

## **Student Complaints**

### **1. Scope**

- 1.1. A student complaint (“Complaint”) is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by a student (or group of students) Enrolled on a Program with any individual, service or lack of service at the Institution, where a response is reasonably expected and which has not already been resolved.
- 1.2. This Complaints Procedure and any decisions made under it do not give rise to legal rights or obligations on the part of the School to pay compensation in respect of a decision made according to these procedures or for a breach of these procedures.
- 1.3. The Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
  - a. Academic Misconduct
  - b. Academic Appeals and other matters of academic judgement
  - c. Honor Code violations and Disciplinary Action
  - d. Staff grievances
  - e. Anonymous complaints

### **2. Principles**

- 2.1. Complaints are:
  - a. Resolved informally if possible
  - b. Treated seriously, consistently and in line with principles of natural justice
  - c. Considered in accordance with the School’s policies such as those for diversity and equal opportunity
  - d. Resolved or escalated promptly through the stages of the procedure, normally within ten working days at each stage
- 2.2. The School maintains reasonable confidentiality regarding the Complaint if this is explicitly requested by the student.
- 2.3. At any stage, the member of staff handling the Complaint may refer the Complaint to a third party and inform the student that this has been done.
- 2.4. Where the same issue is raised by more than one student, the Complaint of the group of students may be considered as one Complaint if raised collectively, or at the discretion of the School. In such cases, in the Complaints Procedure, ‘student’ means the group of students.
- 2.5. Disciplinary action may be taken if the Complaint is malicious, frivolous or vexatious in intent or design, or a result of default or negligence.

### **3. Procedure**

- 3.1. The procedure has four stages:

- a. Informal Stage
- b. Formal Stage
- c. Internal Review
- d. External Review

#### **4. Informal Stage**

- 4.1. Within a period of five working days from the event which has caused the Complaint, the student making the Complaint needs to raise the matter with either:
  - a. The faculty or staff member who is directly responsible for the cause of the Complaint
  - b. The head of the department that is responsible for the cause of the Complaint
- 4.2. The member of staff discusses the Complaint with the student and, with the student's consent, anyone else involved, to see if it can be resolved informally.
- 4.3. The outcome of the Complaint is communicated to the student in writing.
- 4.4. Normally, Complaints at this Informal Stage are dealt with within ten working days.
- 4.5. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Informal Stage, the student may raise a Formal Complaint within five working days of notification of the outcome.

#### **5. Formal Stage**

- 5.1. The student submits a written Complaint, together with relevant evidence and/or a proposed solution.
- 5.2. The Complaint is submitted to the Campus Dean on the student's current campus. The receipt of the Complaint is acknowledged in writing.
- 5.3. The Complaint is considered by the student's Campus Dean (or designee), unless the complaint is against that person, in which case the person's line manager considers the complaint.
- 5.4. The Campus Dean (or designee):
  - a. Considers the evidence provided by the student
  - b. Meets or corresponds in writing with the student, to understand the Complaint and any proposed solution
  - c. Investigates as appropriate to provide further evidence
- 5.5. The Campus Dean (or designee) may consult with the student and other involved parties regarding potential solutions either individually or together.
- 5.6. The outcome of the Complaint is communicated to the student in writing, together with the grounds for the decision.
- 5.7. Normally, Complaints at this Formal Stage are dealt with within ten working days.

- 5.8. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Formal Stage, the student may request an Internal Appeal within five working days of notification of the outcome.

## **6. Internal Appeal**

- 6.1. The student submits the request for an Internal Appeal together with valid grounds for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Formal Stage to the Head of School. Valid grounds are:
- a. Procedural error sufficient to affect the outcome of the Complaint
  - b. Substantive bias in decision-making in the Complaint
  - c. New evidence that was not available at the time of the Complaint
  - d. Insufficient remedy for a Complaint that was upheld
- 6.2. The request for Internal Appeal of the Complaint is acknowledged in writing, as well as any request for a meeting (physical or virtual) with the Head of School.
- 6.3. The Head of School reviews the Complaint and the outcome of the Formal Stage considering the Complaint, evidence, and process by which it was handled. The Head of School may refer the Complaint to a third party.
- 6.4. The Head of School may:
- a. Investigate to provide further evidence
  - b. Consult with the student and other involved parties, either individually or together
  - c. Propose alternative solution(s)
- 6.5. Normally, Complaints at this Internal Appeal stage are dealt with within ten working days.
- 6.6. The decision of the Head of School is final. The outcome of the Internal Appeal may be to uphold the outcome of the Formal Stage or propose a revised outcome. The outcome is communicated to the student in writing.

## **7. External Review**

- 7.1. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, internal procedures have been exhausted, and the student may seek an External Review of the outcome.