
STUDENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

To be read in conjunction with UCOL Student Concerns and Complaints Policy

In this policy the generic term 'Senior Manager' is used to refer to Dean/General Manager or Section Head.

CONCERNS PROCEDURE

It is expected that students will raise their concerns as soon as they arise and staff will manage the resolution of student concerns using the established faculty Student Concerns Procedures outlined in the Student Diary and Students' Course Handbook (see appendix 5, Flowchart Student Concerns Procedure).

Where a student(s) believes that a situation has arisen which will interfere with their ability to have their concern satisfactorily resolved using the Student Concerns Procedures they are advised to contact the Student Relations Coordinator.

Any student who uses the Student Concerns Procedure to raise and seek resolution to a concern and who is not satisfied with the outcome may request that their concern be reconsidered using the following Complaints Procedure (provided it meets the UCOL definition of a complaint and the other conditions specified in Student Concerns & Complaints Policy).

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The following procedure is to be used when a student wishes to make a formal complaint about UCOL services and processes or the behaviour of another person associated with UCOL (refer to the definition and Policy Scope sections of the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy for UCOL's definition of a complaint).

Submission of a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted in writing (or in exceptional cases orally) to any UCOL employee, or directly to the Student Relations Coordinator

Generally the complainant will submit the complaint; however in some circumstances a student's agent may submit the complaint.

The person receiving it will immediately send a copy of the student complaint to the Student Relations Coordinator.

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Category:	Academic	Date of issue: January 2002
Prepared by:	Student Relations Co-ordinator	Date of last review: May 2008
Approved by:	Deputy Chief Executive Academic	Page 1 of 11

The Student Relations' Coordinator will:

- Date-stamp the complaint letter.
- Keep a copy of the complaint and send the original to the Senior Manager concerned.
- Send to the complainant within 2 working days a letter confirming receipt of the complaint (see Appendix 1, Standard letter – acknowledgment of receipt of a complaint).
- Enter details of the complaint into the complaints database.

Receipt of an Oral Complaint (when the complainant wishes the complaint to be considered using the Complaints Procedure)

The staff member taking the complaint will record the following information:

- Complainant's full name, address, phone/fax number/email address.
- Why the complaint has been escalated from 'a concern' or is not to be treated as a concern.
- If the complaint relates to another person(s), that person(s) full name and designation/title/position or if the student is not able to provide these details as much information as possible.
- The concerns raised by the complainant.
- The complainant's desired outcome to the complaint.

The person documenting details of the complaint will verify the accuracy of the recorded details with the complainant and provide them with the opportunity to make corrections if necessary. If the complaint is made by phone the complainant will need to receive a copy of the documented record of their complaint so they can complete the above verification step.

Once the complainant is satisfied that the record accurately records their complaint they will be required to sign and date the record.

The verified record of the oral complaint will now be dealt with in the same way as a written complaint.

Action to be taken on a Complaint

The Senior Manager will initiate an appropriate investigation of the complaint.

If the complaint involves more than one faculty and/or section the Dean/General Manager of Educational Delivery and Innovation (EDI) Faculty or her/his nominee will coordinate the investigations, collate the investigation responses and respond to the complainant.

The Senior Manager will try to ensure that complaints are resolved within 14 working days of being received. However it is recognised that some complaints, because of their complexity and/or because people to be interviewed are not available, may not be resolved within the usual 14 days.

The Senior Manager will:

- Either resolve the complaint and send a resolution letter to the complainant within 14 working days;

- Or, if a resolution is not possible within 14 days send a letter to the complainant (see Appendix 2, *Standard letter - notification that extra time is needed to resolve a complaint*). This letter will include the name and designation of the person the complaint

has been referred to for investigation, and when the complainant can expect a response on the investigation outcome.

- If for any reason it is found that extra time is needed to resolve the complaint a further letter will be sent. Copies of letters will be sent to the Student Relations' Coordinator who will enter the information into the complaints database.

Investigation of a Complaint

The Senior Manager will initiate an appropriate investigation of the complaint. However, the Senior Manager may delegate investigation of the complaint to a suitably qualified faculty or section staff member.

