

IFT - MALTA

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Institute of Family Therapy – Malta
July 2022



INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

IFT-Malta is committed to providing high quality services and welcomes feedback from all beneficiaries of the Institute. Such feedback is invaluable in helping the evaluation and improvement of IFT-Malta's work. The aim of this policy is therefore to:

1. Ensure all students know how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled
2. Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames
3. Provide a fair and effective way to make a complaint
4. Ensure that complaints are monitored and used to improve our services

Definition

Complaints may be related but not limited to the following:

1. The standard of tuition or information provided.
2. The timeliness of feedback.
3. The way a decision has been made in relation to assignment markings and lecture schedules.
4. The way a student has been treated, for instance if he/she feels he/she has been treated unfairly or discourteously.

Policy

The Institute encourages students in the first instance to seek to resolve issues with the person who is the source of the complaint. It is our experience that when complaints do arise, they are usually resolved at the informal level of the procedure. Every effort is made to resolve the complaint at this stage. However, in some instances it may be necessary to invoke the formal stage. Both the Informal and the Formal Complaints Procedure are conducted within the Institute. Third party involvement would mean that the complaint has not been resolved within the Institute and that one of the parties is seeking mediation or legal involvement for its resolution.

1. Informal Stage of Complaints Procedure

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved informally by the student raising the complaint in person with the Course Coordinator. Where the complaint is against the Course Coordinator then the complainant should approach the Chairperson of the Institute. If the

complaint is against the Chairperson the complainant should seek advice from any other director of the Institute.

The Course Coordinator/Chairperson/Director approached will aim to investigate the complaint as soon as possible and should respond or resolve within 15 working days of having been approached with the complaint.

The Course Coordinator/Chairperson/Director approached to investigate the complaint may bring the involved parties together to discuss the complaint with a view to finding a resolution.

If all attempts to resolve the complaint in an informal way have been unsuccessful, the student may formalise the complaint following the Formal Complaints procedure below.

2. Formal Complaint

The student may make a written complaint to the Chairperson of the Institute. The complaint must be lodged within ten working days from the informal stage of this procedure having been concluded, or within 30 calendar days from the matter which has given rise to dissatisfaction. The student must write clearly the nature and origin of the complaint, detailing what steps have been taken to resolve it informally and explaining why the outcome of the informal procedure is not considered satisfactory. The completed written complaint should be handed to the Institute's Secretary. The Chairperson will investigate the complaint in the following way:

- Make such investigations as s/he deems appropriate.
- Meet with the complainant if necessary to clarify and confirm any aspects of the complaint.
- In the event of a complaint being made against a member of staff, the Chairperson will inform the member of staff and issue them with a copy of the written complaint, and ask them to provide a written response addressing the specific issues giving rise to dissatisfaction in the complaint.
- In the event of a complaint being made about the administration, or the course structure, the Chairperson will inform all Directors of the Institute and involve them as a panel in the decision making process.
- Keep all people involved in the complaint procedure informed of progress.

Having concluded the investigation, the Chairperson may make one of the following decisions:

- Dismiss the complaint.
- Suggest an amicable settlement to the complainant. If the settlement is accepted, the procedure terminates at this stage.
- Find the complaint justified and make an offer of redress to the complainant, e.g. an apology and/or appropriate recommendations.
- The Chairperson shall, within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint, have concluded the investigation and provided a written statement, which makes clear the grounds on which a decision or settlement has been reached. The statement shall be sent to the complainant, and all parties involved in the complaint.