



## **DIME ONLINE COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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### **Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure**

This policy and procedure is applicable to students and prospective students who are studying, or who are considering study, for a Falmouth University degree at DIME ONLINE.

#### **1. Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction concerning DIME ONLINE in respect of academic standards or a professional service”. The point of complaint starts when the complainant has drawn their concern to the attention of a DIME ONLINE employee/member of staff.

##### **1.1 Important points to note:**

- Students will not be discriminated against or suffer recrimination for making a complaint;
- Complaints cannot be made anonymously;
- DIME ONLINE’s relationship is with the student. Therefore, students should note that, under Data Protection legislation, DIME ONLINE and/or the University cannot deal with third party complaints without the written permission of the student unless a third party has been formally authorised or instructed to act on a student’s behalf (this includes complaints made by a student’s parent(s) or spouse). Whilst correspondence will then be copied to the student (unless specifically directed to the contrary by the student), DIME ONLINE and/or the University will only deal with the single individual authorised to act on the student’s behalf in respect of a complaint.
- Students must adhere to the timeframes outlined in the procedure. Failure to do so may result in the complaint being rejected or the investigation being delayed.

##### **1.2 Responsibility for managing complaints**

Students studying with DIME ONLINE are enrolled and registered on course(s) that are owned and validated by Falmouth University. The University is ultimately responsible for academic standards on the course(s), whereas DIME ONLINE is ultimately responsible for all other professional services associated with the course(s). It is therefore important that students understand to whom they should address their complaint. The table below is intended to help the student determine which procedure they should follow.

<b>Nature of the complaint</b>	<b>Step 1 – Early Resolution</b>	<b>Step 2 – the Formal Stage</b>	<b>Step 3 – the Review Stage</b>
<b>Academic standards:</b> e.g. teaching standards; quality of assessment feedback and/or course content.	Refer to <b>2.1 Step 1</b>	If the matter remains unresolved following Step 1, refer to <b>2.2 Step 2 (Procedure A)</b> and <b>Falmouth University Complaints Procedure</b>	Refer to Step 3 of <b>Falmouth University Complaints Procedure</b>
<b>Professional services:</b> e.g. pastoral support; technical support; Academy campus facilities; accuracy of marketing materials/promotions etc.	Refer to <b>2.1 Step 1</b>	If the matter remains unresolved following Step 1, refer to <b>2.3 Step 2 (Procedure B)</b>	If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the completion of Step 2, refer to <b>2.4 Step 3</b>

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 Step 1 – Early Resolution (all complaints)

- i. In the first instance, DIME ONLINE encourages students to resolve any issues informally, by addressing the person(s) concerned, or approaching the Module Leader or Head of Education. Wherever possible, early resolution should be sought, regardless of whether the issue concerns academic standards (e.g. teaching standards) or a professional service (e.g. pastoral support).
- ii. **Timeframe:** Step 1 must be invoked within 8 weeks of the incident that is the cause for complaint.
- iii. If the student believes that the matter is still unresolved, or there are compelling reasons as to why early resolution is not possible or appropriate, the student may lodge a formal complaint as outlined below in Step 2.

### 2.2 Step 2 – Procedure A, the Formal Stage: complaints concerning academic standards

- i. ‘Academic standards’ include matters such as:
  - teaching standards on the course;
  - quality of feedback on assessment; and
  - quality of course content.
- ii. If the complaint concerns a professional service that is offered/delivered by DIME ONLINE, the complainant should refer to 2.3 of this procedure.

- iii. Where the complaint concerns academic standards then the student should submit their complaint in writing to Falmouth University using the postal or email address below:
- Quality Assurance & Enhancement  
Falmouth University  
Woodlane  
Falmouth  
TR11 4RH  
Email: [gae@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:gae@falmouth.ac.uk)
- iv. **Timeframe:** Step 2 must be invoked within 10 working days of the completion of Step 1.
- v. The student should provide as much detail as possible in their complaint, including:
- full details of the cause for the complaint, including its impact;
  - the action the student has taken thus far and the date(s) of that action;
  - the response they have received;
  - the reason for their dissatisfaction or disagreement with that response;
  - the remedy that they are seeking; and
- vi. copies of supporting evidence.
- vii. The University's Quality Assurance & Enhancement office will ensure that the complaint is referred to an appropriate member of staff; the case will be managed in accordance with the University's Complaints Procedures at Step 2 and, where required, at Step 3. Falmouth University's Complaints Policy and Procedure can be accessed via the following link: [www.falmouth.ac.uk/studentregulations](http://www.falmouth.ac.uk/studentregulations)

### **2.3 Step 2 – Procedure B, The Formal Stage: Complaints concerning DIME ONLINE professional services**

- i. 'Professional services' include matters such as:
- a. pastoral support (eg welfare advice)
  - b. technical support
  - c. Academy campus facilities
  - d. accuracy of marketing materials/communications, promotions etc.
- ii. Where the complaint concerns a professional service that is provided by DIME ONLINE, then the complainant should put their complaint in writing to one of the following people:

Head of Finance – Michelle Jay: [michellejay@dime-online.org](mailto:michellejay@dime-online.org)

Managing Director – Sarah Clayman: [sarahclayman@dime-detroit.com](mailto:sarahclayman@dime-detroit.com)

- iii. **Timeframe:** Step 2 must be invoked within 10 working days of the completion of Step 1.
- iv. The student should provide as much detail as possible in their complaint, including:
  - a. full details of the cause for the complaint, including its impact;
  - b. the action the student has taken thus far and the date(s) of that action;
  - c. the response they have received;
  - d. the reason for their dissatisfaction or disagreement with that response;
  - e. the remedy that they are seeking; and
  - f. copies of supporting evidence.
- v. Students will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days. DIME ONLINE will endeavour to respond to the complaint, in writing, within 10 working days. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the final response might take longer, in which case the student will be advised of this in the initial correspondence.
- vi. The complaint will be investigated by a member of DIME ONLINE staff not previously involved in the incident that is the cause of the complaint.

#### **2.4 Step 3 – the Review Stage: for complaints concerning professional services**

- i. If the student is not satisfied with the final outcome reached regarding their complaint about a professional service, then s/he may request a review of their complaint.
- ii. The grounds for requesting such a review are:
  - a. a material irregularity in the conduct of the investigation; and/or
  - b. where material new evidence has become available since the commencement of the investigation.
- iii. The student should submit their request, in writing, to the Managing Director, Sarah Clayman, at the following email address: sarahclayman@dime-detroit.com.
- iv. **Timeframe:** a request for review must be made within 10 working days upon receipt of the outcome of Step 2.
- v. The complaint will be investigated by a member of DIME ONLINE staff not previously involved in the case at Step 1 or at Step 2.
- vi. Following the review, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. This letter denotes the conclusion of DIME ONLINE's internal complaints procedures. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, s/he may forward their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) at the address below. The complaint must reach the OIA within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter.
- vii. The OIA's contact details are:  
 Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading RG1 3AB.  
 Tel: 0118 959 9813      Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk)

- viii. Further details can be found on the OIA website at: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)
- ix. Only students enrolled and registered for a Falmouth University award are eligible to refer their complaint to the OIA. Prospective students and applicants do not have recourse to this service.

