



STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Scope and purpose

- 1.1. This document sets out the procedure that should be followed where the Student Code of Conduct is breached.
- 1.2. Breaches of the Morley College London Code of Conduct (see Section 3) constitute Misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action, such as temporary suspension, being taken against a student. Repeated breaches of the Code of Conduct however, or serious breaches of conduct constitute Gross Misconduct (see Section 4) and may result in permanent exclusion.
- 1.3. This procedure applies to all students and users of Morley College London, and at all times during the year.

2. Time periods

- 2.1 With the exception of the time allowed for lodging an appeal, time periods stated in this procedure are for guidance purposes and may be varied by the College in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 Periods of days in this procedure are office working days. Office working days are defined as Mondays to Fridays during the College opening periods. It will be assumed that documents sent by first class post have been received within 48 hours of posting.

3. Student Code of Conduct

- 3.1 The Student Code of Conduct is included in the College Student Handbook. The Student Handbook is available at the College and can be downloaded from the Student section of our website. Students must observe the College rules as detailed in the Code of Conduct, breaches of which may result in disciplinary action being taken.

4. Gross Misconduct

- 4.1 Disciplinary action may be taken against students for repeated breaches of the College's Code of Conduct or whose behaviour is considered by the College to constitute Gross Misconduct. In such circumstances, a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) has the power to temporarily suspend a student pending an investigation. Where appropriate the power to temporarily suspend a student can be delegated to a senior member of staff.

4.2 Any behaviour involving violence or the threat of violence, deliberate damage to property, putting the health and safety of others in danger, disruptive behaviour, bullying, harassment, intimidation, dishonesty (including cheating and theft) or any illegal activity is likely to be treated as Gross Misconduct.

4.3 Gross Misconduct will normally be dealt with under Stage 3 - SMT involvement (see Section 6.3) of the disciplinary procedure. In cases of Gross Misconduct the College reserves the right to suspend the student pending the outcome of the Stage 3 hearing, without prejudice. Under these circumstances, the student is not permitted to enter any Morley College London premises other than by invitation such as to attend an examination, attend an Investigation Hearing or by prior appointment with a member of staff investigating the case.

4.4 The following are examples of behaviour which may be considered as Gross Misconduct. This is not a comprehensive list:

- failure to follow Health and Safety Regulations;
- conduct which prevents, obstructs, or disrupts teaching, learning, or the administration of the business of Morley College London;
- failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff;
- smoking in a non-smoking area;
- disorderly behaviour or the use of offensive or abusive language;
- causing damage to buildings, equipment, books or furnishings;
- interference with software belonging to or used by the College or misuse of computer facilities;
- drunkenness or the use of illegal drugs;
- behaviour or language which is racially or sexually insulting or which is insulting to those with disabilities or likely to cause insult based on age, class or sexual orientation
- posting damaging or offensive messages, attacking staff or other students, on web-based networking sites;
- violence or threat of violence;
- behaviour or language on or off Morley College London premises that involves the College in such a way as to be damaging to its reputation;
- any illegal act on or off Morley College London premises that involves the College in such a way as to be damaging either to the College's premises or its reputation;
- any serious breach of the Morley College London IT Acceptable Use policy, such as deliberate damage to IT systems, unlawful or inappropriate use of social media, accessing internet pornography, hacking, downloading software without permission or deliberately introducing viruses, the making of any vexatious or malicious complaint against the College, its staff or students, or the harassment and bullying of the same.

4.5 Where students are seriously misbehaving and causing disruption to the learning of others, they may be required to leave the classroom premises and/or Morley College London premises immediately. This action by a tutor or other member of staff dealing with the incident does not constitute suspension or expulsion and will not prejudice the subsequent handling of the case, which will normally be dealt with under Stage 3 of the disciplinary procedure.

5. Student entitlement (including vulnerable students)

- 5.1 At all stages in the disciplinary process the College will endeavour to ensure that the student understands the complaint against them, the findings reached at any stage of the procedure and any disciplinary sanctions imposed or other actions taken as a result of the disciplinary process. Whenever the formal stages of the disciplinary policy are invoked, the student will be provided with a copy of this document.
- 5.2 For Investigatory Hearings, the student will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend, student representative or relative (but not by a legal or other professional adviser) at the interview; the student (or their representative) will be entitled to state his or her case (including any mitigating factors) before any decision is taken.
- 5.3 Where it is alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, the student may be accompanied by a legal advisor, provided that the College is informed of the proposed representative at least 48 hours before the hearing.
- 5.4 Students have the right at all stages to see material that is kept on their file. If they believe it to be incorrect and are able to show that this is the case, they can request its removal. All such requests shall be referred for an impartial decision to a senior member of staff with no involvement with the investigation.
- 5.5 In Student Disciplinary Investigations where students have additional communication needs, they have the right to request reasonable extensions to the time limits as stated in Section 6 - Student disciplinary procedure.
- 5.6 Students who are assessed as not responsible for their behaviour, or partly responsible for their behaviour, may be enrolled with suitable support plans, as vulnerable persons. If they exhibit 'challenging behaviour' and there is an incident, their support plan is reviewed and adjusted where possible to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. If they cannot be effectively supported, their programme may be adjusted or they may not be able to continue with their course.
- 5.7 Where the student is assessed as being responsible for the particular behaviour, and also able to understand the basic processes involved, disciplinary procedures will be used in the normal way.
- 5.8 In these circumstances the additional support necessary to support their communication and understanding, and to ensure that they have an appropriate 'friend' at any meeting may be provided. This approach aims to balance the rights of the individual for appropriate support and recognition of their level of independence.

6. Student disciplinary procedure

6.1 Stage 1 - Verbal Warning (Programme Manager)

For breaches of the Code of Conduct, a Head of School may delegate responsibility to an appropriate Programme Manager to conduct a Stage 1 Warning Hearing with a student.

The procedure for this is as follows:

- The Programme Manager will speak to any relevant witnesses and establish what happened.
- The Programme Manager will invite the student to a 1:1 meeting, giving at least 24 hours' notice.
- The Programme Manager will provide the student with a copy of this document.
- The Programme Manager will discuss the incident(s) with the student during the meeting. If they believe a warning is appropriate, they should give it verbally.
- The student should also be warned verbally that any repeat of the misconduct may result in a further action.
- A note of any warning must be made by the Programme Manager and sent to the Quality & Standards Team to be placed on the student's file.

If the decision is to issue a Stage 1 Warning, practical measures to avoid recurrence must be identified and agreed by both the student and the Programme Manager and incorporated into the Warning. The warning will be spent and removed from the student's file and disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 6 or 12 months (depending on the severity of the conduct), subject to the student's conduct being satisfactory throughout that period.

There is no right of appeal against a Stage 1 Warning.

6.2 Stage 2 – Written Warning (Head of School)

Where the conduct is of a more serious nature, there is evidence of repeated misconduct or where there has been no improvement in the behaviour which warranted the Stage 1 Warning, the student will be invited to attend a Stage 2 disciplinary interview with the Head of School.

At least 3 days' written notice will be given and the notice will state:

- the nature of the conduct complained of and a summary of the evidence for the complaint;
- a copy of this document;
- confirmation of the time and place of the interview.

The Head of School will discuss with the student the concern or complaint (as per the Stage 1 procedure in 6.1.2) and, after taking into account any explanation given, decide whether a Stage 2 Warning should be given.

If the decision is to issue a Stage 2 Written Warning, practical measures to avoid recurrence must be identified and agreed by both the student and the Head of School and incorporated into the Warning which will be sent to the student within 5 working days from the date of the Stage 2 disciplinary interview.

A copy of the Warning must be sent to the Quality & Standards Team to be placed on the student's file and copies provided to the SMT and the Quality & Standards Manager. The warning will be spent and removed from the student's file and disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to the student's conduct having been satisfactory throughout that period. In exceptional cases, such as where 12 months is not sufficient to monitor the student's conduct in relation to the particular offence, this period may be

extended to 18 months.

There is no right of appeal against a Stage 2 Warning.

6.3 Stage 3 – Investigation Hearing (SMT member other than the Principal)

Where Gross Misconduct occurs or the misconduct is repeated after the Head of School's Stage 2 Written Warning, the student will be invited to attend an Investigation Hearing with a panel comprising:

- a member of the Senior Management Team other than the Principal, who must have had no prior involvement in the case;
- a member of the Student Council (SC) or Class Representatives' Committee (CRC);
- the Quality and Standards Manager or another member of the College Management Team.

A note-taker will also be present.

At least 5 days written notice will normally be given and the notice will state:

- the nature of the conduct complained of and a summary of the evidence for the complaint;
- a copy of this document;
- confirmation of the time and place of the interview.

