



University
of Glasgow | Human
Resources

Grievance Policy & Procedure

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The University is committed to promoting and maintaining a working environment where concerns can be discussed openly and respectfully between colleagues and encourages staff to raise concerns as soon as they arise.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure sets out the University's approach to resolving concerns which inevitably arise, from time to time, within the workplace.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all employees.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure applies to concerns raised personally by one or more named employees, arising out of their employment.
- 2.3 This policy does not cover collective grievances raised on behalf of a group of employees by one of the University recognised trade unions. Any such formal collective grievances will be considered via an ad-hoc subgroup of the Joint Committee of Consultation and Negotiation (JCCN) which may be at either a local or central level.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The University promotes an environment where all colleagues are able to perform at their best and feel supported to do so.
- 3.2 The University recognises that differences and disagreements do arise in the workplace from time to time.
- 3.3 The ability to discuss issues openly and respectfully is essential to the well-being of our people and the success of the University.
- 3.4 Wherever possible the informal resolution of differences is preferable but a formal process is sometimes required to enable all parties to work together to find a mutually acceptable resolution. The formal policy and procedure hence exists to support colleagues in both raising and responding to grievances.
- 3.5 A formal grievance can be difficult for all those involved and the University is committed to supporting all participants, keeping them informed of progress as appropriate. The University expects those involved in grievances (whether in raising or responding to them) to act objectively, calmly and with due regard to the Dignity at Work and Study policy and the Code of Practice on Unacceptable Behaviour.
- 3.6 The University strives to investigate any grievances fairly, promptly and transparently, where they reach Stage 1 or beyond and employees/respondents may be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union representative at any formal meetings.

- 3.7 The aim of the process, whether informal or formal is to enable staff to raise concerns without fear of reprisal, to have them respectfully listened to and seriously considered and to seek agreement on the best way forward to resolve the concern being raised.
- 3.8 The University believes that grievances should focus on perceived issues and behaviours and not the person or people concerned.
- 3.9 If an employee has particular requirements at any stage of the procedures because of a disability, or wishes to inform the University of any relevant medical condition, the employee should contact the appropriate Human Resources representative.
- 3.10 HR will provide training for managers regarding this policy and procedure and an HR Representative will be available to advise managers on the application of it.
- 3.11 Where the concern arises out of a different University Policy or Procedure such as the Flexible Working or Disciplinary policies the matter would normally be dealt with within the procedure set out within that policy, utilising the appeal mechanisms as appropriate. The grievance policy would not therefore normally be applied where the employee's concerns have or could be considered under a separate appeals mechanism within other University policies or procedures.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1 It is important that issues at work can be discussed in an open and safe environment. All matters should, as far as possible, be kept confidential by all parties and agreement should be sought wherever possible before discussing the matter with others. During any investigation the number of witnesses should be kept to a minimum. Witnesses should only be given such information that is required to enable them to respond to questions and the need for confidentiality should be impressed upon them. In some cases, the investigation may identify related issues which need to be considered but do not relate directly to the Employee who raised the grievance. Only information directly relevant to the Employee will be shared with them.

5. WITHDRAWAL OF GRIEVANCE

- 5.1 A formal grievance may be withdrawn at any stage of the process. However, the University may decide to continue to investigate and deal with any issues raised, for example if matters of potential misconduct have been identified.

6. OVERLAP WITH OTHER PROCEDURES

- 6.1 It is possible, depending on the circumstances of a Grievance, that consideration be given at different points to moving into the University's Disciplinary process if this is deemed appropriate.
- 6.2 A Grievance Manager may identify at the very start of a process that the matter, if found, would be considered to be a serious matter of misconduct. Colleagues in HR will support

the manager in considering the most appropriate way forward. In such cases a decision may be taken to formally investigate the matter under the disciplinary procedure from the start.

- 6.3 Alternatively such a decision may be taken at a later point, for example following the initial meeting with the individual raising the grievance or at the outcome stage. In such cases the individual would be informed of this however would not be informed of the outcome of any such Disciplinary Investigation and/or hearing.
- 6.4 Where a Grievance Manager recommends that consideration be given to the matter under the disciplinary procedure, they should ensure that the allegation of misconduct is clearly identified but not seek to propose a conclusion or outcome ahead of further independent consideration under the disciplinary process.
- 6.5 It is important, given the above, that the investigation process is carried out in a way that should the matter subsequently need to be considered under the Disciplinary Procedures, it meets the key principles set out above. In any case, any potential for a subsequent move to the Disciplinary Procedure must be made clear to the Respondent when they are interviewed as part of the grievance investigation and they must then have the opportunity to respond fully and be accompanied accordingly.

7. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 7.1 All University employees should seek to resolve differences informally where possible. If the concern relates to a matter involving another colleague, you should ideally raise this with them directly with a view to resolving it. Similarly, if the concern relates to your role or work you should typically first discuss this with your line manager. If the matter relates to your line manager you may raise it with a more senior manager. If an Employee is not sure who to speak with they may approach someone in the College/University Services HR team or one of the Campus trade union representatives for advice.
- 7.2 Any employee who thinks they may be experiencing bullying or harassment can also speak in absolute confidence to one of the University's network of trained volunteers who are here to help. For more information, visit [Respect Advisers Network](#)
- 7.3 A line manager who has had informal issues raised with them, should consider the points and actively explore with the Employee how the matter may be resolved. They should also seek advice from their college/US HR Team or a more senior manager whilst being cognisant of any request by the Employee for confidentiality. Every effort should be made to reach agreement and any actions agreed should be recorded and the manager should follow up with the Employee raising the concern to provide any necessary support. Where the concern involves someone in another area of the University the line manager may need to approach an appropriate senior manager to explore the issues and how best to resolve the concern.

8. FORMAL RESOLUTION – STAGE 1

8.1 INITIATING THE GRIEVANCE

- 8.1.1 If an informal approach does not result in satisfactory resolution or if the matter is too serious to be dealt with informally an Employee may raise a formal grievance. This should be done in writing as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the matter to which your grievance relates. Only in exceptional circumstances would a grievance not raised within three months be managed within this formal procedure though support would naturally be offered to the Employee to seek to resolve their concern informally.
- 8.1.2 Grievances should be addressed to the Employee's Head of School/Director of Research Institute or Head of Service. The letter should clearly set out the issue or behaviour giving rise to the concern and the resolution being sought. The letter should be as succinct as possible whilst clearly stating the issues to be addressed. For further information see the Guidance Notes for Employees.
- 8.1.3 Upon receipt of a written Grievance the Head of School/Director of Research Institute or Head of Service should seek advice from their college/US HR team and then acknowledge receipt of the letter, indicating the support available to the employee. If, having discussed the matter with HR, the manager believes there may be a way to promptly resolve the grievance informally they may contact the Employee and seek to do so. However, this should not be allowed to unnecessarily delay the process or deny the Employees option to utilise this procedure if they are not satisfied.
- 8.1.4 Working with HR the Head/Director should identify an appropriate independent manager to consider the Grievance (The Grievance Manager). In cases of alleged Bullying or Harassment the Grievance Manager would normally be someone from another Department/School/Research Institute. The Head/Director or HR should also inform the person identified as responsible for the concern (The Respondent) that a grievance has been received and inform them of the support available to them and that the Grievance Manager will contact them in due course. An HR representative will be identified to support and guide the Grievance Manager through the process.

8.2 INITIAL GRIEVANCE MEETING

- 8.2.1 The Grievance Manager will write to the Employee inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss their grievance. This would normally be within 10 working days of the formal grievance being submitted. At the meeting the Employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. Their role is to support the Employee, to help them prepare for the meeting and to assist in explaining the concern and the resolution being sought. At the meeting the Grievance Manager will be supported by an HR representative and a note taker may also be present.
- 8.2.2 The meeting allows the Employee to explain the background to their grievance and the resolution they are seeking. It is also for the Grievance Manager to ensure they understand the issues and to mutually explore potential options for resolution. The Grievance Manager should also seek to understand who else they may need to speak to prior to reaching a recommendation.
- 8.2.3 A summary note, recording the key points, will be taken of the meeting and shared with

the Employee. The Employee may comment on the notes to ensure they are accurate. If they wish to add additional information not raised at the meeting they may do so but these should be clearly noted as an insert. Any such amendments should be completed promptly and returned no later than five days of receipt of the draft notes.

- 8.2.4 If the Employee or their trade union representative is unable to attend the initial Grievance meeting, steps will be taken to rearrange this as soon as possible. However, if the Employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Grievance Manager may investigate and reach an outcome on the basis of the information available to them. A decision to proceed in this way will be communicated in writing to the Employee.

8.3 INVESTIGATING THE GRIEVANCE

- 8.3.1 The Grievance Manager will then conduct any further investigation required. This may involve reviewing relevant policies or documents provided by the Employee. It is likely that they will also need to speak with other colleagues including any named Respondent(s). If the Grievance Manager believes the investigation has the potential to result in an allegation of misconduct then the points noted in section 6 must be adhered to. A Respondent and any witnesses should be invited to formal investigation meetings. Information provided to witnesses should be kept to the minimum required to ensure they are able to provide the information being sought by the Grievance Manager.
- 8.3.2 It is important that all those involved in the matter feel supported and able to engage in the process of seeking a mutually acceptable resolution. As indicated above (section 7.1.4) any named Respondent(s) should be informed as soon as possible that a grievance has been raised and the basis for this. Any letter inviting them to an investigation meeting must also clearly set out the grounds for the grievance, the issues to be discussed and, where possible, the resolution being sought by the Employee. A Respondent may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 8.3.3 The Grievance Manager may decide it is necessary to meet with the Employee raising the grievance again prior to making a decision. This could be to seek additional information or to give the Employee an opportunity to respond if contrary information has been provided by a Respondent or witnesses.
- 8.3.4 This investigation stage should be concluded as quickly as possible and normally within 10 to 15 working days of the initial meeting with the Employee. If longer is required, the Grievance Manager should ensure they communicate with the Employee and set out a likely time scale and the Employee and other key parties should be kept informed of progress.

8.4 COMMUNICATING THE OUTCOME

- 8.4.1 Once they have reached a conclusion the Grievance Manager should prepare a formal response in writing to the Employee. This will set out the issues under consideration, the steps they have taken to investigate and assess them, their conclusions and the resolution they are recommending. In more complex cases it may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to produce a formal investigation report which would be appended to the outcome letter. It may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to arrange a follow up meeting with the Employee who raised the grievance at this point to discuss the outcome,

with a particular focus on any recommendations and/or further action required to support a resolution.

- 8.4.2 The Respondent(s) should also be informed of the outcome and it may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to meet with the Respondent(s) and/or their line manager to support the implementation of any recommendations.

9. FORMAL RESOLUTION – STAGE 2 – APPEAL

9.1 LODGING AN APPEAL

9.1.1 If an employee wishes to appeal the outcome of a Stage 1 grievance outcome they should submit an appeal in writing outlining their full grounds for appeal, to the appropriate College/University Services Head of Human Resources within 10 working days of receipt of the University's decision. Employees will be notified that their appeal has been received within 5 working days. The Respondent(s) will also be informed that an appeal has been received and may be advised of the appeal grounds and context.

9.1.2 The appeal stage is not intended to be a rehearing of the original case. Hence the grounds for appeal should typically fall within one of the following:

- Procedural error
- The outcome and recommendations are unreasonable and significantly out of line with the issues considered
- New information is now available which could not have reasonably been provided when the original outcome was communicated

Where the appeal relates to new evidence there should be a clear statement provided outlining the reason why this was not available for consideration at the previous stage.

9.2 THE APPEAL MEETING

9.2.1 The University will invite the employee in writing to attend an appeal hearing, normally within 10 working days of receipt of an appeal. The employee may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

9.2.2 Appeals will be heard by an independent and normally more senior manager (the Appeal Manager) who will consider the original outcome with an open mind. For more complex grievance appeals the University may also decide to appoint a panel of two. Appeals in relation to dismissals will be heard by a panel of 2, the chair being a senior member of University staff (of minimum Grade 7) and the other being an appropriately trained member of staff*.

**For staff engaged in teaching, the provision of learning or research the trained member of staff will be a senior member of academic staff drawn from a grouping proposed jointly by University Management and the recognised Trade Union(s) and approved by Court.*

9.2.3 The appeal meeting allows the employee to explain why they think the outcome from the initial grievance was incorrect or failed to resolve the grievance. The Appeal Manager

will ask questions to ensure they understand the grounds for the appeal and any new information being presented along with the resolution being sought. A summary note, recording the key points, will be taken of the meeting and shared with the employee. The employee may comment on the accuracy of the note.

- 9.2.4 The Appeal Manager will adjourn the meeting to consider the information and conduct any additional investigations they feel necessary. This is likely to involve meeting with the original Grievance Manager and potentially the Respondent(s) but only where this is felt necessary to reach a conclusion.
- 9.2.5 If the employee or their Trade Union representative is unable to attend the appeal meeting, steps will be taken to rearrange this as soon as possible. However, if the employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Appeal Manager may review the available materials and reach an outcome based on the information available to them. A decision to proceed in this way will be communicated in writing to the employee in advance.
- 9.2.6 Appropriate training/guidance will be provided to Appeal Managers and members of Appeal Panels by Human Resources. Further information and guidance on the appeal process is available from the appropriate College/University Services HR team.

9.3 THE APPEAL OUTCOME

- 9.3.1 Once the Appeal Manager has considered all the points raised they will provide a response to the employee. This will normally be within 15 days of the appeal meeting and the employee will typically be invited to a further meeting to hear the outcome. The outcome of the appeal and any additional recommended actions] will be confirmed to the employee in writing and also communicated formally to the Respondent(s).
- 9.3.2 The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there is no further right of Appeal.

Document Control	
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Employee:** The individual who has a concern and is raising the grievance. Their role is to explain the basis for their grievance. This may relate to a decision taken, or not taken, which they believe is unfair, or behaviours they are experiencing from a colleague. They should also be clear on the resolution sought, the basis for this and how it may be achieved. Where-ever possible, the Employee should initially raise the issue informally by talking to the person responsible for the decision or behaviour. Raising your concern in a timely and measured manner may often resolve the matter without the need for any formal process.

At all stages they may seek support from their manager, HR or a trade union representative. If they feel they are experiencing bullying or harassment they may also contact a member of the Respect Advisers Network. They may also make use of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

The Employee should actively engage in the process and do what they can to assist in resolving their grievance. They should also do what they can to depersonalise the issues. Whilst in many cases a grievance may relate to treatment by a manager or colleague, the grievance should focus on the situation or behaviours which give rise to the concerns and the resolution being sought rather than being raised as “against” a person. They should respond promptly to any request for information from the Grievance or Appeal Manager and to any request to review draft notes of meetings. In relation to the notes they may add additional clarification or information but this must clearly be marked as such.

- 2. Respondent (s):** The person (or people) identified by the Employee (or potentially the Grievance Manager) as responsible for the issues being raised. During any informal stages they should do all they can to understand the Employee’s concerns and explore ways to mutually resolve them. They may be the Employee’s line manager in which case this should form part of their normal dialogue with them and managers should seek to create an environment where any concern can be raised freely and discussed.

During the formal resolution stage the Respondent (s) should fully engage in the process, responding to questions raised by the Grievance Manager and, where possible, making suggestions as to how the matter might be successfully resolved. They may also suggest additional witnesses who they believe would have relevant input to the matter. They should also act to implement any recommendations made by the Grievance Manager seeking support from their own line manager as appropriate.

It is important that the Respondent(s) are supported through any formal process. They may be accompanied at any formal meetings by a Trade Union Representative or Colleague and may raise questions with their colleague/US HR team or speak to their own line manager. They may also make use of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

- 3. Line Manager:** The Employee’s line manager may be the Respondent (see above). Alternatively, they may take the role of the Grievance Manager but only if they have not had any prior involvement in the situation.

If they are not the respondent the line manager should take appropriate actions to support the Employee through the process. They may provide guidance to the Employee; simply discussing a situation with them may assist in resolving it. Actions may include

approaching others (including the Respondent) during the informal stage to support the Employee in seeking a resolution. They may seek advice and support from their college/US HR team or a more senior manager at any point whilst respecting the confidentiality of the Employee as far as possible.

The Line Manager may also have responsibility for delivering or supporting the delivery of any recommendations arising from the formal stages of a grievance. Even if the actions are assigned primarily to others (for example where there is a recommendation to review a particular policy), the Line Manager should take responsibility to monitor these and ensure the Employee is kept informed and is supported accordingly.

4. **Grievance Manager:** The manager assigned to consider the Grievance at Stage 1. Their role is to seek to resolve the grievance, in a transparent and impartial manner. They meet with the Employee to understand the basis for the grievance and the resolution sought. They will conduct any investigation required, including meeting with the Respondent. The Employee and Respondent may identify potential witnesses and the Grievance Manager will consider which to see recognising the need to keep this to the minimum without compromising the need for a fair and reasonable process. If a decision is taken not to interview a potential witness the rationale for this should be explained to the Employee and/or Respondent when delivering the outcome or at any 2nd investigation meeting.

Following the investigation, the Grievance Manager will reach a conclusion on the outcome and make appropriate recommendations to resolve the grievance. They will then communicate these to the Employee and confirm them in writing. They will also inform any other relevant parties of the outcome and actions required to take forward the recommendations. This may include recommending that the matter is progressed via the Disciplinary policy.

The Grievance manager, with support from HR, is responsible for ensuring that as far as possible, both the Employee and the Respondent are kept informed and feel equally supported and fairly treated throughout the process. The Grievance Manager should, as far as possible, conduct the process within the timelines outlined in the Procedure. Where this is not possible then it is important to keep all relevant parties updated. If participants (including the Employee or Respondent) seek reasonable extensions to the timelines for personal reasons, including those potentially relating to a disability or illness, the Grievance Manager should accommodate these as far as practicably possible whilst taking the welfare of all participants into consideration.

5. **Witnesses:** These are University employees who the Grievance or Appeal Manager needs to meet to conduct their investigation. Occasionally it may be necessary to approach third parties outside the University who are believed to have witnessed relevant events. Grievance Managers should seek advice from HR before approaching a third party on behalf of the University. The role of any witness is to respond openly and honestly to any questions posed by the Grievance/Appeal Manager in relation to the issues raised by the Employee. If they have detailed knowledge of a situation they may also suggest ways in which they believe the grievance may be resolved.

All witnesses interviewed must respect the confidentiality of those involved and will only be informed of such details of the grievance required to enable them to respond to questions.

Witnesses will not typically be informed of the outcome of the grievance though it may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to inform them once the process is concluded that the matter is closed.

6. **Appeal Manager:** The manager assigned to consider an Appeal at Stage 2 of the Formal Process. Their role is to review the paperwork and process conducted at Stage 1, to consider any additional information provided by the Employee and to reach a conclusion on the grievance appeal. They are not assigned to re-hear the original grievance but to consider whether the process followed at Stage 1 was robust and fair and whether the outcome and recommendations were reasonable. They will typically carry out a full review of the papers from Stage 1 and may carry out some additional investigations if new information has been raised. In delivering their conclusions they will also make recommendations to support those involved to move forward.
7. **HR Representative:** The Head of HR for the College/University Services will assign HR Representatives to support Management through the process. The role of the HR Representative is to support the Grievance Manager and Appeal Manager in their considerations. They may provide advice on the process, the conduct of any investigation and the communication to the various parties involved. They may also advise on potential options for resolution, sharing information on relevant policy matters and precedence relating to the case. The HR Representative does not make the decision on the outcome but may be asked to support the actions arising from any recommendations made by the Grievance Manager or Appeal Manager.

The HR Representative will always aim to ensure that all parties are treated fairly and with respect and are both guided and supported through the grievance process.

The HR representative may also be called upon to provide support and advice to the Employee or their line manager, particularly at the informal stages. If the Employee has sought advice from HR at the informal stage the Head of College/US HR should consider whether an alternative HR Representative may need to be assigned to support the Grievance Manager. This should also be considered when a case moves to an Appeal Hearing.

The HR Representative is responsible for retaining documents relating to the Grievance and the investigation and recording the outcome on the HR System.

8. **Accompanying Trade Union Representative or Colleague:** To support those involved in the process and assist them in preparing for any meetings and presenting information to the Grievance Manager or Appeal Manager.

Their role is to support the Employee as they seek a resolution to their grievance. They may assist the Employee to prepare for any meetings, defining the issues and any supporting evidence and also the resolution they are seeking. They may present information at any meetings on behalf of the Employee and help them to ensure the Grievance Manager has as full an understanding as possible. They may not answer questions on behalf of the Employee.

If accompanying the Respondent (or a witness) the role is the same.

The Trade Union Representative or colleague may request an adjournment during any

meetings if they feel this is required. They may also make suggestions as to how the grievance might be resolved.

9. **Note Taker:** The role of the note taker is to record any formal meetings and produce a summary note of the key points raised. This is not a verbatim record but it is important that all parties consider it to be a fair record. The Note Taker should retain any hand-written notes of the meeting for six months after the meeting and should then destroy them. N.B. The University does not permit the recording of any meetings held under this policy and procedure.

The draft note will typically be reviewed by the Grievance or Appeal Manager prior to being issued to the Employee, Respondent or witness for their review.
