

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Brief Description (max 50 words)	The University of Suffolk (UoS) is committed to providing a positive working environment, consistent with our values, where employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We appreciate that sometimes concerns and issues occur, and you may need support to resolve them. This policy explains how to raise grievance and the steps that will be taken to find a resolution as swiftly as possible.
Version Number	2.4
Document Reference	POD011
Policy Dept	People and Organisational Development (POD)
Equality Impact Assessment	This document has been assessed for equality impact on the protected groups, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Policy is applicable as outlined in the 'scope' irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage, or civil partnership.

Amendment History

Version	Date	Reviewer Name(s)	Summary of changes
2.3	Feb 25	Emma Gwinnutt	Changed to new policy
2.4	Jun 25	Carol Taylor & Donna Phillips	Clarification of roles, responsibilities, and amendments.

Contents

1. Introduction.....3

2. Scope.....3

3. Roles & responsibilities3

4. Principles.....4

5. Inclusions/exclusions.....5

5.1 Inclusions.....5

5.2 Exclusions.....5

6. Grievance procedure5

6.1 Informal Resolution5

6.2 Formal Resolution – Stage 16

6.3 Formal Resolution – Stage 2 – Appeal7

6.4 Keeping Records8

7. Withdrawal of grievance.....8

8. Links to other relevant policies & guidance8

1. Introduction

The university is committed to fostering a positive working environment, consistent with our values, where employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We appreciate that sometimes concerns and issues occur, and that employees may need support to resolve them. This policy explains how to raise a grievance, and the steps that will be taken to find a resolution as swiftly as possible and as close to the point of origin.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University of Suffolk and relates to issues or incidents that have occurred at work or in a work-related situation within the previous three months. All grievance matters should be raised promptly. We are unable to investigate long-standing matters that have not been raised within the timeframes set out in this policy.

It does not apply to matters collectively agreed with the University's recognized trade unions.

This policy applies to:

- University of Suffolk employees

Should service conditions apply to any part of this policy, this will be detailed as relevant.

3. Roles & responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of the following individuals or groups are as detailed below:

Employee: The individual who has a concern and is raising the grievance. The employee should explain the basis of the grievance and resolutions sought, and actively engage in the process and where possible, work with others to resolve the grievance.

Respondent (The person against whom the grievance has been raised): The person (or people) identified by the employee as responsible for the issues raised in the grievance.

Line Manager: The employee's line manager may be the respondent or if not involved in the grievance may take the role of the Grievance Manager. They may also have responsibility for delivering or supporting the delivery of any recommendations arising from the formal stages of a grievance, or commissioning an independent manager to hear the grievance (where necessary),

Grievance Manager: The manager assigned to consider the grievance. Their role is to seek to resolve the grievance, in a transparent and impartial manner.

Appeal Manager: The manager assigned to consider any appeal of the formal process. Their role is to review the paperwork and process conducted and consider any additional information provided by the employee 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 was robust and fair, and whether the outcome and recommendations were reasonable.

People and Organisational Development (POD) Representative: To support the Grievance and Appeal Manager in their considerations, providing advice on the process of any investigation. They do not make the decision on the outcome.

Companion: They can be a work colleague or trade union representative. A companion can support those involved in the formal process and assist them in preparing for any meetings, presenting information, supporting the employee, and talking to the employee about their case outside of grievance meetings. They may present information on behalf of the employee at formal meetings although they may not answer questions on behalf of the employee. Employees who have a disability and need additional support should let the relevant manager or member of POD know. A companion cannot be a witness in the case.

4. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The ability to discuss issues openly and respectfully is essential to the well-being of our people and the success of the University.
- The grievance procedure does not take the place of normal communication with the manager or colleagues. All staff should try and resolve issues by talking informally to the manager at an early stage, if possible.
- 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.
- 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, and treating everyone with dignity and respect.
- The process will be kept as confidential as possible, and information about a case will only be shared with those directly involved or affected.
- All genuine grievances will be dealt with promptly and fairly. Deliberate misuse of the Grievance Procedure may lead to disciplinary action against the employee concerned.
- The people identified to investigate or review grievances will have the relevant training to carefully consider cases. If a concern relates to another University policy, the correct procedure as outlined in that policy should be followed.
- In circumstances where a grievance may apply to more than one person, it may be appropriate for the problem to be resolved through a group or collective approach, or by collective agreements between the trade union(s) and the employer rather than by recourse to the above procedure.
- Where a grievance relates to an employee's immediate line manager, it will normally be possible to raise the issue with someone outside of the management line. If more guidance is

needed regarding this, please contact the POD Business Partner for clarification.

5. Inclusions/exclusions

5.1 Inclusions

Grievances may be raised about:

- The nature of duties
- Conditions of service (excluding contractual matters)
- Working relationships
- Bias or unfair discrimination on employment decisions

5.2 Exclusions

This policy will not apply to complaints that should be dealt with under other policies. These include:

- Dismissal - it would be expected that this is dealt with under the appropriate appeal process dependent on the reason for dismissal.
- Discipline – it would be expected that this is dealt with under the appeal process associated with the Disciplinary policy.
- Performance (Capability) issues– it would be expected that this is dealt with under the appeal process associated with the Managing Performance policy.
- Redundancy– it would be expected that this is dealt with under the appeals section of the Organisational Change policy.
- Bullying and Harassment - it would be expected that this is dealt with under the Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Statutory matters over which UoS has no control, e.g., income tax or national insurance.

