

# University Grievance Procedure for Staff (Confidentiality of Whistleblowers)

## Objective

To provide a safe, confidential, and effective mechanism for staff to report grievances related to employment matters, including unethical behavior, without fear of retaliation.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all university staff across all departments and units, addressing grievances that may include, but are not limited to, workplace harassment, discrimination, unethical behavior, and violations of university policies.

## Definitions

- **Whistleblower:** An employee who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal, unethical, or incorrect.
- **Grievance:** A formal complaint raised by an employee regarding any aspect of their employment.

## Steps of the Grievance Procedure

### Step 1: Submission of Complaint

- **Confidential Reporting:** Employees can submit grievances through a dedicated, secure, and confidential online reporting system or via a confidential hotline managed by the Office for Ethical Compliance.
- **Content of the Report:** The report should include a detailed description of the grievance, any relevant dates, involved parties, and any evidence or documentation that supports the complaint.

### Step 2: Acknowledgment of Receipt

- **Initial Response:** The Office for Ethical Compliance will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 48 hours.
- **Initial Assessment:** A preliminary assessment will be conducted to determine the appropriate course of action.

### Step 3: Investigation

- **Appointment of Investigator:** A neutral party, either from within the Office for Ethical Compliance or an external expert, will be appointed to investigate the grievance.
- **Process:** The investigation will involve interviews with the complainant, the accused, and potential witnesses. All proceedings will be documented in a confidential manner.
- **Duration:** The investigation will aim to be completed within a set timeframe (30 days), depending on the complexity of the grievance.

#### **Step 4: Resolution and Reporting**

- **Outcome:** After the investigation, a report will be prepared by the investigator, outlining the findings and recommending actions.
- **Review:** The report will be reviewed by the Chief Ethics Officer or designated official.
- **Decisions:** Appropriate actions, ranging from no action to disciplinary measures or policy changes, will be decided and implemented.

#### **Step 5: Feedback to Whistleblower**

- **Communication:** The whistleblower will be informed about the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. This communication will maintain the confidentiality of all involved parties.

#### **Protection for Whistleblowers**

- **No Retaliation:** The university guarantees that no staff member who files a grievance will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or adverse employment consequences.
- **Confidentiality:** The identity of the whistleblower will be protected to the fullest extent possible throughout the process.

#### **Appeals**

- **Right to Appeal:** If the whistleblower or the accused is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision within a specified period (15 days after receiving the outcome).
- **Appeal Review:** The appeal will be reviewed by an independent panel appointed by the university leadership.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

- **Regular Updates:** The grievance procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and fairness.
- **Transparency:** Anonymized statistics about the number and type of grievances reported and their outcomes will be published internally to promote transparency and trust in the process.