



Language in Action

Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose and scope

This document contains Student Complaints Procedures.

The scope of the procedures is restricted to complaints in respect of the students' experience at LIA, including services and facilities provided.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Students may ask for information, advice and help in making a complaint from anyone they wish. At any stage, the student has a right to be accompanied/represented by another person who may speak on the student's behalf if s/he requires it.
- 2.2. LIA welcomes comments and suggestions from students as to how the School might enhance its effectiveness and/or improve its service. Students are encouraged to give suggestions.
- 2.3. The School recognises that from time to time students may have complaints about facilities or services they receive from its staff.
- 2.4. These procedures aim to provide a simple and comprehensible means by which students may raise comments, suggestions and complaints with appropriate staff.
- 2.5. The School will ensure that the service and care provided to any student making a comment, suggestion or complaint will not suffer in any way as a result of the action taken, but the School expects that students will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- 2.6. The School will maintain the confidentiality of comments, suggestions and complaints as far as possible. However, the service provider should normally be informed that a complaint has been made and that it is being investigated.
- 2.7. The above paragraph does not in any way prejudice existing procedures for dealing with staff disciplinary matters.

3. Complaints Procedure

3.1. Informal Stage (refer to 2.1 above):

It is hoped that many problems will normally be dealt with informally, in a spirit of conciliation without the need for recourse to a formal procedure. As a first step, a student who is unhappy with the service he/she has received, should try to resolve the matter with his/her teacher or with the Director of Study/Academic Manager or with the Activity Leaders / Activity Manager & Welfare Officer/ Centre Manager. In many cases, that person can best respond to the complaint. However, if the response to the informal complaint is unsatisfactory the student has the right to use the formal complaints procedure set out below. A student should only use this formal complaints procedure if he/she considers that the complaint is too serious to be dealt with informally or is dissatisfied with the results of informal discussions.



3.2. School Stage:

If the student wishes to make a formal complaint under these procedures, they must raise the complaint with the Centre Manager who will give them a complaint form to fill out.

Written complaints involving the Centre Manager should be sent to the Language in Action Head Office, directly via email or completed on the Language in Action complaints form available in the centre.

The Centre Manager will normally respond in person to the student's letter within 48 hours. If the Centre Manager thinks that the complaint needs further investigation, they will explain to the student (or their agent) how the complaint will be processed. The complaint will be investigated fully (normally this will also involve an invitation for the student to discuss the complaint in person) and the student will normally receive a written response within 5 days.

If the student is satisfied with the response received, and does not wish to take the complaint further, the information gained from the complaint will be used to improve the service provided by the School.

3.3. Appeals

If the complaint is not resolved within 5 days or is unsatisfactory to the student, the student should refer the complaint to the Language in Action Head Office.

The Head Office will investigate the complaint (normally this will involve an invitation for the student to discuss the complaint in person with themselves or a person they have nominated) and the student will normally receive a written response within 3 working days.

If the student is satisfied with the response received, and does not wish to take the complaint further, the information gained from the complaint will be used to improve the service provided by the School.

If the student is not satisfied with the response the Directors will convene a meeting of a Complaints Committee. Prior to the meeting the aggrieved student will be informed of the right to be represented at the hearing.

3.3.1 Composition of the Complaints Committee

No member of the Complaints Committee shall have had any previous connection with the case. The Complaints Committee will be comprised of:

- The complainant
- One Member of Board of Directors, or, the Director or Operations Manager or Academic Manager, or the HR Manager (as appropriate)
- One Student Representative
- One Teacher

3.3.2 Terms of Reference for Appeals

The terms of reference of the Complaints Committee shall be:

- To consider a student's complaints in respect of her/his experience at the School, including services and facilities provided by Schools or any support departments.
- To report its decisions to the Board of Directors and Student Representatives where appropriate.



3.4. Final appeals

If the student is not satisfied with the results of the appeals stage they are encouraged to contact the accrediting bodies for the school:

- **The British Council:** British Council Customer Service UK, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6BB
- **The Independent Schools Inspectorate:** C A P House, 9-12 Long Ln, London EC1A 9HA

APPENDIX: PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS OF A COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

- The Chair shall confirm to the parties the nature of the grievance.
- The Chair will ask the aggrieved student (or representative) to present his/her case in support of the grievance, and to introduce any witness(es) in support of the grievance.
- The Committee may ask questions, through the Chair, of the student and/or representative and/or his/her witness(es) at any time.
- The Chair will ask the person against whom the grievance has been raised to respond to the grievance, and to introduce any witness(es) in support of the response.
- The Committee may ask questions, through the Chair, of the person against whom the grievance has been raised and his/her witness(es) at any time.
- The Chair will ask the student (or representative) bringing the grievance to summarise his/her case.
- The Chair will ask the person against whom the grievance has been raised to summarise his/her case.
- The parties will be asked to leave the meeting and the Committee will consider the evidence that has been heard, and may at this stage choose to reconvene the hearing to a later date in order to obtain further evidence or advice from other parties. Should this be the case, all parties will be invited to attend the reconvened meeting.
- The Chair will announce the Committee's decision, either by calling the parties together or in writing. The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing within five working days.