

An easy guide to the Complaints Management Procedure

Key definitions

Term	Definition
Complainant	The person making the complaint. For the purposes of this guide, we are assuming that is you – the person reading this.
Respondent	The person/department the complaint is about.
Investigator	The university staff member investigating the complaint.
Student Integrity Office	The university department which manages the administrative side of the process.
Working Day	A university business day, excluding any day the university is closed including weekends and some public holidays.
Natural Justice	Amongst others, the right to an unbiased hearing and decision-maker; the right to a support person; and the right to genuine consideration (and, if accepted, investigation) of your complaint.

Confidentiality

During the complaints process, you are only allowed to discuss the complaint with:

- The people involved with managing the complaint.
- Any confidential support service.
- Any person who is supporting you through the process (e.g. a parent or partner).

These rules also apply to any university staff managing the complaint or supporting you with it. In general, it is a good idea not to discuss your complaint with the person it is about, once you're in the formal process.

Step 1 - Informal Resolution

In most cases, you are expected to have tried to resolve the issue yourself with the person/department involved, before making a formal complaint – although in some circumstances this will not be possible/appropriate. You should email the person/department, politely outlining the following:

- What has happened – write this as a timeline if it is complex or went on for a long time.
- Why you think this is unsatisfactory/unfair etc.
- Any ideas you have of how this could be resolved (if relevant).

If you feel comfortable meeting with the person to discuss the situation this can be a good idea, but you don't have to. Student Advocacy can help you draft the email and prepare for a meeting (and attend the meeting with you if you would like).

Step 2 - Formal Complaint

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution, or if you were not able to resolve it informally, you can use the formal process. You will need to submit your complaint [through the online portal](#), and include all the information in the previous section, plus:

- What you have already done to resolve the situation.
- Why that was unsuccessful.

Within 5 working days, you'll receive an email confirming whether the complaint will be investigated and if so, who will investigate it. If it is not accepted, the email will direct you to an alternative process (if applicable).

The investigator will then investigate – this may involve contacting you or others involved for more information, or consulting with other staff for advice. You should receive an outcome via email within 20 working days, unless your complaint is particularly complex.

Step 3 - Escalated Complaint

If you're unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for it to be escalated to a more senior staff member for one or more of the following reasons:

- There is new, relevant evidence that you were unable to access when you made the complaint.
- The investigator ignored relevant evidence you did include.
- The investigator did not follow the correct process, and/or natural justice in their investigation.

Within 5 working days, you'll receive an email confirming whether the escalation has been accepted and if so, who will investigate it further. The same process and timeline as in the previous section then applies.

Step 4 - Appeal

If you're unhappy with the outcome after the escalation, or with the university's decision not to escalate, you can appeal to the Student Appeals Committee – [please see our webpage](#) for more information about this.

How Student Advocacy can help

- Helping you to identify whether a complaint is the right process to follow.
- Helping you draft emails or complaint statements, and identifying what evidence you could supply.
- Attending meetings with you
- Advising on your escalation/appeal options
- Advocating on your behalf *if you are unable to advocate for yourself*.

Contact us: www.federation.edu.au/studentadvocate