



FOUNDATION YEAR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Foundation Year Complaints Procedure

Introduction

1. The Royal Drawing School Foundation Year has clear procedures in place for dealing with student complaints which form part of its quality assurance system and reflect current best practice. Complaints from students are treated seriously without negatively affecting student rights or impartial judgement on academic progress or any other aspect of student life at the School. It is hoped that all complaints can be dealt with in a swift, professional and understanding manner, at the earliest stage possible. We provide an open door policy in the Foundation Year office so please feel free to come in a discuss any issues, at any time.
2. These procedures are a means by which the School can resolve student complaints and address inadequacies. Through the procedures, students enrolled at the School may seek redress, wherever possible, for any shortcoming or concern caused by the School. The procedures are relevant to all types of complaint and not only in relation to the Schools' requirement to provide teaching and facilitate learning.
3. **Head of Foundation and Foundation Year Programme Manager.** The complaints procedures is managed by the Office of the Head of Foundation. It is the Head of Foundation who has overall responsibility for the procedures together with the authority to adjudicate upon any questions raised by a student, or member of staff in relation to any aspect of the procedures. In all cases the decision of the Head of Foundation shall be final.
4. **Foundation Year Programme Manager.** The Foundation Year Programme Manager has responsibility for the operation and management of the student complaints system. It is the responsibility of the Foundation Year Programme Manger to manage, co-ordinate and monitor student complaints and ensure that the school implements complaints procedures in full. The Foundation Year Programme Manager shall provide the Head of Foundation with regular updates on current complaints.
5. **Students Representative.** A student complaint may be presented to Foundation Year Programme Manager by the elected Students Representative, at any time.

The Procedures

General Guidance

6. All students should feel that they can bring issues of concern, difficulties or differences of opinion to the attention of the School. Students have a right to expect that they will be listened to and that their concerns will be investigated properly and dealt with fairly without fear of recrimination or penalty.
7. The School will always try to deal with concerns swiftly and informally in order to seek an appropriate resolution. Where this is not possible the concern or problem must be dealt with formally. In such cases the complaint has to be lodged in writing using the Student Complaint Form. Forms can be obtained from Foundation Year Administrator in the Foundation Year Office.
8. Complaints should be submitted as soon as possible and any delay in submitting a complaint will need to be fully explained and may be grounds for rejection.
9. A student may raise a matter individually or as part of a group. If students wish to lodge a complaint as a group a spokesperson should be identified. This person could be the elected Students Representative.
10. If a complaint is considered to be vexatious or without reasonable purpose, the complaint shall be referred to the Head of Foundation for review and a response to the Student or Students concerned. A Completion of Procedures letter shall be sent to the complainant within 14 working days following the Head of Foundation's decision.

11. Issues excluded from the procedures

- 11.1 Complaints raised anonymously are not considered under the procedures. *(In certain exceptional circumstances anonymous complaints may be investigated at the sole discretion of the Head of Foundation).*
- 11.2 Third party complaints.
- 11.3 Complaints submitted by someone acting on behalf of the student, unless the Head of Foundation considers it fair and reasonable in all the circumstances presented.
- 11.4 Complaints about any aspect of the admissions process should be raised during or immediately after the admissions process.
- 11.5 Complaints from former students should be raised with the Head of Foundation's Office directly. All complaints must be raised within three months of a student leaving the school and complaints received after this time will not normally be considered.

- 11.6 Complaints raised by students enrolled at another institution on a course leading to an award from the Royal Drawing School. *(Except in circumstances where students who are enrolled at another institution have reached the end of that institution's procedures and demonstrate that there was a material or administrative or procedural error in the operation of the other institution's procedures and the Head of Foundation considers it fair and reasonable in all the circumstances to permit a complaint.)*
- 11.7 Complaints in relation to the decisions of examination boards and final assessments results. Such matters are covered by the regulations for the review of and appeals against the decisions of the awarding body and final assessments results.
- 11.8 Complaints in relation to the outcomes of student disciplinary hearings which are covered by the Student Learning Agreement.
- 11.9 Complaints against fellow students unless those students are acting as agents or employees of the School.

Raising a concern

12. Students have the opportunity to raise concerns without the requirement for submission of a formal complaint. If students wish to raise a concern they should contact the Foundation Year Programme Manager.
13. The FYPM shall acknowledge receipt of the concern and shall take reasonable steps to address it by providing information or explanation, suggesting solutions or contacting relevant members of staff. The FYPM shall keep a record of basic information on the concern such as the Student's name and a brief summary of the issues raised.
14. The consideration and response to the concern should take no longer than 10 working days.
15. Students shall receive a response to the concern they have raised, and they will be directed to submit a Formal Complaint if they are dissatisfied with the response.
16. Raising a concern is an optional stage of the procedure, and students may begin with the submission of a Formal Complaint if they consider this appropriate.

Making a Formal Complaint

17. Students are required to complete a Student Complaint Form and submit it to the FYPM who is located within the Foundation Year office.
18. The Formal Complaint will be considered by the Head of Foundation on behalf of the School and the Trustees.
19. The FYPM shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within seven working days.
20. If the FYPM takes the view that the complaint is vexatious or without substance or merit, they shall consult with the Head of Foundation and either:
 - (i) Dismiss the complaint summarily; or,
 - (ii) Refer the complaint for further investigation
21. In each instance in point 20 above, the FYPM shall notify the complainant in writing of their decision within 14 working. If the FYPM rejects the complaint then the complainant may proceed to Final Complaint Review.
22. Where the FYPM believes there are reasonable grounds for investigation, they shall refer the complaint to The Foundation Year Programme Manager.
23. The Head of Foundation shall investigate the complaint and submit a written report for the consideration of the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees.
24. The student shall receive a response to their Formal Complaint within 28 working days of its submission.
25. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they may proceed to Final Complaint Review.

Final Complaint Review:

26. If the complainant wishes to proceed to Final Complaint Review they must write to the Head of Foundation. The complainant must write to the Head of Foundation within 28 working days of the date of their Formal Complaint Outcome. The student should clearly set out the areas of the Formal Complaint response with which there is dissatisfaction, including the reasons why the response is not satisfactory and the desired remedy.
27. The Head of Foundation shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within seven working days. An account of the complaint and the Schools' response to it to date shall be provided by the School within 14 working days of a request being submitted.
28. If the Head of Foundation takes the view that there has been an unreasonable delay in pursuing the complaint, or the matters being pursued are vexatious or without substance or merit, they shall reject the complaint summarily, inform the complainant in writing and issue a Completion of Procedures letter within 28 working days from the date of receipt of the request for Final Complaint Review.
29. If the Head of Foundation takes the view that the complaint has been considered fairly at the Formal Complaint stage and there is no reason to suggest that a different decision would be reached upon further consideration, they shall terminate the procedures, inform the complainant in writing and issue a Completion of Procedures letter, which shall be sent within 28 working days of receipt of the request for Final Complaint Review.
30. If the Head of Foundation takes the view that the complaint warrants further investigation, they shall refer the complaint to a specially convened Complaints Review Panel.
31. The Complaints Review Panel shall be chaired by a senior member of staff and comprise the Executive Director, Head of Foundation, FYPM and a Students Representative, elected by the student body.
32. The Student will be invited to attend the Complaints Review Panel and to bring someone with them for support. This supporting person should be a friend or relative.
33. The Foundation Year Programme Manager shall provide a member of staff to act as secretary to the Complaints Review Panel.
34. The Complaints Review Panel shall consider the complaint and make its decision within 30 working days of receipt of the request for Final Complaint Review.
35. The decision of the Complaints Review Panel shall be referred to an External Adjudicator who will assess the decision for fairness, transparency and consistency with the terms of the Foundation Year Complaints Procedure.

The External Adjudicator shall be Simon Sadinsky, Deputy Executive Director (Education), The Prince's Foundation.

36. The Head of Foundation shall inform the complainant of the outcome of the review in writing in the form of a Completion of Procedures letter within 14 working days of the decision by the Complaints Review Panel.

Stage	Procedure
1.	Raising a Concern with FYPM
2.	Making a Formal Complaint using the Student Complaint Form
3.	Final Complaint Review. Written response from the Head of Foundation