

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Complaints Handling Procedure A Guide for Students and Members of the Public May 2018

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is committed to providing an excellent educational experience for our students and high quality services to all other service users of GSA.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with what we are providing, please tell us – you should feel free to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage. This guide describes our complaint procedure and how to make a complaint and should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Handling Procedure, which is available here: www.gsa.ac.uk/complaints

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the institution’.

You can complain about things like:

- the quality and standard of service.
- failure to provide a service.
- the quality of facilities or learning resources.
- treatment by or attitude of a staff member, student or contractor.
- inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, student or contractor.
- the failure of GSA to follow an appropriate administrative process.
- dissatisfaction with the GSA’s policies, although it is recognised that policy is set at the discretion of GSA.

Your complaint may involve more than one of GSA’s services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What is not a complaint?

There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints handling procedure, which include:

- a routine, first-time request for a service.
- a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act.
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice.
- a response to an invitation to provide feedback through a formal mechanism such as a questionnaire or committee membership (will generally not be treated as a complaint).
- an insurance claim.
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal.
- a request for compensation only.
- an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where the GSA’s procedure has been completed and a final decision has been issued.
- a grievance by a member of staff which is eligible for handling through the Staff Grievance process.

- a grievance by a member of staff which is eligible for handling through the student disciplinary procedure.
- an appeal about an academic decision on assessment or admission.

Matters that are not considered complaints will be dealt with under the alternative appropriate processes rather than under the Complaints Handling Procedure. However, some situations can involve a combination of issues, some are complaints and others are not, and each case should be assessed on a case by case basis.

Please find links below to other alternative processes:

[Grievances against a member of staff](#)

[Academic Appeals](#)

[Academic Misconduct](#)

[Student Discipline Procedure](#)

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. We encourage anyone with a complaint to approach us directly, but can accept a complaint made on your behalf (e.g. through a friend or a family member) provided you give us your clear written authority to liaise with your representative, and provided you also give them clear authority to act on your behalf.

How can I complain?

We recommend that you complete the Complaints Form found [here](#) or email us at complaints@gsa.ac.uk. You can also complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing or email: By post or in person at: The Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew Street Glasgow, G3 6RQ ; By email: complaints@gsa.ac.uk

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff within the department you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter

Disclosure of Personal Details of Complainant(s)

The GSA will treat all complaints in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual(s) making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, it may be necessary to reveal the personal details of the complainant(s) to the subject(s) of the complaint in order to ensure an effective investigation.

Further, in order to investigate the complaint, it will be necessary to reveal the identity of the complainant to individuals other than the recipient of this form. Every effort will be made to observe confidentiality and to ensure that information concerning this complaint is restricted.

Special Category Data?

If you disclose personal information which relates to a special category of data, for example: race; ethnic origin;

politics; religion; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; disability or sexual orientation, GSA will require consent from you before processing your complaint. Please complete a consent form which can be found [here](#) or send your written consent to complaints@gsa.ac.uk

How long do I have to complain?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will aim to resolve your complaint quickly at **Stage 1** and within five working days and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. Where possible, your concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member, tutor, GSA representative or school office. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

If you are dissatisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to **Stage 2** of the complaints procedure. You may choose to do this immediately or shortly after you get our initial decision. Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. We have a complaint form, which will help you to state your complaint clearly to us. Although we will also accept complaints that are made in person or on the phone, we encourage you to complete the complaint form in the interests of clarity and in order to best assist the investigation process.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days

GSA is committed to making its services easy to use for all students. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please let us know. If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

Reporting outcomes

Once the investigation is completed, a copy of the Investigator's Report will be sent to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint, which will include details of the investigation and an explanation of the grounds for the decision. Furthermore, a copy of the Investigator's Report – including any recommendations or actions arising from the report - will then be shared with the relevant Head of School, Service or Department to allow these to be taken forward as appropriate.

What if I am still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated your complaint and you are still dissatisfied with our decision or in the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it. Our letter advising you of our decision will give you information on how to contact the SPSO. Further information related to the SPSO can be found on their website at www.spsso.org.uk

Getting help to make your complaint

We are committed to making our service easy to use. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another format, such as large font or Braille, please let us know. You can contact us by emailing complaints@gsa.ac.uk or by writing to: The Academic Quality Office; The Glasgow School of Art; 167 Renfrew Street; Glasgow G3 6RQ.

Quick Guide to our Complaints Procedure

Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1: Frontline Resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.



Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.