

Raising a Concern

General Procedure Points:

- Raising a concern informally means you can be heard and discuss what your options are. This will be confidential and no further action is taken unless you ok it. The person/issue you are discussing will not be told of your concern
- If you want the matter taken further, investigated and resolved, it will need to be put in writing. If you are raising a concern/complaint about a person then they have a right to be told, a right to respond and a right to be heard, just as you do

I don't want to make a formal complaint, I just want to talk to someone about a concern. What do I do?

You can raise a concern informally by choosing to have a chat with the Student Liaison or your Trainer.

What are the options for raising a concern?

- You can simply talk to someone – either the person who made the decision you are unhappy with or who is causing you concern, or, you can seek advice and support.
- You can put your concern in writing. You will need to tell us who you are and how we can contact you; what the concern is and who if anyone it involves; and what outcome you are seeking.

What grounds are needed to raise a concern?

There are no set grounds for raising a concern. If you are unhappy about a decision that has been made; a staff member or another student is causing you to feel uncomfortable or upset; you would like to see a change happen because you feel adversely impacted by a decision made by a staff member; or alternatively if you feel that something is really good and you want to bring it to someone's attention – you can raise it.

Administrative:

Who do I send my formal concern to?

You should send your concern to the Student Liaison via: students@masteracademy.co.nz

Is my concern confidential?

Absolutely. Only the people involved in the investigation or the allegation will know about it and then only the parts that they need to know.

Why do I need to put my concern in writing?

In general, if you want the Academy to take action on your behalf or investigate an issue to find a resolution, then it will need to be put into writing.

Is there a form that I have to fill out?

No there isn't. There is, however, certain information that you will need to supply.

Do I need to supply evidence if I raise a concern?

If you raise a concern or make a complaint in writing then you should provide any information or evidence you have to support your concern/complaint.

What evidence or supporting documents are required?

Evidence or supporting documentation can take many forms and there is no set format or amount. Examples of evidence may include:

- Emails
- Progress reports
- Supporting letters from witnesses or members of your family or community
- Medical certificates
- Police statements
- Death notices
- Social media postings
- A documented timeline of events and conversations that took place

What is considered sufficient evidence or grounds for an academic appeal?

Historically, for an appeal to be successful, the student would generally need to provide evidence of:

- A breach of legislation
- A breach of Academy Regulation
- A failure on the part of the Academy to follow prescribed Academy process, and/or
- Supplementary pertinent information that is now available, that was not available to the original decision maker at the time the decision was made

What if I don't have any tangible evidence but I still want to raise a concern? Is this possible?

You can, however, the Academy will be limited in how they can respond depending on the nature of the concern.

Meetings and Appeal Committee Meeting

Will I have to meet with the person I want to complain about?

- No. You do not have to meet with them unless you want to
- If you do want to meet with the person, you can nominate who else you would like to be present

Do I need to attend appeal committee meetings?

The Academy would prefer that you are present at any appeal meeting so that they can ask you for further detail if required or to better understand any evidence you may have supplied. However, attendance is not compulsory.

Who else will be in meetings?

This will depend on who you decide to bring with you (e.g. a support person and/or advocate) and the nature of the issue that the meeting is about.

How formal are meetings/appeal committee meetings?

- We would like to keep any meetings as informal as possible and resolve any issues with as little distress to all people concerned as possible
- If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally or is of a serious nature, then depending on what it is about, other staff may need to be involved such as a Human Resources Advisor. Meetings will be documented and any outcomes will be confirmed in writing
- Academy Appeal meetings are quite formal and structured and there will be a panel of people involved. The meetings are minuted and written decisions are provided

Are final decisions reached in the meetings or appeals?

- If at all possible during a meeting we would like to find a resolution that is fair and acceptable to all concerned
- If you are at an appeals meeting - yes. However, these decisions will be confirmed in writing to you afterwards and you will be advised if you have any other avenues for further appeal
- If the final decision rests with you, you will be given time after the meeting to consider your response or what further action you would like to take if any

Who will be involved:

Academic

If you are appealing an academic decision, in most cases, the person who made that decision will be asked to review it.

Student Conduct

Complaints involving the conduct of a class member, the Student Liaison will speak to you about your concerns and advise you in writing about the process. Any students named in your written complaint receives a copy and will have an opportunity to respond.

Staff Conduct

Complaints involving the conduct of a staff member, the Student Liaison will speak to you about your concerns and advise you in writing about the process. Any staff members named in your written complaint receives a copy and will have an opportunity to respond.

Timeframes:

How long do I have to raise a concern?

You can raise a concern at any time, however, we would prefer you to raise it as soon as possible so that a solution can be found or changes can be made to ensure that you are not adversely affected and you can get on with your studies.

How long does it take to get a decision?

This will depend on the nature of the issue and the number of people involved and is sometimes affected by the other demands on decision-makers' time. Some things can be resolved in a matter of hours and others may take weeks.

How long do I have to appeal a decision?

You are usually given a set timeframe such as 10 working days to lodge an appeal and this will be communicated to you in writing (the timeframe or requirements may differ according to the nature of what is being appealed). The sooner you lodge an appeal after a decision has been made the better.

Will I be kept informed about what is going on at every step along the way?

Yes. You will be kept informed by the Student Liaison or depending on who you have asked to be involved.

Outcomes:

What are possible solutions?

- The original decision may be upheld
- The original decision may be overturned
- A resolution or decision made

What happens to my concern once it has been resolved?

- If you raised the concern informally then nothing further will happen unless you ask for it
- If you put the concern or complaint in writing then all information – including the complaint, any decision letters, correspondence and evidence - is kept in a secure, electronic database by the Student Liaison. The concern or complaint database is not linked to your student record

What is the Academy able to tell me about the outcome? Why?

- The Academy will inform you of the steps taken to investigate or review your concern or complaint
- If there has been a resolution reached or a decision taken, you will be informed of this and why/how it was decided
- If there is a further avenue of appeal within the Academy you will be told about this
- If the matter raised involved the behaviour of a staff member then Human Resources will investigate and take action as appropriate under the current Employment Agreement. In these circumstances you will not be told what action was taken due to privacy reasons

Does a concern/complaint go on my transcript or student record?

No.

Will the person I raise a concern about know it was me?

- If you raise the concern informally then anything you say will be kept confidential
- If you put the concern in writing or make a formal complaint then the laws of natural justice necessitate that the person who is the subject of the complaint has a right of response to any allegation made about them

I am worried that the person I want to raise a concern about might hold a grudge. What can I do about this?

Harassment, vilification, bullying, victimisation, abuse, intimidation, threats, or any other similar behaviour is unacceptable. If you experience any of these behaviours or have genuine concerns that this may happen, speak with the Student Liaison as soon as possible.

Can a staff member discuss my concern with other members of the Academy?

This is strongly discouraged and is not part of usual practice unless the other member of the department needs to be involved in the investigation; has more working knowledge of the issue; or is the decision maker.