During the investigation of all complaints, the Senior Manager will acknowledge the following requirements:

All parties named in the complaint will be informed of any allegation made against them at the earliest convenience unless there is supportable evidence that this will jeopardise the investigation and/or place the safety of others at risk.

The Senior Manager or delegate will conduct the investigation in a manner that:

- Is thorough and comprehensive
- Includes appropriate expert input; e.g. if the complaint regards allegations of unprofessional behaviour or a breach of professional standards an acknowledged expert from the specialty/profession involved will either conduct the investigation or provide ongoing input to the investigation
- Is respectful of all parties rights including their right to:
 - Details of and time to consider any allegations made against them.
 - Time to consider and formulate a response to any allegations.
 - Time to organise a support person to attend interviews if this is desired (see Appendix 3 -*List of suggested support people*).
- Verifies the accuracy of any information provided and discovered.
- Is constructive and focuses on identifying and addressing issues.
- Records investigation findings and recommendation(s).
- Provides a paper/electronic trail for later review.

The Senior Manager will forward the final record of the investigation findings and recommendations to the Student Relations' Coordinator who will enter information from the record into the complaints database. In cases where investigating the complaint has been delegated, the final record must also go back to the person exercising the delegation.

Resolution Letter to the Complainant

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Following investigation, the Dean or Senior Manager will compose a letter of resolution to the complainant which will:

- Be written in a style that promotes the relationship between UCOL and the complainant(s).
- Address issues raised
- Indicate the outcome of the investigation(s)
- Identify any action that has or will be taken as a result of the complaint and investigation. Attach a copy of UCOL's Complaints Appeal Procedure (Appendix 4)

Note:

It should be noted that where the outcome of the complaint involves further action in respect of a staff member such as further training or disciplinary proceedings the student will be notified that further action will be taken in respect of the staff member but will not be provided with details of this action.

The Senior Manager will send a copy of the resolution letter to the Student Relations' Coordinator who will enter details on to the complaints database

Appeal Procedure

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the decision made by UCOL in respect of their complaint may access the following procedure to appeal the resolution or any part of the resolution.

Complainants will have a period of one (1) month from the receipt of their complaint resolution letter to submit a written appeal regarding the resolution or any part of the resolution of their complaint. **The appeal letter must clearly outline the basis for the appeal and the complainant's preferred outcome from the appeal.** Complainants who wish to appeal, but require help to write their appeal letter should contact the Student Relations' Coordinator who will arrange assistance.

- 1) To initiate an appeal the complainant will send their appeal letter to either:
 - a) The Student Relations' Coordinator; or
 - b) The Senior Manager of the faculty or section;
- 2) The person contacted by the complainant will acknowledge the complainant's dissatisfaction with the outcome and arrange an interview between the complainant and the appropriate Senior Manager.
- 3) The Senior Manager will notify the Student Relations Coordinator of the issues that the complainant raised for further consideration and the outcome of the meeting.
- 4) If following the meeting with the Senior Manager the complainant remains dissatisfied they may contact the Student Relations' Coordinator who will arrange a meeting with the Chief Executive or his/her nominee. The Chief Executive or his/her nominee will make a final and binding decision confirming, modifying or overturning the original decisions and will notify the complainant, Student Relations Coordinator and appropriate others of the outcome of the meeting.

All parties named in the original complaint will be informed of the appeal and its final outcome unless there is supportable evidence that this will place the safety of others at risk.

Recording Complaints Data base/Safekeeping of Complaints related Documents

- The Students Relations' Coordinator will manage the complaints database. Only the Student Relations Coordinator and the Chief Executive and those authorised by the Chief Executive for audit purposes will have direct access to the database.
- Any reports generated from the database will maintain the privacy of those who have made or been party to a complaint in accordance with the Privacy Act (1993).
- Documents pertaining to current (in process) complaints will be handled in a way that ensures that the information they contain and the identity of any named parties remains confidential to those with a legitimate role in progressing and investigation the complaint.
- Complaints related information will not be placed on any staff member or student's files except in the circumstance when the complaint leads to disciplinary action being taken. Then a sealed copy of the action taken will be placed on the involved person's file.
- Historical student complaints-related documents will be kept in a locked file for 7 years and will only be available to the Student Relations Coordinator, the Chief Executive and those authorised by the Chief Executive to access this material for audit purposes. After 7 years complaints related documents will be destroyed using a recognised secure disposal system.

