Complaints Management Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the mechanisms and processes of The University of Queensland's (UQ) complaints management system. This includes how complaints can be made to UQ and how those complaints will be managed.

(2) This Procedure applies to all UQ staff and students and acts as a guide for members of the community.

(3) UQ has implemented this Procedure to inform complainants how a complaint can be made to UQ and inform staff on how complaints are to be handled by UQ.

Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(4) Consistent with best practice for complaints management handling, UQ's complaints management framework is based on the process outlined in the attached flowchart.

Section 3 - Key Requirements

Part A - UQ's Commitment

(5) The Complaints Management Policy and this Procedure outline UQ's commitment to ensuring all persons have a right to express their concerns about UQ's services or conduct of its staff and students and for them to be dealt with appropriately.

Part B - Reporting of Complaints

Local Level

(6) In the first instance, and where possible and appropriate, complainants are encouraged to raise their complaint at the local level, such as a supervisor for staff or a relevant Course Coordinator for students. Wherever possible, the University will manage and resolve complaints at the local level.

Escalation under Relevant Policy

(7) If the complaint cannot be resolved or is not suitable for resolution at the local level, the complaint may be escalated under the relevant policy by either the complainant or the person who received the complaint.

(8) The relevant policy will be as follows:

Type of Complaint	Relevant Policy
Student grievance For student issues relating to academic or administrative matters, including student appeals.	Student Grievance Resolution Policy

Type of Complaint	Relevant Policy
Staff grievance For staff in relation to issues affecting their employment with the University.	Staff Grievance Resolution Policy
Discrimination and harassment For all persons: staff, students, and UQ community, in relation to matters of discrimination and non-sexual harassment.	Prevention of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Behaviours Procedure
Privacy For all persons: staff, students, and UQ community, in relation to matters of personal information and privacy breaches.	Privacy Policy
Sexual misconduct For all persons: staff, students, and UQ community, in relation to incidents of sexual misconduct.	Sexual Misconduct and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy
Student integrity and misconduct For matters relating to student general misconduct or academic misconduct	Student Integrity and Misconduct Policy
Research integrity complaints For complaints regarding the responsible conduct of research at UQ.	Managing Complaints about the Conduct of Research Procedure
Workplace Health and Safety For all persons: staff, students, and UQ community, in relation to matters of work health and safety, including complaints and feedback.	Workplace Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
Fraud and Corruption For complaints regarding fraud, corruption or corrupt conduct of students, staff or UQ Senators.	Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy
Public Interest Disclosure For staff and UQ Senators in relation to matters which may be a 'Public Interest Disclosure' (as defined in the Public Interest Disclosure Policy)	Public Interest Disclosure Policy

(9) Details of these complaint types and relevant policies are available at the university's centralised Complaints Management website. This website allows for the reporting of complaints via an online complaint form including complaints that do not specifically fall within the above complaint types.

(10) Further guidance can be sought from the relevant Division, Unit or Office, such as:

a. Human Resources Division;
b. Health, Safety and Wellness Division;
c. Research Ethics and Integrity;
d. Integrity Unit;
e. UQ Respect Network;
f. Student Complaints and Grievance Resolution;
g. Student Central; or
h. Student Support Services.

External Referral

(11) If UQ receives a complaint that is more appropriate for another agency to manage, the complainant will be

advised and provided with the details of the appropriate agency to refer their complaint to. If appropriate, UQ may assist the complainant with this referral. These agencies may include:

a. Crime and Corruption Commission; and
b. Queensland Police Service;

(12) Specific timeframes and other requirements may apply when lodging a complaint with external agencies. Complainants should refer to the relevant agencies' websites for this detail and further advice.

Anonymous Complaints

(13) UQ accepts complaints can be made anonymously and will take reasonable measures to address them. However it is important that a complainant understands that this may have an impact on how effectively UQ can deal with the complaint. There are difficulties in investigating anonymous complaints because the University is unable to seek clarification of the complaint or additional information about the complaint. This includes the ability to gather further information from the complainant, provide natural justice to those subject to the complaint and, where appropriate, update the complainant on how the complaint was dealt with.

Part C - Complaints Management Committee

(14) The Complaints Management Committee (CMC) is responsible for making decisions about how complaints of a serious nature that are referred to it should be dealt with, including whether the complaint should be investigated, by whom, and what resources should be made available to deal with and/or investigate the complaint.

(15) The CMC will meet fortnightly or as otherwise required. The composition of the CMC will include:

a. the Provost who will perform the role of the chair or delegate;
b. the Chief Human Resources Officer or delegate; and
c. the Director, Integrity Unit or delegate.

(16) The following members will attend when they have matters to discuss:

a. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) or delegate;
b. The Academic Registrar or delegate;
c. The Chief Marketing and Communication Officer or delegate.

(17) The composition and operation of the CMC will be conducted in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference

Part D - Assess and Action Complaints

(18) All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the policy and procedures relevant to the type of complaint.

(19) In accordance with, but subject to the policy and procedures relevant to the type of complaint, the relevant unit assigned to deal with the complaint will:

a. acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as practicable;
b. undertake an assessment of the complaint, which may include contacting the complainant for further information;
c. be fair, reasonable and objective during their assessment and resolution of the complaint;
d. treat complaints confidentially in accordance with the requirements of the policy;
e. treat anonymous complaints on their merits;

f. gather and consider any relevant material prior to making a decision;
g. resolve complaints in a timely manner and where possible at the local level; and
h. seek advice from relevant senior staff and organisational units as required.

Part E - Support for Complainants

(20) Where possible UQ will endeavour to provide appropriate support to the complainant whilst dealing with their complaint. This may also involve providing reasonable assistance after a complaint has been resolved.

(21) Staff are encouraged to access UQ's Employee Assistance Program for confidential and professional counselling and assistance.

(22) Students are encouraged to contact Student Support Services for information on professional counselling and assistance.

Victimisation of Complainants

(23) UQ does not tolerate any form of victimisation towards persons who have made a complaint or who are associated with a person who has made a complaint. Such behaviours are in breach of UQ's Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Student Code of Conduct Policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

(24) Additional protections are also afforded to Complainants who have made a Public Interest Disclosure in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Public Interest Disclosure Procedure.

Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints and False or Misleading Statements

(25) The making of complaints that are frivolous or vexatious is a serious matter. If a person intentionally makes a false or misleading statement, disciplinary action will be considered in accordance with the misconduct/serious misconduct provisions under the Enterprise Agreement or the Student Integrity and Misconduct Policy. The making of such complaints or statements may be regarded as suspected corrupt conduct and dealt with under the Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy.

Part F - Feedback

(26) The University will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint. The level of information provided to the complainant will be subject to the University's legal obligations and obligations under other University policies and procedures.

Part G - Review

Internal Review

(27) The process for lodging a review of the outcome of a complaint is set out in the relevant policy and procedure listed under clause 8. If no process is set out in the relevant policy or procedure, a complainant may seek a review by contacting the relevant decision-maker or the Integrity Unit, who will refer the matter to the appropriate party for review.

Complaints Management Committee

(28) The CMC does not make decisions about the outcomes of complaints.

(29) The CMC may assess how a review may be undertaken including what resources are to be utilised in dealing with complaints.

External Review

(30) Depending on the nature of the complaint, there are a number of external review bodies that a complainant can approach should they feel their complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with internally. These bodies include:

a. Queensland Human Rights Commission
b. Australian Human Rights Commission
c. Crime and Corruption Commission
d. Fair Work Commission
e. Office of the Health Ombudsman
f. Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland
g. Queensland Ombudsman

(31) In some circumstances, external bodies will not investigate a complaint if the complainant has not attempted to resolve the problem under the University's complaints management framework.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

(32) Refer to the Complaints Management Policy.

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(33) The Integrity Unit is responsible for periodically reviewing this Procedure and related policy and will:

a. review complaint data, trends and statistics to assess UQ's compliance and effectiveness of the policy and Procedure;
b. identify, assess and promptly address any deficiencies such as timeliness and support; and
c. review relevant Australian Standards and other relevant recommendations to ensure the ongoing relevance of the policy.

(34) The Integrity Unit will report on the effectiveness of the policy and this Procedure to the Chief Operating Officer and the CMC.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(35) Refer to the Complaints Management Policy.

Section 7 - Appendix

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service offered or provided by the University or the conduct of its staff or students (in so far as their role at the university), whether voiced by a member of the community, staff or a student.
Complainant	The person who has made a complaint.

Term	Definition
Enterprise Agreement	The University of Queensland Enterprise Agreement in effect at the time.
Public Interest Disclosure	as defined in the Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

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