

# Policies and Procedures

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## Student Grievance Procedures

<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>1.6.2.31(a)</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Deputy Vice-Chancellor &amp; Vice President - Education</b>
<b>Policy Editor/Contact:</b>	<b>Deputy Vice-Chancellor &amp; Vice President - Education</b>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	<b>Senate (Meeting 4 of 2024)</b>
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### 1. Purpose

The Student Grievance Procedures provide the formal mechanism for resolving grievances about matters or issues relating to student experiences at the University.

### 2. Scope

These Procedures apply to all students of the University and covers all issues arising from students' involvement with the University. A grievance matter that is before an appeal body/person defined in a University regulation shall not be considered under the Student Grievance Procedures.

### 3. Definitions

A request for reconsideration of a decision .

#### **Appeal**

An appeal may be a complaint about a decision relating to an academic or administrative decision, or unfair treatment.

#### **Complainant**

The aggrieved student who makes the complaint.

#### **Grievance**

A problem or concern raised by a student who considers they have been wronged because of an action, decision or omission within the control or responsibility of the University. This includes grievances or complaints which are not able to be resolved through the formal University processes.

#### **Responsible Officer**

A person responsible for an area which is subject to a grievance. This person may be a Campus Director, Head of Academic Unit, Deputy Head of School or Head of College, Discipline / Programme Coordinator or Course Coordinator, Director, Group Manager, Manager or staff who hold designated positions for overseeing specific tasks.

#### **Support Person**

A person who may assist a student in the preparation and, where appropriate, the presentation of their case in formal grievance proceedings. The support person must be a member of the University community and

may not be a person who was involved in or associated with events giving rise to the grievance.

#### **4.Procedures**

Students wishing to raise a grievance, shall follow these steps:

4.1 Seek advice from an advocate or an independent person who is knowledgeable about the grievance process to clarify options for resolving their concerns. The independent person maybe:

- an advocate from the USPSA;
- a student welfare officer or counsellor;
- a student officer or coordinator from SAS;
- an academic / administrative staff member.

4.2 The student and the independent adviser should:

- consider whether the grievance is reasonable;
- clarify the details of the concern including the events that occurred, the basis for the grievance, and resolution sought;
- identify the most appropriate process under which the matter may be pursued.

4.3 On the basis of this discussion the student may wish to:

- take no further action;
- make an informal approach to the complainee (the person whom their grievance concerns);
- Proceed with the grievance procedure by completing the Grievance Statement Form and submitting it to SAS.
- Students who decide to pursue the matter further may if they wish continue with the assistance of the advocate listed in 4.1 above.<sup>2</sup>

4.4 Resolving student grievances.

4.4.1 Responsible Officers listed in the appendix who receive a completed Grievance Form shall within five working days:

- (i) acknowledge receipt of the Student Grievance Form;
- (ii) arrange to discuss the matter with the student or indicate when an initial response will be provided, and in what form;
- (iii) attempt to clarify with relevant parties what is agreed and where opinions differ;

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<sup>1</sup> Students should first make reasonable attempts to resolve the matter through formal University process in the area where the grievance arose, unless there is a compelling reason why this is not appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> If students wish to pursue the matter further, the Student Grievance Form must be completed and directed to the DVCVP-E or Responsible Officer listed in the appendix.

- (iv) attempt to clarify the relevant policies, procedures or processes underpinning the action to which the grievance relates;
- (v) identify the appropriate manner of resolving the grievance, including seeking advice or a decision from other relevant parties;
- (vi) advise the student of a proposed process for resolving the grievance, which may be through mediation (see 5.4.2 below);
- (vii) advise the student of his or her right to be accompanied by a support person at any meetings or discussions towards resolution.

4.4.2 If all parties agree to mediation, the Responsible Officer shall negotiate the appointment of a mediator who may be a USP staff member or an external mediator.

4.4.3 If, in the judgement of the Responsible Officer, disclosure of the grievance to the person who is the subject of the grievance may put the student(s) or staff member at risk, they shall advise that the grievance be submitted to relevant the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice President (Education), Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice President (Research & Innovation), or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Campuses & Regional Campuses and Global Engagement).

#### 4.5 Escalation of Unresolved Student Grievances

4.5.1 If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their grievance, he or she may ask that the grievance be escalated to the Head of the Academic Unit/Director, DVC or VCP (Definition provided).

4.5.2 The Responsible Officer to whom the grievance has been escalated, shall follow the procedures to consider the grievance as detailed in 4.4 above.

4.5.3 The Responsible Officer to whom the grievance has been escalated may decline to investigate further, for example, where the student has repeatedly submitted grievances in relation to the same matter which have not been upheld.

4.5.4 The Responsible Officer, if he or she chooses to investigate further, shall undertake a quality check of all investigation reports produced to ensure that:

- all issues raised in the student grievance for which he or she is appealing are investigated;
- all key stakeholders are interviewed;
- the report is fair and balanced;
- all relevant circumstances have been considered;
- the findings and recommendations are evidence based.

4.5.5 The Responsible Officer shall:

- acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing within five working days and indicate when a resolution of the matter should be expected;

- recommend any immediate corrective action that needs to be taken before the appeal is investigated;
- independently review the appeal process including hearing from all parties who wish to partake in the process and attempt to resolve the problem;
- within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal, notify the student and the next most senior Responsible Officer listed in the Definition provided, in writing of the nature of the investigation process;
- provide the Responsible Officer listed in the appendix, a report of the investigation for review prior to its release;
- provide the student with the outcome of the review process, including a resolution or why a resolution could not be reached.

4.5.6 The Responsible Officer shall notify the student and the Responsible Officer listed in the appendix if the appeal is frivolous, or if no grounds could be offered to support it.

4.5.7 A student not satisfied with the decision of the Responsible Officer listed in the appendix may appeal the decision to the Vice-Chancellor & President (VCP). No appeals to the VCP shall be considered if the student has failed to follow these procedures for raising grievances.;

4.5.8 If the student is not satisfied by the VCP's decision, the student can write to the University Visitor through the Council Secretariat. (Refer to Guideline for Appeal to The Visitor)

4.5.9 Decisions made upon appeal shall not necessarily set precedence for future cases of a similar nature.

## **5. Records**

5.1 Student grievances shall be registered on a Student Grievance Register at the DVCVP's Office or SAS and include data collected on student grievances resolved by any section of the University. The Student Grievance Register is maintained by the DVCVP-E's office and Student Academic Services (SAS), and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to register the grievance with the relevant SAS officer.

5.2 Staff members receiving grievances shall keep appropriate, confidential records of informal discussions and outcomes for the period that meets the details described in the University's Retention and Disposal Schedule:

### ***University Retention and Disposal Schedule: 23.11 Grievances***

- *The handling and resolution of individual cases relating to complaints about the study environment, study organisation or distribution, peers, supervisors or subordinates*
- *23.11.1 Formal complaints or grievances raised by a student, which are precedent setting cases and have resulted in significant change to University policy or procedure. Refer to the Introduction, 3.2 for a description of significant. Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then transfer to Archives.*
- *23.11.2 Formal complaints or grievances and where the matter has been referred to an outside agency. Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy.*
- *23.11.3 Non-significant formal grievances not included in 23.11.1, raised by a student which are not precedent setting and do not result in a change to policy or procedure. Does not include formal complaints or grievances referred to outside agencies Retain minimum of 7 years after action*

*completed, then destroy.*

- *23.11.4 Grievances that were raised informally and were not proceeded with. Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy.*

5.3 Mediators shall keep appropriate, confidential records of mediation discussions and outcomes.

5.4 SAS shall report findings and outcomes in the Student Grievance Register to the DVCVP (Education) via the Teaching Quality Committee (TQC), who shall ensure appropriate, confidential records are kept (unless the grievance relates to the DVCVP-E, in which case a record shall be held by the Office of the VCP).

5.5 The DVCVP-E shall ensure that reporting of grievances and their resolution is confined to ensuring that processes are fair and that appropriate action is taken to address problems and improve existing policies, procedures and processes.

5.6 The DVCVP-E shall analyse data relating to grievances on an annual basis to identify trends.

5.7 The DVCVP-E shall provide an annual report along with recommendations on student grievances to the Senate via the VCP and include quantitative and qualitative data.

## **6.Related Policies & Documents**

- 6.1. [Student Grievance Policy](#)
- 6.2. [Student Grievance Statement Form](#)
- 6.3. [Teaching Quality Committee – Terms of Reference](#)
- 6.4. [USP Handbook and Calendar](#)
- 6.5. [Student Charter](#)
- 6.6. [Guideline for Appeal to The Visitor](#)