

Student Appeals Complaints Grievances Procedure

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Contact Officer: Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Approval Authority: Academic Board

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the framework of procedures to enable student appeals, complaints and grievances to be addressed and resolved in a fair, equitable, transparent, confidential and timely manner. Internal agents such as the Lincoln University Students' Association (LUSA) or the International Student Advisor, may act on behalf of the complainant/s in progressing an appeal, complaint or grievance.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Student Appeals, Complaints and Grievances Policy.

2. PROCEDURES

Academic

- Step 1:** In some cases it may be possible for the complainant to seek resolution informally by communicating directly with the respondent. It is recognised however, that this may not be appropriate or the complainant may not feel confident in approaching the respondent directly. In these cases, the complainant should proceed to the second step.
- Step 2:** The complainant should contact the Faculty Dean or Centre/Division Director in writing. The Faculty Dean or Centre/Division Director will investigate by communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue. The Faculty Dean or Centre/Division Director will communicate their resolution to all parties in writing.
- Step 3:** Where the complainant believes the resolution from step 2 is unsatisfactory, they may formally write to the Convenor, Academic Administration Committee, normally within 10 working days of receiving notice of the suggested resolution from Step 2.
- Step 4:** If Step 3 is unresolved, the Convenor, Academic Administration Committee, may refer the case to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (for Postgraduate matters) or the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning (for Undergraduate and/or Sub-degree matters). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor may recommend mediation occurs between relevant parties.
- Step 5:** In exceptional cases and at the sole discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, where the resolution is not to the satisfaction of the complainant at Step 3, and has not been resolved by mediation, the Vice-Chancellor may appoint an external agent to act on

their behalf. The external agent (who is not a member of the University's staff) will investigate the case by meeting with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issues.



Step 6: The external agent will communicate their recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor who retains authority to make the final decision. The Vice-Chancellor will communicate their decision to the complainant in writing.

Step 7: Where the complainant believes the decision from Step 6 is unsatisfactory, they may make a written application to the Secretary of the Council Appeals Committee, within 10 working days of the date of such decision.

Service Delivery

Step 1: Before making an appeal or lodging a formal grievance, the complainant should make every effort to communicate with the respondent to seek to resolution without resorting to formal procedures. There is no requirement however to follow this pathway. In these cases the complainant should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: The complainant should contact the respondent's Manager in writing. The Manager will investigate by communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue. The Manager will communicate their resolution to all parties in writing.

Step 3: Where the complainant believes the resolution is unsatisfactory, the Vice-Chancellor will appoint a Senior Manager who will further investigate by communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue. The Senior Manager may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that mediation occurs between relevant parties. The Senior Manager will communicate their recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor in writing. The Vice-Chancellor will communicate their decision to the complainant in writing.

Step 4: In exceptional cases and at the sole discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, where the resolution is not to the satisfaction of the complainant at Step 3, and has not been resolved by mediation, the Vice-Chancellor may appoint an external agent to act on their behalf. The external agent (who is not a member of the University's staff) will investigate the case by meeting with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issues.

Step 5: The external agent will communicate their recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor who retains authority to make the final decision.

Step 6: Where the complainant believes the decision from Step 5 is unsatisfactory, they may make a written application to the Secretary of the Council Appeals Committee, within 10 working days of the date of such decision.

Personal: Student - Student

Step 1: Before making an appeal or lodging a formal grievance, the complainant should make every effort to communicate with the respondent to seek to resolution without resorting to formal procedures. There is no requirement however to follow this pathway. In these cases the complainant should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: The complainant to contact the Student Advocacy and Voice Coordinator (LUSA) who will determine the nature of the complaint and refer to a) the University Proctor where the complaint does not relate to coursework, or b) to the examiner where the complaint concerns coursework, or c) facilitate reconciliation.

Step 3: Where the complainant believes the resolution is unsatisfactory, the complainant may contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who will further investigate the grievance by



communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue or recommend mediation between the relevant parties. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will communicate their recommendation to the

Vice-Chancellor in writing. The Vice-Chancellor will communicate their decision to the complainant in writing.

