

IADT Student Complaints Policy and Procedures

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Purpose	This is the policy and procedure for dealing with student complaints at the Institute
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Date of Next Review	September 2016
Who needs to know about this document	All staff and students of IADT
Revision History	Revision of version 2, 2010
Policy Author	Registrar
Policy Owner	Registrar

Policy

1. Introduction and Context

IADT is committed to providing a high quality service for all our registered students. IADT periodically reviews Institute services and provisions via internal and external audit procedures, for example the Institutional Review and Programmatic Review processes. A student complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a service or services by IADT.

The Student Complaints Procedure is an integral partner to the Learner Charter, and is the reference point for registered students who believe they have a legitimate complaint for investigation. The Learner Charter clarifies what is reasonable to expect as part of the learning experience, and enables learners to review whether IADT has met its commitments as a learning provider.

This Student Complaints Procedure enables matters of complaint to be brought to the attention of the Institute, and to enable investigation of those complaints with the aim of a satisfactory resolution. IADT's aim is that most matters can be dealt with through informal processes in a spirit of conciliation.

2. Principles and Scope

- Any IADT registered student may use this policy and procedure
- Complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to confidentiality of all parties involved, subject to the requirements of natural justice
- Any person named in a complaint will be given a copy of the complaint and will have the right to reply as part of the investigation
- Information contained within the complaint will be made available only to those members of staff involved in its resolution
- It should be noted that in the interest of natural justice to all parties, anonymous complaints will not be processed
- IADT aims to resolve as many complaints as possible through the informal process
- No student bringing a complaint under this Procedure will be treated less favourably or discriminated against by any member of staff of the Institute. If evidence to the contrary is found in this regard the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under Institute policy.
- The making of a malicious or vexatious complaint is regarded as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student.

This procedure may be used to complain about any aspect of the academic, administrative and student support services (which includes ICT and Estates & Facilities) provided by IADT. The following list indicates examples of the types of complaint covered by this procedure:

- Problems arising within the learning experience
- Deficiencies in information published by the Institute
- A failing in an Institute service, academic or non-academic
- Complaints around facilities
- Difficulties with a member of Institute staff
- Difficulties with another student in relation to a module or programme of study

These procedures do not cover the following matters, for which separate procedures exist, and which can be accessed on the IADT website: <http://www.iadt.ie/en/>

- Breaches of IADT regulations - Student Disciplinary Procedures
- Allegations of discrimination – Equal Opportunities Policy
- Request for review of decision of assessment board - Academic Appeals Procedures
- Complaints of bullying or harassment - Mutual Respect Policy
- Child Protection Policy

IADT reserves the right to re-direct submissions to the appropriate procedure.

Where any legal action is pending in relation to a complaint, the IADT Student Complaints Procedures will not be the conduit for resolution of this complaint.

3. IADT's Commitment when dealing with Complaints

- We will acknowledge all formal complaints by e-mail within five working days of receipt of the complaint.
- We will investigate all complaints and issue a response to the complainant within twenty working days or, where this is not possible, an interim reply will issue from the Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs, explaining the position and advising when a substantive response will issue.
- All complaints will be treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- We will keep records of complaints in accordance with IADT's Record Management Schedule (2008): 'Office of the Registrar' – *Documents and correspondence relating to litigation or disputes which have been completed or settled will be held for three years.*

- We will ensure that any complaint lodged in good faith will not be used to disadvantage any complainant in the future.
- We will endeavour to resolve complaints as close as possible to the point of origin.

Procedures

4. Stages of Student Complaints Procedures

Informal complaints procedures

At this stage, students are encouraged to approach the relevant member of staff and discuss any issues with him/her directly. In the case of dissatisfaction with a module or a programme of study, for example, a student should approach an individual lecturer and/or the Head of Department. In the case of dissatisfaction with student support or administrative services, these should be directed to the designated officer of that area (see Appendix).

In order for the complaint to be dealt with effectively and efficiently, it should be drawn to the attention of the member of staff concerned as soon as possible, and normally not later than ten working days after the alleged failure in, or dissatisfaction with, services or the incident that gave rise to the complaint. The complaint may be made in oral or written format and an appropriate response shall be communicated to the complainant, normally within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

Formal complaints procedures

If there is no resolution following the informal stage, a formal complaint can be submitted to the Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs who will ensure the complaint is investigated and an Institute response will be sent to the complainant within twenty working days.

- The Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs will forward the complaint to the relevant Head of Faculty or Directorate and will request a formal written response within fifteen working days of receipt of the complaint. The Head of Faculty or Directorate will carry out an investigation of the complaint and will make a decision as to whether the complaint is upheld or not. If anyone is named in the complaint the Head of Faculty or Directorate will forward a copy of the complaint to this person.
- This formal written response is completed by the head of faculty or head of directorate and returned within fifteen days to the Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs, for the attention of the Registrar.
- The Registrar will review the formal written response and will contact the Head of Faculty or Directorate if further information or clarification is required.