6. Grievance procedure

6.1 Informal Resolution

All University employees should seek to resolve differences informally where possible. If the concern relates to a matter involving another colleague, employees are encouraged to raise concerns with them directly with a view to resolving the matter as soon as possible. Similarly, if the concern relates to the role or work, employees should typically discuss this with their line manager. If the matter relates to the line manager, employees may raise their concerns with a more senior manager.

If they require more clarity around who to direct their grievance to, they may approach any of the following:

- Dean of School/Department/Directorate.
- Local Officers of the Trade Unions: UCU or Unison
- POD team

It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved at this stage.

6.2 Formal Resolution – Stage 1

Any employee who feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions may raise a formal grievance. This should be done in writing as soon as possible and in any case within 5 working days to the line manager or another relevant manager, providing the following details: -

- When the incident(s) happened (date and time).
- What/who the complaint is being made against.
- The nature of the incident and specific details.
- The names of any witnesses to the incident.
- Any action which has already been taken; and
- Resolution sought.

The Grievance Manager will write, normally with 48 hours' notice, to confirm the date for the meeting to discuss the grievance.. At the meeting the employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague (a companion).. A People Business Partner will advise the Grievance Manager on matters of process and available options; the People Business Partner will not be part of the decision-making.

The meeting will enable the employee to explain the background to the grievance and the resolution that is sought. It is important that the Grievance Manager understands the issues and can explore potential options for resolution. The Grievance Manager will also seek to understand who else they may need to speak to prior to reaching a recommendation.

A summary note, recording the key points, will be taken of the meeting and shared with the employee. The employee will be asked to check the notes for accuracy; however, they will not be verbatim.

If the employee or their trade union representative is unable to attend the initial grievance meeting, steps will be taken to rearrange this within 5 working days. However, if the employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Grievance Manager may investigate 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, if relevant.

The Grievance Manager will arrange to meet the person against whom the grievance has been raised (the respondent) as soon as possible to discuss the content of the grievance. A copy of the grievance will be provided to the Respondent in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, the Respondent may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague if they wish. The meeting will allow the Respondent to comment on the allegations detailed in the grievance.

A summary note recording the key points will be taken of the meeting and shared with the Respondent. The Respondent will be asked to check the notes for accuracy; however, they will not be verbatim.

The Grievance Manager may decide it is necessary to meet again with the employee who has raised the grievance, prior to deciding the outcome. This could be to seek additional information or to provide an opportunity to respond if contrary information has been provided by a Respondent or witnesses.

Once the Grievance Manager has reached a conclusion, they will respond in writing to confirm this. 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. On some occasions, a meeting may also be held to confirm the outcome of a grievance investigation.

6.3 Formal Resolution – Stage 2 - Appeal

Employees may appeal the outcome of a Stage 1 grievance in writing, outlining the full grounds for appeal. The appeal should be submitted to the manager who heard the grievance within 5 working days of being notified of the outcome of Stage 1. Arrangements will then be made for an appeal hearing to be conducted by another manager not involved in the original grievance.

The Respondent will be informed that an appeal has been received, and they may be advised of the appeal grounds and context.

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.
- Added information is now available that could not have 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 this was not available for consideration at the previous stage.

Appeals will be heard by a more senior manager or the same level of manager from a different team. For more complex cases, an additional manager will join the Appeal Manager to form a panel to hear the grievance. A People Business Partner will advise the Appeal Manager/panel on matters of process and available options; the People Business Partner will not be part of the decision-making.

The appeal meeting allows the employee who has raised the grievance 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 added information being presented, along with the resolution being sought. A summary note, recording the key points, will be taken of the meeting and shared.

The Appeal Manager may adjourn the meeting to consider the information and conduct any additional investigations they feel necessary. This is likely to involve meetings with the original Grievance Manager and potentially the Respondent(s) and/or witnesses, but only where this is felt necessary to reach a conclusion. If the Appeal Manager decides longer time for adjournment is needed to collate more evidence, the members of the meeting will be advised accordingly. However, decisions should be made promptly, and the meeting should be reconvened at the earliest opportunity.

Once the Appeal Manager has considered all the points raised, they will provide a written response within 10 working days of the meeting to confirm the outcome of the appeal. No further appeals are permitted.

6.4 Keeping Records

At the end of each stage, a complete record of all appropriate documentation generated during the various stages of the formal procedure must be passed to the People Business Partner. These records should be kept confidential and held electronically within the POD Directorate. The outcome of the grievance will be held in the personal file of the employee who has raised the grievance and retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

7. Withdrawal of grievance

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.

8. Links to other relevant policies & guidance

You may find it useful to refer to other relevant University policies and guidance, which can be found on the University's intranet (Hub).

- Disciplinary Policy
- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy