



# **FIE Dublin**

# **Complaints**

# **Procedure**

FIE Dublin  
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### Summary/Purpose Statement for FIE Dublin Complaints Procedure

FIE's [Educational Mission](#) is to provide high quality educational experiences to the global community. FIE is also committed to inclusive [values](#) engendering a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive living, learning and working environment for the entire FIE community. As per our Safe Spaces policy, our hope is that everyone in the FIE community - students, faculty, staff, and visitors - knows they can come to any member of staff for help, advice, or just to talk to someone who is supportive.

In this vein, while we sincerely hope that everyone has a positive and fulfilling experience while at FIE, we do welcome constructive feedback from current and recent students as well as faculty and staff and are committed to responding to, and dealing with, complaints in a timely and effective manner.

At FIE Dublin we engage in an open-door policy where students are always welcome to voice concerns or any feedback they may have. Should someone wish to make a complaint, we take it very seriously and the following procedure should be followed. Complaints are dealt with discreetly and in line with data protection and confidentiality considerations. Individuals are encouraged to raise their concern without risk of disadvantage, and all parties are requested to engage constructively with the procedures.

A complaint can be defined as the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities. A complaint can also be about the quality of other aspects such as housing, facilities, or behaviours (excluding actions that may be more appropriately considered under FIE's Safe Spaces' policy) whether provided by FIE or a third party on behalf of FIE.

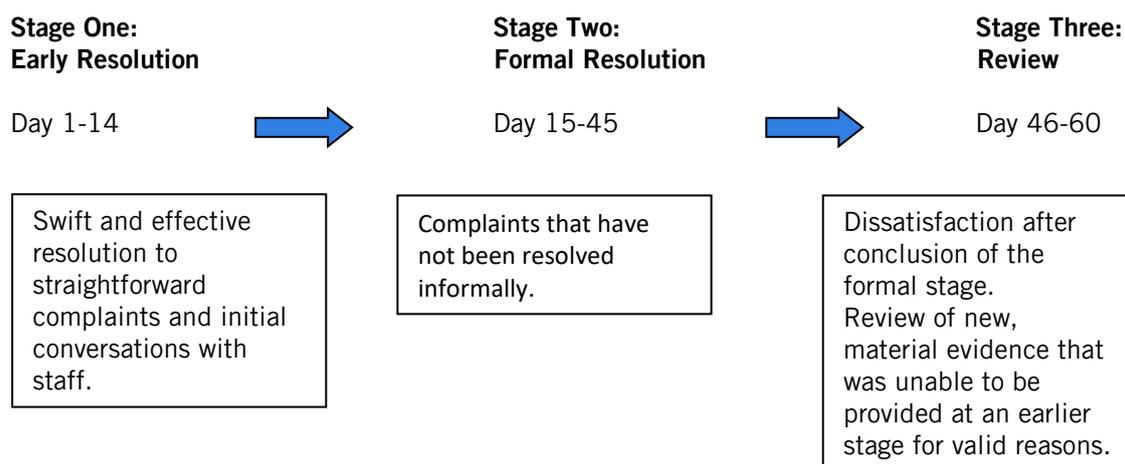
Any FIE student, staff member, or recent student is able to file a Complaint and is able to appoint an advisor or representative to speak on his/her behalf. FIE will decline appeals from third parties except where they are acting as a complainant's designated representative. Where the issues raised affect a number of individuals, those people may submit a Group Complaint. In such circumstances, in order to manage the progression of the Appeal, FIE will ask the group to nominate one person to act as group representative. FIE will then deal with the representative only and expect him/her to liaise with the others.

Anyone may seek guidance and discuss the issue with their Residence Life Supervisor, or a member of staff with whom they feel comfortable speaking to. Students also have access to counselling through their host academic institution. Please feel free to ask any member of staff at FIE or at the host academic institution about this service.

Students also have the option to discuss concerns with a Student Representative in residence, if their programme has one, who can be used as a link between students and staff, if the complainant does not wish to go directly to a staff member with their complaint.

There should be confidence in FIE's Complaints process and it should not be necessary to bring anonymous complaints. Exceptionally, however, an anonymous complaint may be considered when FIE accepts that there is a compelling case – supported by evidence – for the matter to be investigated. Complainants must be aware that in many circumstances raising a concern anonymously may impede an investigation and communication of the outcome. Information gathered during the Complaints Process is used to improve services and experiences for the future.