- The Registrar finalizes the Institute's formal response to the complainant, having taken into consideration the formal response provided by the Head of Faculty or Directorate and the complaint submitted by the student.
- The Registrar communicates the Institute's formal complaint response to the Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs and the Head of Faculty and/or Directorate.
- The written response will clearly outline what action has been taken or is being proposed to resolve the complaint. In the event that a decision has been taken not to uphold the complaint, the reasons for that decision will be outlined in the response.
- The Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs then sends the Institute's formal complaint response to the complainant within five working days.
- A copy of the response will also be issued by the Manager of Academic Administration and Student Affairs to ***anyone named in the response***.
- Where a member of the executive is the subject of the complaint the President will deal with the complaint.
- Where the President is the subject of the complaint the Chair of the Governing Body will deal with the complaint.

5. Outcomes of the Complaints Procedure

- The Registrar may make recommendations to the Head of Department or Directorate
- The Registrar may also make recommendations to the appropriate Institute committees in respect of quality assurance procedures or policies.

6. Appeal procedures

In the event that a complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the response to a complaint, they can make an appeal in writing to the Complaints Appeals Board within ten working days of notification of the response. This appeal should be addressed to the Registrar, outlining the reasons why the complainant/respondent is not satisfied with the response, and how, in their view, the complaint could be resolved.

If there is an appeal, any conclusions and recommendations will be communicated in writing by the Registrar to the complainant and the Head of Faculty or Directorate.

Grounds for an appeal

A complainant/respondent who wishes to lodge an appeal may do so on a limited number of grounds. They must clearly identify the elements for which the appeal is being made. The application must also specify the grounds on which the appeal is sought and must contain all information that they require to have taken into account in the appeal.

An appeal may be submitted on the following grounds:

1. Procedural irregularity
2. Inconsistent implementation of procedures
3. Exceptional personal circumstances not previously reported for good reason; the appeal should explain the reason(s) for previous non-disclosure

- The Registrar will acknowledge appeals by e-mail within five working days.
- The appeal will be directed to the Complaints Appeals Board who will handle the appeal. The Registrar will have no role or function on the Complaints Appeals Board.
- The Complaints Appeals Board will make a decision within fifteen working days.
- The Complaints Appeals Board may choose to meet with the complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint is made and will conduct such investigations and seek further information as it deems necessary.
- The Complaints Appeals Board will take into account the following when considering an appeal; any previous attempts at resolution, the original complaint, the formal written submissions and the formal written appeal.
- The Complaints Appeals Board will provide the complainant/respondent with a decision in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of the request under the Appeal Stage.
- The Complaints Appeals Board will be composed one member of the IADT Executive (who will act as Chair) and two members of the Management Team, not related to the area of complaint. The President will decide on the individual members of the Board.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they have a right to appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the Government and the service is free. Nothing in this complaint procedure affects statutory rights under Freedom of Information, Data Protection or other relevant legislation.

Office of the Ombudsman
 18 Lower Leeson Street
 Dublin 2
www.ombudsman.ie
ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

LoCall: 1890 22 30 30
 Tel: 01 639 5600
 Fax: 01 639 5674
 Email:

If a child or young person under 18, or an adult who knows a child feels they have been unfairly treated, or if such persons are not satisfied with the decision of IADT on a complaint, it is open to them to contact the Ombudsman for Children's Office. By law the Ombudsman for Children's Office can investigate complaints about any of IADT's administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction by IADT in dealing with complaints. The Ombudsman for Children provides an impartial, independent and free complaints handling service.

Contact details are as follows:
 Ombudsman for Children's Office
 52-56 Great Strand St
 Dublin 1
 Free Phone: **1800 20 20 40**
ococomplaint@oco.ie
www.oco.ie

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- The Registrar's office will oversee the tracking and monitoring of complaints progressed through the Procedure and will ensure that records show the nature of the complaint, how it was dealt with, the time taken for each part and the outcome
- The Registrar will produce an annual report on complaints for IADT Academic Council and Governing Body

8. Role of the Student Union

The Student Union officers are available to advise and assist students with the complaints procedure. They can be contacted at 01 - 2394646

9. Training and Awareness

The Registrar's Office will facilitate activities to raise awareness of the Complaints Procedure. Support and guidance will be provided for staff in handling complaints

IADT Formal Complaint Form

Please complete all sections of this form where possible. Thank you.

1. Your Details

Dr	Ms.	Miss	Mr.
First Name			
Full Address			
Contact Number/s			
E-mail address			
Student ID Number			
Programme coordinator name			
PLEASE TICK	Student <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent or guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	

2. Details of Complaint, including relevant dates (please use additional sheets if necessary)

3. Have you used the informal procedures? Yes No

If yes, please provide details of previous efforts to resolve the matter:

If no, give reason as to why not.

4. In your opinion, how could this complaint be resolved?

Signed..... Print Name.....

Date.....

**Please forward this form to David Doyle, Academic Administration and Student Affairs
Manager at IADT, david.doyle@iadt.ie**

**If submitting this form by e-mail, you may be required to sign a copy and/or produce proof of
identity.**

APPENDIX 1

Names of designated officers in functional areas: