



Student Complaints Procedure

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Complaints

The Institute is committed to offering the highest quality of education while providing effective and efficient mechanisms for encouraging student feedback. At the same time, the Institute is committed to supporting students in filing a complaint and to taking all measures to ensure that no one is discriminated against and justice and fairness always prevails. As part of this directive of encouraging open lines of communication between each individual student and the Institute's staff (programme heads, lecturers, mentors and administrative staff), the Institute has developed the following procedures for addressing student complaints.

The Institute aims to address all student complaints in a fair, sympathetic and timely fashion. It is of the utmost importance that students voice their concerns with confidence and without fear of retribution. In conveying possible issues, whether academic or administrative, students will have fulfilled their obligations to strengthening our Institute and helping everyone improve the overall experience.

The procedure set out below will inform students about how, when and where to voice their complaints. These complaints may be about a problem encountered by a student in connection with academic or other services provided by the Institute. They can be general comments or concerns, or more specific, regarding a specific person or department. All complaints will be resolved in a fair, just and timely manner and the Institute will ensure that the student is not treated in an unfavourable manner, regardless of the outcome.

If the complaint is upheld, the Institute will resolve the complaint and advise the student of the outcome of the review, including action steps for resolution. If necessary, the student may be asked to provide evidence supporting the claim to assist the committee in determining disciplinary action. If it is not upheld, the student will be provided a thorough explanation. If it is determined that the complaint was made maliciously, the student may be in breach of the Institute's rules and may be asked to appear before the Disciplinary Committee.

Time Limit

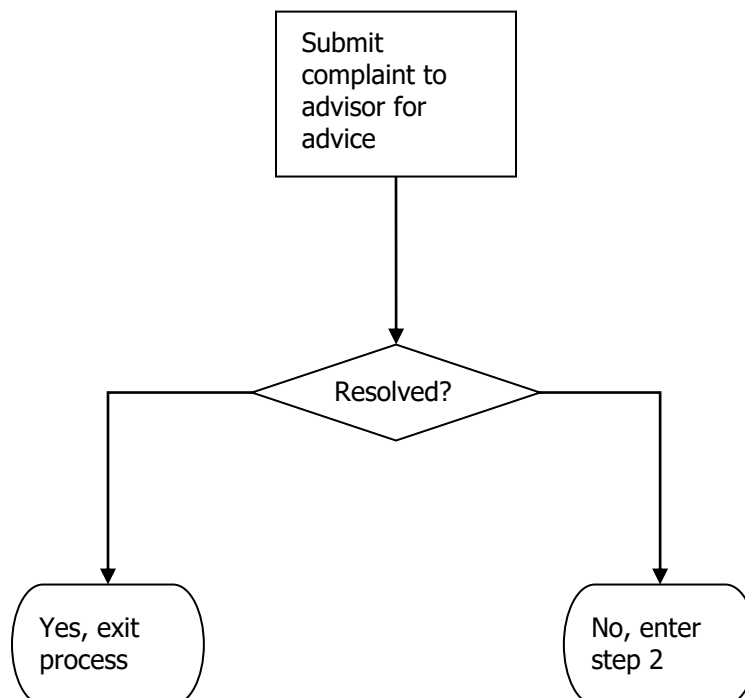
The Institute will attempt to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible. The timelines contained in the procedure below are estimates and may not be practical under all circumstances. In general, a complaint should be submitted within seven days of the incident. Resolution at the informal level should be completed within five days of submission, while, at the formal level, it could take up to two weeks. Regardless of the timeframe, all parties involved will be kept abreast of the progress towards resolution.

Step 1: Mentor/Student Advisor Discussion

1.1 The first step is to submit the complaint promptly, within seven days of the incident.

1.2 The complaint should go through an advisor first. It is important to get advice early from an advisor, such as your mentor. Often, this advisor can help resolve the issue or complaint quickly without needing to proceed to the next step.

If you have any complaints regarding the Institute, a staff member or class, meet with your advisor first and they will work to resolve the issue. (If the matter pertains to a mark or examination grade, contact the Dean. If it regards admissions, contact the admissions officer; for enrolment, contact the Academic Registrar; for administrative matters, contact the Admissions Officer or Administrative Assistant.)

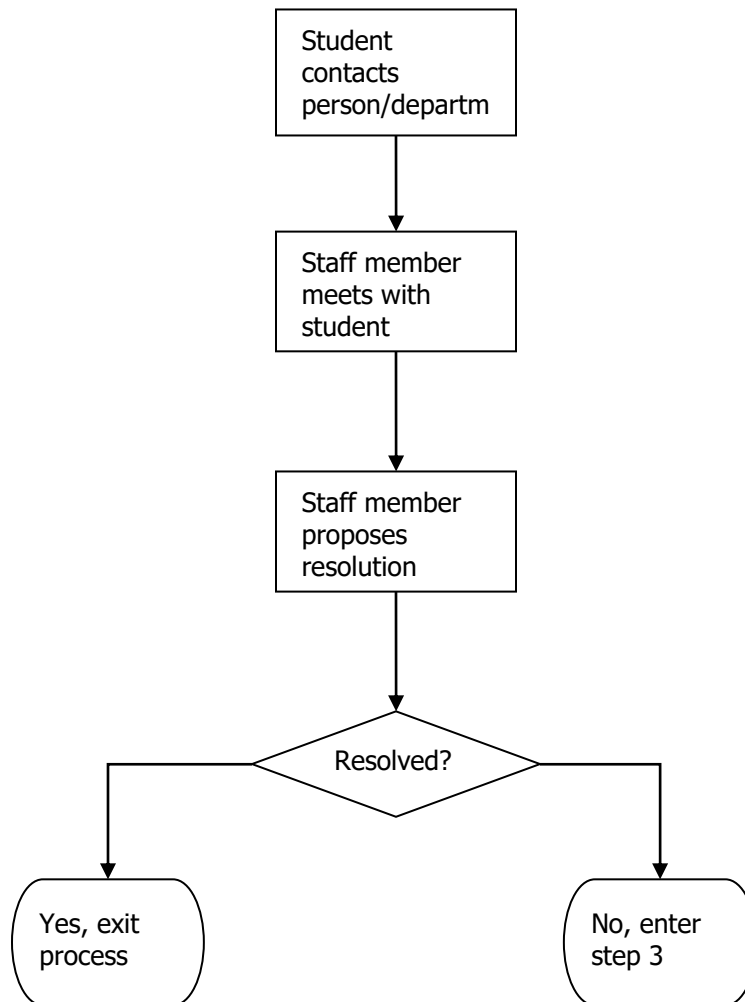


Step 2: Informal Process

1.1 The student should contact the staff member most closely related to the complaint and can resolve it expeditiously. This complaint can be either oral or in writing.

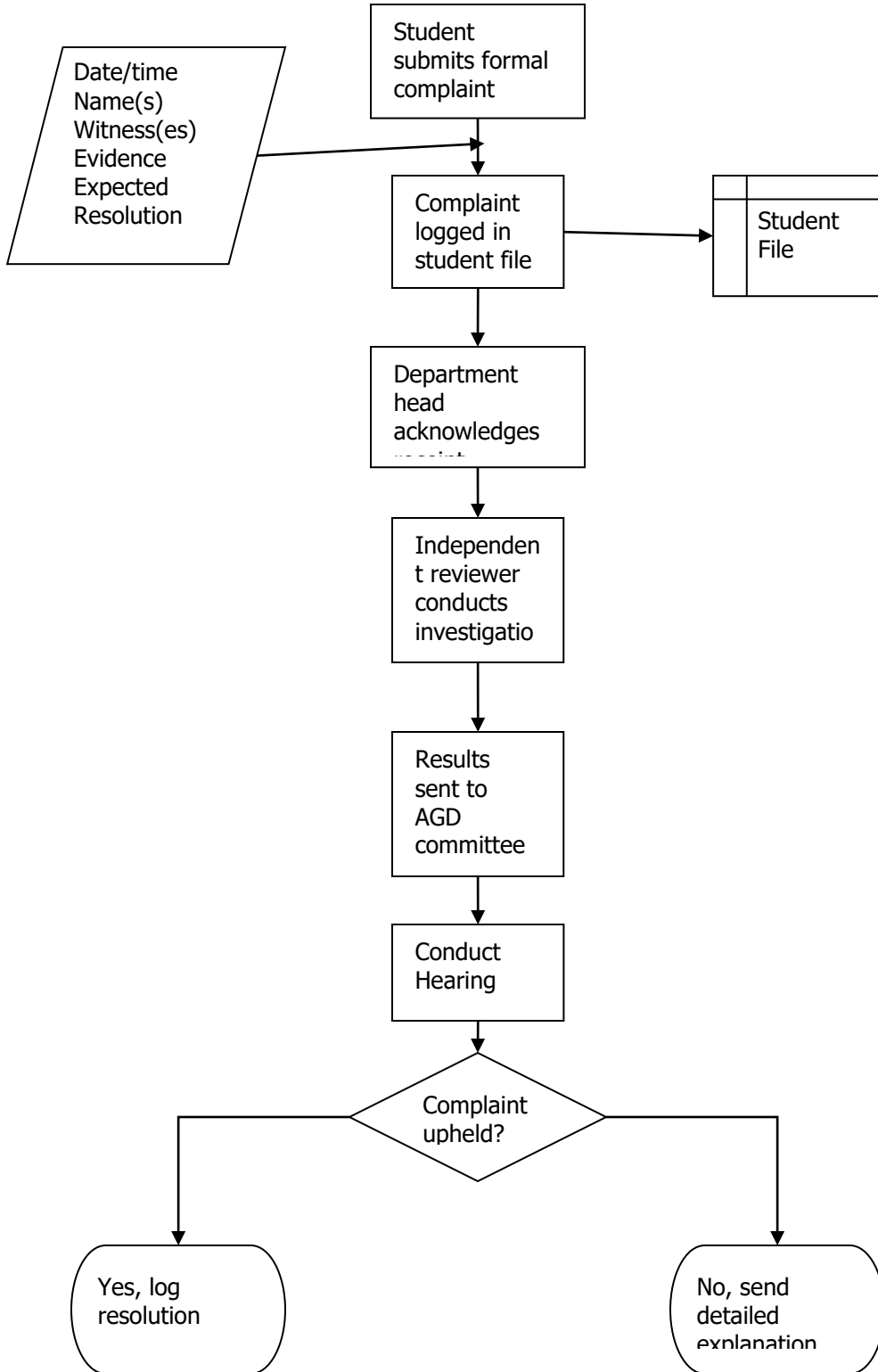
1.2 If possible the student should raise the complaint directly with the person or department involved. If the student is uncomfortable doing this, then another individual within that organization should be contacted.

- 1.3 The staff member shall first attempt to resolve the complaint informally. The staff member may need additional information or clarification regarding the complaint from the student, classmates or other personnel. The student is expected to assist to the best of his/her ability so that the staff member can recommend appropriate action.
- 1.4 The staff member then meets with the student within 5 days and proposes a resolution, if needed.
- 1.5 If the resolution is unsatisfactory, then the student may escalate the complaint to the next step.



Step 3: Formal Process

- 1.1 Before entering the formal stage of the process, the student must exhaust all informal routes to resolution. If the resolution is not satisfactory or the problem is particularly serious, or if the concerned party refuses to address the problem, a formal complaint may be submitted.
- 1.2 Students submitting a formal complaint must do so in writing (*see the attached Complaint Form). The written complaint should include all pertinent details, including:
 - Exact date and time
 - Name of the person or department involved
 - Names of any witnesses who will corroborate the complaint
 - Any evidence the student possesses
 - Expected resolution
- 1.3 Complaints should be submitted to the officer most closely related to the individual(s) identified in the complaint, or in the case of complaints against academic individuals, to the Director of Academic Programmes. It can also be filed through the Student Affairs officer or the administrative officer at the branch, who can then forward it to the appropriate person(s).
- 1.4 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and an independent reviewer will be assigned by the Appeals, Grievances and Disciplinary Committee chairperson to the investigation of the complaint. The independent reviewer can be anyone at the Institute not directly or indirectly involved in the complaint. The student may object to the reviewer selected and, if the objection is upheld, another may be selected.
- 1.5 The independent reviewer will then conduct interviews with the parties involved and issue a report containing the findings. This report will also contain recommendations for action.
- 1.6 The report is then reviewed by the Appeals, Grievances and Disciplinary Committee, who will then issue copies of the report and schedule a hearing if necessary. The Committee will then set the appropriate course of action to be carried out.
- 1.7 The ruling may be appealed if the complainant disagrees with the ruling. An ad-hoc committee comprising four members of the Institute's Council will review the hearing and evidence and render the Institute's final decision.



The Institute aims to resolve all complaints within two weeks of the initial lodging of the complaint. Throughout the proceedings, all parties involved will be treated in a fair and just manner. The most important part of the process is to keep open lines of communication with the student at all stages. Questions, comments and needs for clarification are encouraged throughout the process and the student can ask for assistance or advice at any stage. For further questions, please contact the Student Affairs officer.

Monitoring

Annually, a report will be produced by the Administrative Committee (or an administrative officer) that summarises the volume and types of complaints and identifies areas that may require further investigation or procedural modifications. The report should also summarise complaints by gender, ethnicity, disability, etc. to identify any potential signs of discrimination. This report is then reviewed by the Institute's Council to identify areas for improvement in the policies and procedures for Equal Opportunity, Appeals, Grievances and Student Complaints. Amendments to the policies and procedures will be considered, and then enacted for the upcoming academic year.

Getting Help

The Institute has several individuals who can help with the process in person, via phone or email.

The Student Affairs Officer is the primary means of support and assistance for the student during his/her time at the Institute. The officer provides assistance with anything that affects student life, including complaints, appeals and disciplinary actions.

Administrative assistants at both branches are also available to assist the student with answers and advice regarding processes and the student's rights.

Lastly, the student's mentor is not just for seeking advice on academic matters; often your mentor should be your first contact for support and he/she can guide you through the process.

Approved by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee
September 2021