Reporting

The development of complaints service performance measures, indicators and reporting formats etc will be overseen by the Deputy Chief Executive: Academic or her/his nominee.

Monthly reports (reporting on the previous month) will be prepared by the Student Relations Coordinator and forwarded to the Deputy Chief Executive: Academic or her/his nominee.

Complaints Procedures and related documents and processes will be audited within one (1) year of being implemented and thereafter every two (2) years or as agreed with the Chief Executive. Results will be forwarded to the Deputy Chief Executive: Academic who will arrange for their distribution to appropriate others.

Publicity

UCOL will:

1. Advertise the various stages in the Complaints Procedures
2. Outline the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Procedures including those of:
 - The person with overall delegated responsibility for the Procedures
 - The persons with responsibility for the various stages of the Procedures
 - The complainants
3. Publicise sources of information and advice for parties involved in a complaint.
4. Identify any other processes, policies and procedures that have an association with the Student Concerns & Complaints Policy and Procedures and the nature of this association.

Related Documents

- APNZ Academic Quality Standards (adopted by UCOL)
- UCOL Academic Statute
- UCOL Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities
- UCOL Individual and Collective Staff Employment Agreements
- [H01-P05A Harassment Prevention Policy](#)
- [A04-P04 Student Concerns and Complaints Policy](#)
- [H01-R03A Harassment Complaint and Investigation Procedure](#)
- [A04-P01 Student Harassment Prevention Policy](#)
- [A04-R01 Student Harassment Prevention Procedure](#)

Appendices

- Appendix 1. Standard letter – Acknowledgment of receipt of a complaint
- Appendix 2. Standard letter - Notification that extra time is needed to resolve a complaint
- Appendix 3. List of possible support people
- Appendix 4. Copy of UCOL Complaints Appeal Process
- Appendix 5 Flowchart of UCOL Concerns procedure

Appendix 1

(Date)

(Complainants full name)

(Street Address)

(City)

Dear *(Complainants name)*

Re:

Thank you for taking the time to write to us about your concerns. UCOL values any feedback that is given with regard to the service that it provides.

Your letter has been referred to *(insert name of Senior Manager)* for investigation and it is expected that a response will be ready by *(expected resolution date 14days from receipt of complaint)*

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2

(Date)

(Complainants full name)

(Street Address)

(City)

Dear *(complainants name)*

Re:

Thank you for letter advising of the concern(s) you have with regard to *(refer to original complaint)*. Your complaint has been referred to *(name of designated person)* for investigation. Due to *(give reasons)*, the investigation into your complaint had not yet been completed. It is expected that a response will be ready by *(expected response date)*.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3

List of possible support people

Palmerston North

AS@U (Student Association)	06 952 7460
Disabilities Coordinator	06 952 7001 ext 70223
International Student Coordinator	06 952 7213
Student Relations Coordinator	06 952 7001 ext 70619

Wanganui

Accessibility Coordinator	06 965 3801 ext 60735
International Student Coordinator International Officer	06 965 3801 ext 60851 06 965 3811
SAWU(Student Association)	06 965 3801 ext 60761
Student Relations Coordinator	0800GOUCOL ext 70619

Wairarapa

Student Support	06 946 2301 ext 72076
Student Association	06 946 2301 ext 72017
Student Relations Coordinator	0800GOUCOL ext 70619

Levin

AS@U (Student Association)	06 952 7460
Student Relations Coordinator	0800GOUCOL ext 70619

Appendix 4

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All parties named in the original complaint will be informed of the appeal and it's final outcome unless there is supportable evidence that this will place the safety of others at risk.

Procedure for Solving Student Concerns and Complaints

If you would like assistance to resolve your concern or complaint you can contact the Student Relations Coordinator or your Students Association Representative.