## Section 1: Complaints Handling Procedures



## Section 2: Safe Spaces

Inappropriate and derogatory comments and actions are not tolerated and any such behaviour brought to the attention of FIE faculty and staff is addressed in an educational and informative manner. Everyone at FIE has a right to their opinion; however, if someone is stating myths or misinformation then FIE, and host academic institution, faculty and staff will inform them of more accurate information in a respectful manner.

## Section 3: Early Resolution

1. The complainant should contact a relevant member of staff, if it is a general issue, via email or in person. See [here](#) for FIE Dublin team.
2. If the complainant feels uneasy approaching a member of staff in residence, s/he should contact the resident director/associate resident director as appropriate via email.
3. Questions to consider in attempting Early Resolution could include
  - a. What specifically is the concern about?
  - b. What outcome is hoped for and can it be achieved?
  - c. Is the concern straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
  - d. Can it be resolved quickly by providing, where appropriate, an explanation, alternative solution, or apology?
  - e. Is there merit in using confidential mediation or conciliation with agreement?

4. If responsibility for the issue raised lies in the staff member's area of work, every attempt should be made to resolve the concern in consultation with the complainant. If responsibility lies elsewhere, the staff member should liaise with the relevant area to facilitate swift resolution.
5. In all likelihood, at this stage the relevant parties will have been able to resolve the issue informally. Where proportionate, a written outcome is provided.
6. Where it is clear that Early Resolution is not appropriate or possible and that a concern will need to proceed immediately to the Formal stage the complainant should be promptly directed.

If the complainant feels that the issue has not been resolved to his/her satisfaction, he/she can seek formal resolution via the official complaints process.

**N.B. Formal resolution should only be sought as a last resort once all of the above opportunities for informal resolution have been exhausted.**

#### **Section 4: Formal Complaints**

A **Formal Complaint** is used where

- A complainant declines to engage with Early Resolution and initiates a Formal Complaint in line with FIE procedures; or
  - There is dissatisfaction with the outcome of Early Resolution; or
  - Early Resolution is not possible or suitable due to the character, complexity, or seriousness of the case.
1. The complainant submits his/her complaint via email to [complaint@fie.org.uk](mailto:complaint@fie.org.uk), fully detailing the issue, the steps s/he has taken to resolve the issue informally (see *Early Resolution* above), as well as providing any supporting documentation. This email address is monitored by a member of FIE's Leadership Team. Students, faculty and staff are assured that their complaint will be reviewed fairly and objectively.
  2. Key questions considered could include:
    - a. Is this a Complaint, Safe Spaces issue, or an Academic Appeal? Should the complainant be referred to another procedure?
    - b. Was Early Resolution attempted? If not, can the matter be referred back to that stage?
    - c. Is it clearly set out what the complaint is about and which area(s) of FIE is/are involved?
    - d. Has evidence been provided in support of the complaint?
    - e. What outcome is hoped for and can it be achieved?
    - f. Is the complaint suitable for mediation or conciliation?

3. Special attention is given to identifying complaints that may require particularly swift action and may include:
  - a. A threat of serious harm
  - b. Issues raised that have detrimental consequences for a person's mental health or where the complainant displays significant distress
  - c. Complaints relating to disability support/academic accommodations
  - d. Issues of serious and repeated service failure and/or significant delay
  - e. Issues of a highly sensitive nature (gender; race related etc.)
4. Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, FIE's Senior Manager will undertake an initial evaluation to confirm the complaint is submitted under the correct procedure. It is essential that both FIE's Senior Manager and the complainant understand the purpose and scope of the investigation and the Senior Manager will consider meeting with the student to facilitate this. If the expectations appear to go beyond what FIE can reasonably provide or what is in our power to provide then the complainant will be advised of this as soon as possible via email in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes.
5. If the issue requires further action all relevant parties will be kept well informed of the progress until a timely resolution is reached.
6. The complainant will receive a formal response via email that may include suggestions for mediation or conciliation, where appropriate. The decision will also give information about a student's final right to appeal to their home campus.