17 Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, a copy of the complaint (with any enclosures LCCA considers appropriate) will normally be sent to them for their response. Where a complaint is against a member of staff, any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the appropriate employment policies, which may take precedence over the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy.

7.18 The investigation may include the following:

- A meeting with a designated senior officer to clarify matters or procedures
- Liaison with the relevant department to support a local investigation.
- Mediation or conciliation meetings (this may also be requested by the student at any time).
- Appoint an independent IO where needed if the complaint is complex or contains serious allegations against staff.
- Arrange a formal hearing.

7.19 Following the investigation, the IO will make one of the following determinations and will be detailed in a written report:

- that there is substance to all or part of the complaint; or
- that there is no substance to the complaint.

7.20 If the complaint is considered to have substance, the student(s) will be informed of the

means to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is deemed to have no substance, the student(s) can expect to be given an explanation. In all cases the student(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome of the complaint investigation within 1 month of receiving the complaint. Complex cases may, however, take longer to investigate with the appropriate levels of care and thoroughness. Should this be the case, the student(s) will be informed of any delay at the earliest opportunity.

7.21 The Quality Assurance Officer will ask the student(s) to confirm their acceptance or rejection of the Stage 2 investigation outcome. This must be provided within one month of the report issue date. If the complainant(s) either confirm their acceptance of the outcome or do not respond within the stated timeframe, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (CoP).

### Stage 3 – Review

7.22 If the response to the complaint resolution is not considered satisfactory to the student, they are able to request a Case Review. The student(s) may only request a Case Review on one or more of the following grounds:

- any procedural irregularity which has materially disadvantaged the student in the investigation or outcome of the complaint.
- the emergence of new and relevant material that supports the complaint, that was not available at the time the complaint was first submitted.
- that the decision was unreasonable in all circumstances.

7.23 The Stage 3 review will not consider issues that were not cited for investigation in the Stage 2 process.

7.24 Any request for a review must be made in writing to the Head of Quality Assurance within one month of the students receiving the letter outlining the outcome of the formal stage 2 investigation. The request must clearly set out the ground(s) in which the review is being requested. The request should be sent to [complaints@lcca.org.uk](mailto:complaints@lcca.org.uk).

7.25 The Head of Quality Assurance (or nominee where applicable) will review the case. Where needed the case may be referred to the Senior Management Team (SMT) to discuss the investigation and any further outcomes.

7.26 The Head of Quality Assurance (or nominee) will make one of the following determinations for agreement by SMT:

- that the complaint has been investigated in accordance with LCCA procedures, that no new and relevant material has been presented and a reasonable outcome has been recommended.
- that the complaint has not been investigated in accordance with LCCA procedures. In this case the complaint will normally be referred to Stage 2 of the process to be re-investigated.
- that new and relevant material has become known. In this case the Head of Quality Assurance

(or nominee) may either recommend a new outcome or refer the complaint back to Stage 2 to be re-investigated.

- that the recommended complaint outcome or resolution was not reasonable. In this case, the Head of Quality Assurance (or nominee) may recommend an alternative resolution.

7.27 The student(s) should be notified of the outcome of the review within one month and will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (CoP). Where it is not possible to review a complaint within this timeframe, the student(s) will be informed of any delay at the earliest opportunity. The CoP letter will usually be sent within 5 working days of the SMT date where the outcome was approved. A copy of the CoP letter will be copied to the Managing Director.

## 8. External Review

8.1 A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome after all internal processes have been completed may raise the complaint with the validating partner in accordance with the partner's specific requirements.

NB: Currently this will be referring to UCA's complaints procedure.

8.2 In such circumstances, LCCA will comply fully with the requests and requirements of the validating partner institution and their investigation procedures.

8.3 Where a complaint is upheld by the validating partner, the partner will communicate these findings to the student and LCCAs Head of Quality Assurance. This will be reviewed by SMT, and any outstanding actions will be implemented within the specified timeframe. LCCA will take appropriate action where the experience of the wider student population may be affected, and this will be communicated to all students.