The SMT member will chair the Panel and is responsible for conducting the Hearing in a fair and transparent manner.

During the Hearing the Chair or another Panel member will present the case against the Student and may refer to witness statements, attendance records, previous warnings or any other relevant documentation that relate to the case. The student has the right to call witnesses who may be questioned by the student, his or her representative or any Panel member.

Before the Panel adjourns to make a decision, the Chair will ask the student whether there are any other factors or mitigating circumstances that he/she would like to be taken into account.

After hearing the student's case, the Panel may make one of the following decisions:

- i) no further action will be taken;
- ii) the student will receive a Stage 3 Written Warning;
- iii) the student will be suspended from the class or the College, for a specified period of time;
- iv) the student will be permanently excluded from the class or the College; this decision may be reviewed after a minimum of 12 months should the student wish to enrol on a College course again.
- v) further investigation is needed before a final decision can be made .

The Chair of the Panel will write to the student within five working days to communicate the decision including the reasons for it. The decision will have immediate effect. If relevant, the timescale and procedures for reviewing an exclusion will be provided.

The letter will affirm the student's right of appeal to the Principal, stating that this must be done within 10 working days of receipt of the decision letter. In case of permanent exclusion the letter will also state that the exclusion may be reviewed after a specific period of time (usually 6 to 12 months) and the student may be readmitted to the College subject to a satisfactory interview with a member of the SMT and to certain conditions being met.

6.4 Stage 4 – Appeal

A student who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision must do so within 10 working days of the date they were informed of the decision. To do so, they should write to the Principal, stating their main grounds for appeal.

The Principal can reach a final decision based on the documentary and/or new evidence or convene an appeal hearing.

At an appeal hearing, the SMT member who chaired the panel that conducted the Investigatory Hearing in Stage 3 of the procedure will be asked to present and explain the reasons for the decision.

The student will be invited to explain the grounds of the appeal and state his or her case.

The Principal may ask questions of the student and the SMT member presenting the case and will then consider whether to allow or dismiss the appeal. Any witnesses will normally be asked to be on call to answer any questions.

If the appeal is upheld, the Principal may decide on lesser disciplinary action, or no disciplinary action. If the appeal is dismissed the Principal will issue a statement saying that he/she has decided to uphold the recommendation at Stage 3.

The Principal's decision is final and is not subject to any further appeal, and will be confirmed in writing to the student within 5 working days.

7. Criminal offences

7.1 Where there is reason to believe that a student may have committed a criminal offence whilst on the College premises or otherwise having an impact on it, the College may refer the matter to the police and will normally suspend the disciplinary proceedings and suspend the student pending the outcome of police enquiries and any charges which may be brought against the student. Where the student has been suspended under this provision, when the results of those enquiries and any criminal proceedings are known, the College reserves the right to recommence proceedings.

7.2 Any disciplinary action relating to alleged criminal offences will be based on the genuine belief of the member of staff taking the action after a proper investigation and will not require a criminal conviction. It is emphasised that in relation to the application of this procedure the College is not bound by the results of any criminal proceedings against students but may take them into account.

8. Conduct of Investigation and appeal hearings

- 8.1 Investigation and appeal hearings under this procedure will be conducted fairly. A member of staff who is not directly involved in the hearing will be available to take notes. If communication assistance is required, this will be arranged by the College, taking into account the need for impartiality
- 8.2 The chair of the panel or (in the case of an appeal hearing) the Principal may:
- give instructions in relation to the conduct of the hearing, including (without limitation) as to the length of time that any part of the hearing should take. Instructions must be fair, particularly in allowing the student to question the evidence and state his or her case. Witnesses may be called to the hearing;
 - exclude from the proceedings any person (including the student or the student's fellow student representative or relative) who behaves unreasonably or who disregards the instructions of the chair; or
 - consider and determine the outcome of any request to postpone a hearing.
- 8.3 If the student does not attend an investigation or appeal hearing without good cause, the hearing may still proceed in the student's absence.
- 8.4 In exceptional cases it may be desirable that variations should be made to procedural aspects of this code. Any such variations must be subject to informing the student concerned and subject always to the consideration of fairness.
- 8.5 If any person who would otherwise be conducting a hearing has previously had close personal involvement in the matter to be considered, the chair of the panel or (in the case of an appeal hearing) the Principal must arrange for another member of College staff to take his or her place.

APPENDIX

Student Disciplinary Procedure Flowchart

