

## 1 ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

- 1.1 The aim of this Grievance Procedure is to provide all employees with a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal grievance you raise, hold a meeting to discuss it with you, inform you in writing of the outcome, and give you a right of appeal if you are not satisfied.
- 1.2 The University encourages you to attempt resolve your grievances quickly and informally through discussion with your line manager, but if this does not resolve the problem, you should follow this procedure.
- 1.3 This Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, you should appeal the decision under the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.4 If a grievance is raised during the course of a disciplinary matter about the behaviour of the manager dealing with the case, it may be appropriate to suspend the disciplinary procedure (depending on the circumstances) until the grievance can be considered.
- 1.5 The University has a Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure in place for dealing with concerns about illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice (commonly referred to as whistleblowing). If, however, you are directly affected by the matter in question, or if you believe you have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, you may raise the matter under this Grievance Procedure.
- 1.6 This Grievance Procedure will not generally apply to collective grievances. Such matters will usually be resolved through agreement with the University and College Union (UCU) and/or UNISON.
- 1.7 The University is mindful that some grievances result in the identification of other employees or workers and could result in serious damage to their professional reputation. The University is committed to handling grievances in a fair and balanced way. However, employees who, after investigation, are found to have provided information falsely and in bad faith will be subject to action under the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.8 If you have difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, you should discuss the situation with a member of the HR department as soon as possible.
- 1.9 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be reviewed and amended at any time. We may also depart from this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any individual case.

- 1.10 This procedure has been agreed with the UCU and Unison and the Unions will be consulted with regarding any proposed future variations to this procedure.

## **2 CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 2.1 Our aim is to deal with grievances sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a grievance.
- 2.2 You, and anyone accompanying you, must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure.

## **3 NOTES OF MEETINGS**

- 3.1 A representative from HR will normally attend investigation, grievance and appeal meetings under this procedure and take notes of the meeting.
- 3.2 The purpose of note taking is not to record verbatim what is said, but to capture the main points.
- 3.3 Once the notes are typed, HR will provide copies to all attendees.

## **4 GENERAL**

- 4.1 The University will take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no unreasonable delay by it in dealing with grievances raised under this Grievance Procedure.
- 4.2 You must take all reasonable steps to attend meetings arranged under this Grievance Procedure. If you are unable to attend for whatever reason you should let the HR department know as soon as possible so it can consider rearranging the meeting. You may propose an alternative date for a meeting if your chosen companion is unable to attend as explained in section 5 below of this Grievance Procedure. If you are persistently unable or unwilling to attend meetings arranged under this procedure without good cause we will make a decision on the evidence available.
- 4.3 The University will take reasonable steps to ensure the location and timing of any grievance meeting is reasonable.
- 4.4 The University will take reasonable steps to ensure that grievance meetings are conducted in a manner that enables both parties to explain their case.

## **5 THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED**

- 5.1 You may bring a companion to any grievance hearing or appeal hearing under this procedure. The companion may be either an appropriate trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell the HR department who your chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing.
- 5.2 A companion employed by us is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay but no-one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

- 5.3 If your companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask you to choose someone else.
- 5.4 We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of your family) if this will help overcome a disability, or if you have difficulty understanding English.
- 5.5 Your chosen companion has the right to address the meeting but not to answer questions on your behalf.
- 5.6 The right to be accompanied does not apply to informal discussions or investigatory meetings.

## **6 INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS**

- 6.1 The University hopes that most complaints and grievances can be resolved through an informal discussion or meeting with your Line Manager and you should therefore do this as a first step.
- 6.2 If your grievance is about your Line Manager, you can discuss your grievance informally with your Line Manager's immediate manager or, in the case of a member of the University Management Team, the Vice Chancellor. If your grievance relates to the Vice Chancellor, you should discuss it with the Head of Human Resources.

## **7 SUBMITTING A FORMAL GRIEVANCE**

- 7.1 If you wish to raise a matter formally, you should put your grievance in writing and submit it to your Line Manager. If your grievance relates to your Line Manager, address it to your Line Manager's immediate manager or, in the case of a member of the University Management Team, the Vice Chancellor. If your grievance relates to the Vice Chancellor, you should submit it to the Clerk and Secretary to the Board of Governors.
- 7.2 The written grievance should contain a description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. You should also include your desired outcome. In some situations we may ask you to provide further information.

## **8 INVESTIGATIONS**

- 8.1 It may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.
- 8.2 Your grievance may be investigated by the manager who hears your grievance. However, in some cases it may be appropriate for another individual to carry out the investigation. The HR department will determine who should carry out the investigation.

- 8.3 We may be able to carry out an investigation before meeting with you to discuss your grievance, or we may need to carry out the investigation, or further investigations, after the grievance meeting.
- 8.4 In order for us to investigate your grievance properly, we may need to share your grievance document with your colleague(s) you have raised concerns about.
- 8.5 The University expects employees to comply with reasonable requests to be interviewed or to provide a witness statement for the purposes of an investigation or grievance hearing under this procedure. A refusal to co-operate may lead to disciplinary action.
- 8.6 Employees should note that any evidence, including witness statements, obtained during a grievance matter may need to be shared with the employee who has brought the grievance and the colleague(s) against whom the grievance has been brought.

## **9 THE GRIEVANCE MEETING**

- 9.1 We will arrange a grievance meeting, usually within 5 working days of receipt of your written grievance, but it may be later particularly if we are able to investigate your grievance based on your written grievance statement.
- 9.2 Your grievance will usually be heard by your line manager, or if your grievance is about your line manager, it will usually be heard by that person's line manager. In some cases it may be appropriate for a different individual to hear your grievance. The HR department will determine who should hear your grievance.
- 9.3 You and your companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.
- 9.4 The purpose of the grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist the University in reaching a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made.
- 9.5 Following the grievance meeting, further investigation may be needed before a decision can be made, and you may be invited to a further grievance meeting if appropriate.
- 9.6 You will in any event be informed of the decision in writing within a reasonable timeframe from the final meeting and be informed of your right of appeal.

## **10 THE APPEAL**

- 10.1 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your grievance you may appeal the decision within 5 working days of notification of the decision.

- 10.2 You must inform the Head of Human Resources in writing of the grounds on which you are appealing and set out full details of why you are not satisfied with the outcome.
- 10.3 Your appeal will usually be heard by the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor or another member of the University Management Team.
- 10.4 In case of a grievance against the Vice Chancellor, you should instead address your appeal to the Clerk and Secretary to the Board of Governors. Your appeal will be heard by a Sub-Committee of the Governors.
- 10.5 A meeting to hear your appeal will be arranged as soon as possible. The Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor (if he/she is to hear the appeal) or the Clerk and Secretary to the Board of Governors will arrange a meeting with you and any with any other people as, in their discretion, are necessary.
- 10.6 We will inform you in writing of our final decision as soon as possible, usually within 10 working days of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.

## **11 MEDIATION**

- 11.1 In some cases an independent mediator can help to resolve problems with working relationships and therefore, in these cases, the University reserves the right to pursue discussions with the employees involved at any stage of the Grievance Procedure in relation to attempting to resolve the grievance by mediation.