



Informal Resolution

The majority of concerns and complaints can be dealt with outside of the University's formal student complaint handling process. Getting it right at the front-line may achieve early resolution without the need for the student to escalate the matter to the formal complaint process. The following guidelines are provided to help staff respond when concerns are raised informally by students.

- Treat students raising concerns and complaints courteously and professionally. It is useful to give the student your name.
- Before responding to a complaint, make sure it falls within the authority of your area to resolve the matter. If not, provide the student with the contact details of the relevant area. It may be helpful, where possible, to introduce or direct the student to the relevant staff member who can deal with the matter.
- Treat the student with empathy and understanding when listening to their concerns and bear in mind that even if you feel the complaint is unjustified, the student's sense of grievance is real.
- Listen carefully to what the person has to say and give them enough time to express their complaint. Summarising the complaint back is useful in demonstrating that you have understood the issues. Seek clarifications on any points that are not clear to you.
- Check what solutions or remedies the student is looking for.
- It is helpful to manage the expectations of the student about what outcomes might possibly be achieved.
- If appropriate, provide information that will assist the student to better understand the decision or the action that they are aggrieved about.
- If you do not have sufficient information to address their concern, tell the student that you will seek further information and get back to them, or that someone else will follow up with them about their complaint as quickly as possible, and no later than 15 working days.
- Offer an apology, where appropriate, or provide relevant information or an explanation to the student.
- If an immediate solution is not possible, outline possible options for remedy and seek the agreement of the student.
- If a straightforward local solution is not possible, escalate the complaint to an appropriate person for decision (the Head of School/Unit or their nominee).
- If the student is not satisfied with your attempts to resolve the matter, advise them that the complaint can be reviewed by the Head of School/Unit. Provide students with the following information: the name and email address of the Head of School/Unit; the **[Student Complaint Form: Head of School/Unit Review](#)**; and the timeframe within which the complaint must be raised (as soon as possible and no more than 15 working days since the student's last interaction with the School/Unit on the matter).

Further information

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