8.4 Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the LCCA and the validating partners' attempts to resolve their complaint, may refer the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of unresolved student complaints.

8.5 Students have 12 months from the date of issue of the 'Completion of Procedures' letter to refer their complaint to the OIA.

8.6 Further details about the OIA can be obtained from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> or by contacting the OIA at the following address:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education  
Second Floor  
Abbey Gate,  
57-75 Kings Road,  
Reading,  
RG1 3AB

Telephone: 0118 959 9813 / Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk)

## 9. Concerns

9.1 A student can raise a concern about any element of their student experience before elevating to a complaint or following the complaints procedure. To do this a student should contact the person in charge of the area where there is a concern (Course/Module Director, Head of Department etc.). The Concerns form should be used (appendix 2).

9.2 Students can also raise concerns with the student representative for discussion at the School Boards of Study.

9.3 LCCA is committed to providing a high-quality student experience, feedback is sought through alternative means such as surveys, questionnaires, and student forums where, if appropriate to do so, a concern may be raised.

9.4 If a student is not comfortable with raising concerns directly or has already done so with no further action taken, then they should commence the complaints process.

## 10. Anonymous Reporting

10.1 LCCA has a robust complaints process that aims to protect and support students. However, we recognise that sometimes people may not be confident or willing to reveal their identity when raising concerns. As LCCA endeavour to respond to all feedback, we allow students to submit anonymous reports.

10.2 These reports will be collated, reviewed, and fed into decision making groups that contain Student Representatives and LCCA management. This will help us identify and discuss any areas of concern that may not otherwise be identified through usual processes.

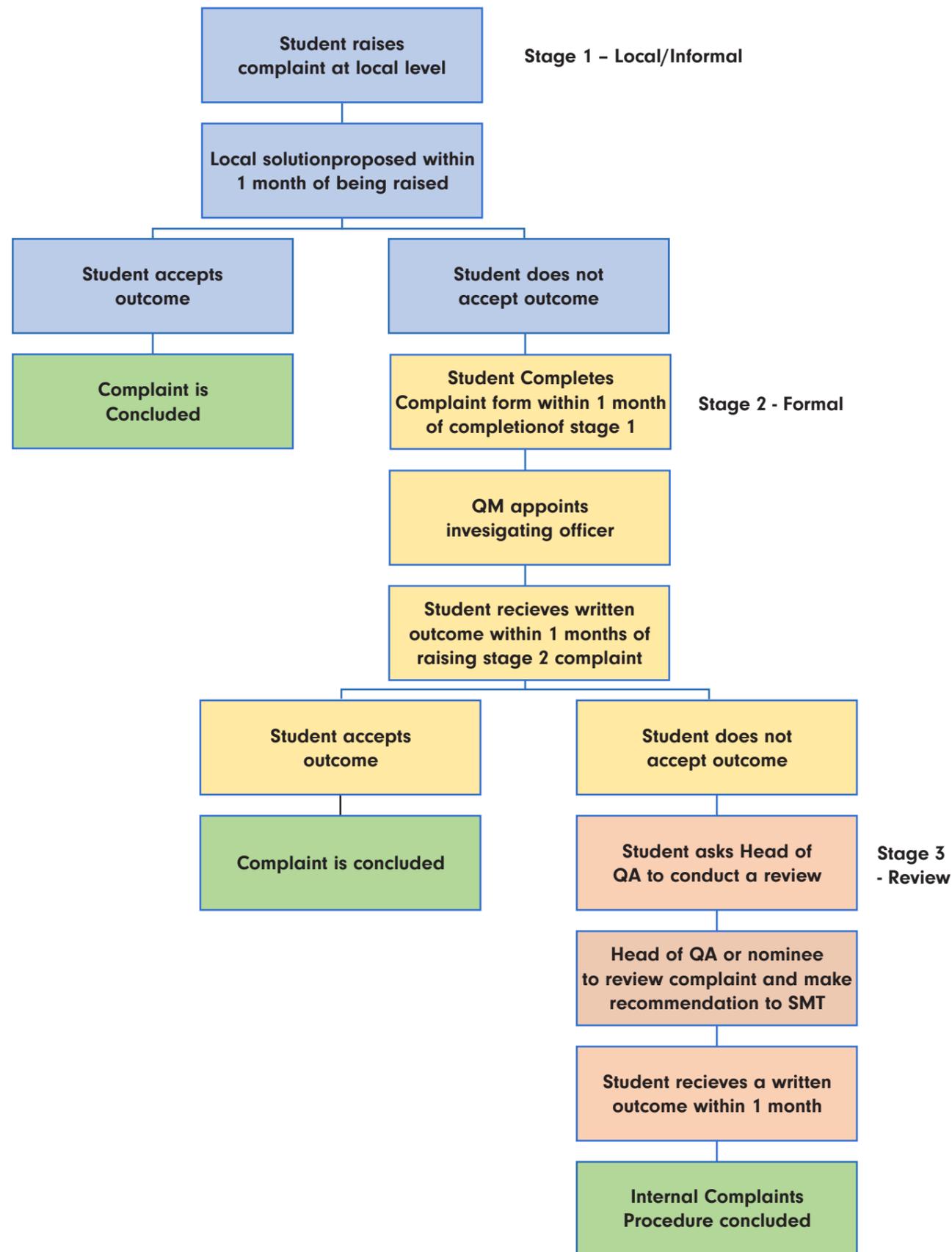
10.3 As the reports are anonymous, you will not be asked for any contact details and will be able to provide only general information about your area of concern. All anonymous complaints should be sent to [complaints@lcca.org.uk](mailto:complaints@lcca.org.uk) or handed to a member of staff in the Quality Assurance Office.

10.4 If students want to move a complaint forward personally or discuss issues in detail, then a formal complaint will need to be made.

## 11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

11.1 The Head of Quality Assurance will oversee the tracking of complaints at all stages, logging the nature, timeliness, and outcome of the complaint. All data will be held in line with Data Protection regulations. A report will be drafted annually to Academic Board and The Board of Governors on the complaints and outcomes, developing recommendations for further action where needed.

## Process Flow Chart



## Appendix 1 – Student Complaints Form 2021/22

Before completing this form, students are advised to read the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Please note that if local level discussions have not taken place the form will be referred to the local Course Director or Head of Service for action. The complaint will only be considered where stage 1 has been completed or the Head of Quality Assurance deems that there is a significant warrant to progress to stage 2.

Student Name	
Student ID Number	
Course Name	
Course Level	
Please conduct a formal review of my complaint described below. I have read the LCCA Student Concerns & Complaints Procedure, and I confirm that I have already tried to resolve the matter informally. My complaint is (please describe the nature of the complaint as fully as possible):	
To resolve my complaint, I have done the following, and spoken to the following people:	
This is the outcome and the reason it did not resolve my complaint:	
Please detail the evidence that has been included to support the complaint, and evidence of the informal (stage 1) discussion:	
To resolve my complaint, I would like the following outcome:	
To support you with your complaint, please detail any additional support that you require and/or whether you would like any additional mediation/conciliation meetings.	
By signing this form, I am confirming that I have attached all the required evidence, that I have read and understand the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure, and that the statements I have provided are truthful to the best of my knowledge.	
Student Signature	
Date	
For Office use only	
Receiving Officer Name	
Received Date	
Case Log Number	
Assigned IO	

## Appendix 2 – Student Concerns Form 2021/22

Before completing this form, students are advised to read the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

This form can be anonymous so please only complete the sections that you feel comfortable doing. Please ensure you include full details of the concern and any outcome you would like.

Student Name	
Student ID Number	
Course Name	
Course Level	
Please detail the nature of the concern, please be as specific as possible.	
To address my highlighted concern, the following should happen.	
For Office use only	
Receiving Officer Name	
Received Date	
Case Log Number	