

# Staff Complaint Procedure

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next full review
2.0	Chief Human Resources Officer	28 October 2021	28 October 2021	October 2024
<b>Procedure Statement</b>				
<b>Purpose</b>	This procedure establishes a process for resolving complaints, or any type of problem, concern or grievance about work or the work environment			
<b>Scope</b>	This procedure applies to complaints brought by staff or independent contractors of the University.			
<b>Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, however Local Documents must be consistent with this University-wide Document		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Procedure Processes and Actions</b>				

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## 1. Introduction

The University aims to provide a working environment which promotes safety, teamwork and respectful treatment. From time to time, issues or conflict may arise causing a person to feel aggrieved. The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process for resolving complaints which:

- applies equally to all staff
- encourages staff to raise their complaint, without fear of victimisation or disadvantage
- promotes timely resolution of complaints, as close to the source as possible and at an appropriate level having regard to the seriousness and nature of the complaint
- provides a clear process for addressing complaints
- recognises the importance of sensitivity, confidentiality and impartiality in the complaint resolution procedure.

The principles of procedural fairness apply during the complaints procedure, which means that the respondent is informed of the allegations against them, each party has a chance to have their say and be



### **3. What is a Complaint?**

#### **3.1. What is a complaint?**

A complaint is any type of problem, concern or grievance about work or the work environment. Complaints must relate to University matters, which includes work-related activities and functions. Common complaints include:

- the conduct of another staff member or student (including interpersonal conflict)
- discrimination, harassment or bullying
- workplace safety or environment issues
- the application of University policies and procedures.

#### **3.2. Who can make a complaint?**

This procedure applies to all staff, regardless of seniority or whether they are employed under an enterprise agreement, AWA or any other arrangement. The University will accept complaints by former staff and independent contractors under this procedure where it considers it appropriate to do so. If a complaint is not accepted, reasons will be given for the decision.

The University acknowledges that individuals may wish to obtain advice or assistance during any stage of the complaint process from a representative (such as the union or a legal advisor) or support person. For more information about the role of representatives and support persons, see section 5.5 of this Procedure.

The University also acknowledges that in some circumstances staff may feel more comfortable making a complaint collectively (i.e. as a group). A collective complaint will be accepted where each of the complainants are identified, has a particular complaint

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have a legitimate reason to know, such as an advisor, a counsellor/medical practitioner or their family/partner. However, these people must also maintain confidentiality.

- **Work arrangements:** Staff are generally expected to work as normal during a complaint process. In some circumstances, a person may be suspended during the complaint procedure, in accordance with the enterprise agreement, AWA or industrial instrument. The University may also make alternative work arrangements (e.g. a different work location, a temporary transfer, a change in work duties etc.).
- **Representation:** At any stage of the complaint process, a staff member can be supported or represented by a support person, union representative or legal representative. The support person or representative can attend any meetings and provide advice or support to the person about written documents, process etc.
- **Counselling:** The University offers a confidential counselling service for all employees of the University, known as the Employee Assistance Program. Staff members can access the program by contacting 1300 360 364 or at <https://www.benestar.com>
- **No victimisation:** Individuals should not be victimised or retaliated against because of their involvement in a complaint. If any staff member believes they are being victimised, they should immediately contact their supervisor, Head of School, Department Head or the Chief Human Resources Officer. Similarly, individuals must not victimise others. If any person engages in victimisation, disciplinary action may be taken against them.
- **Conflict of interest:** If the complainant or respondent believes that the complaint handler is not impartial or has a conflict of interest, they should raise this with the complaint handler, the complaint Chief Human Resources Officer.
- **Complaints must be made in good faith:** This complaint procedure is not to be used for revenge, retribution or mischief. If a person makes a complaint which is frivolous, vexatious or in bad faith, disciplinary action may be taken against them. Examples of frivolous, vexatious and bad faith complaints include fabricating a complaint, making trivial or petty complaints, or seeking to re-agitate issues that have already been addressed or determined.

### 5.3. Complaint handlers

The following rights and responsibilities apply to all persons handling complaints, including supervisors (under the informal complaint procedure), Heads of School, Department Heads and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Planning and Assurance (under the formal complaint procedure) and Chief Human Resources Officer and other Management Board members (under the internal appeal procedure):

- **Seek advice from HR:** complaint handlers should notify their HR Advisor upon receipt of a complaint made under this procedure. The HR Advisor will remain allocated to the complaint for the duration of the complaint process for the purpose of providing ongoing advice and assistance to the Complaint handler in relation to conducting the complaint process.
- **Notification to HR Director:** Complaint handlers must notify the Chief Human Resources Officer upon receipt of any Formal Complaints for the purposes of ensuring the Formal Complaint is recorded



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**ANNEXURE A FLOW CHARTS  
OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

**ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE YOURSELF**

If you feel comfortable doing so, approach the person directly. This is not a compulsory step.

**MAKE A COMPLAINT**

directly, or you tried this and it was not effective, you should make a complaint to your immediate supervisor (or another manager). There are two options for handling your complaint: the informal complaint procedure and the formal complaint

**INFORMAL COMPLAINT  
PROCEDURE**



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