Step 4: The Vice-Chancellor will communicate their decision to the complainant in writing.

Step 5: Where the complainant believes the decision from Step 4 is unsatisfactory, they may make a written application to the Secretary of the Council Appeals Committee, within 10 working days of the date of such decision.

Personal: Student – Staff

Step 1: Before making an appeal or lodging a formal grievance, the complainant should make every effort to communicate with the respondent to seek to resolution without resorting to formal procedures. There is no requirement however to follow this pathway. In these cases the complainant should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: The complainant to contact the respondent's Faculty Dean or Centre/Division Director in writing who will investigate by communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue. The Faculty Dean or Centre/Division Director will communicate their resolution to all parties in writing.

Step 3: Where the complainant believes the resolution is unsatisfactory, the complainant may contact a Human Resources Business Partner who will further investigate the grievance by communicating with all relevant parties and seek to resolve the issue.

The Human Resources Business Partner may refer the case to the Director People, Culture and Wellbeing. The Human Resources Director may recommend that mediation occurs between relevant parties.

Step 4: The Director People, Culture and Wellbeing will communicate their recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Manager (this may be a Faculty Dean or Division Director) in writing.

Step 5: The Vice-Chancellor will communicate the decision to the complainant in writing.

Step 6: Where the complainant believes the decision from Step 5 is unsatisfactory, they may make a written application to the Secretary of the Council Appeals Committee, within 10 working days of the date of such decision.

3. FRAMEWORK

The framework is designed to identify the nature of the appeal, complaint or grievance (Academic, Service Delivery or Personal), and to enable appeals, complaints and grievances, where feasible, to be addressed and resolved as close as possible to the level at which they arose within the University's structure. This is to ensure that:

- There is opportunity for the complainant and the respondent concerned to resolve the issue directly;
- If this is not possible, then the relevant managers or delegation holders have an opportunity to resolve the issue;



- The University staff management structure is followed in the steps of any appeal, complaint or grievance;
 - There is a clear hierarchy of stages; and
 - There is a wholly independent stage in the process.
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Academic (Appeal)	Service Delivery	Student - Student	Student - Staff
Step 1: Seek resolution from respondent. If unresolved, then:	Step 1: Seek resolution from respondent. If unresolved, then:	Step 1: Seek resolution from respondent. If unresolved, then:	Step 1: Seek resolution from respondent. If unresolved, then:
Step 2: Dean / Director. If unresolved, then:	Step 2: Respondent's Manager. If unresolved, then:	Step 2: LUSA / Proctor If unresolved, then:	Step 2: Human Resources plus, if necessary, with Director People, Culture and Wellbeing
Step 3: Convenor, Academic Administration Committee. If necessary, then:	Step 3: Senior Manager. If unresolved, then:	Step 3: Deputy Vice-Chancellor if unresolved, then:	Step 3: HR Director. If unresolved, then:
Step 4: Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor. If unresolved, then:	Step 4: Vice-Chancellor / Vice-Chancellor's External	Step 4: Vice-Chancellor	Step 4: Vice-Chancellor
Step 5: Vice-Chancellor / Vice-Chancellor's External Agent.	Step 5: Vice-Chancellor	Step 5: Council Appeals Committee	Step 5: Council Appeals Committee
Step 6: Vice-Chancellor	Step 6: Council Appeals Committee		
Step 7 Council Appeals Committee			

Notes

1. If the complainant is at all unsure how to proceed, contact the Convenor of the Academic Administration Committee, the University Chaplain or the President of LUSA for advice in the first instance.
2. Any appeal, complaint or grievance that has not followed this framework will be redirected to the appropriate step.
3. If the personal complaint is one of assault or theft, or other alleged criminal activity, the complainant should contact the police in the first instance.
4. Appeals to decisions from the Proctor or the Disciplinary Committee are dealt with under the Discipline Regulations.
5. Complainants who feel they have not had their appeal, complaint or grievance resolved by the University's procedures may make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman or, if the complainant is an international student, to NZQA in the first instance. If the matter is financial or contractual, NZQA may forward to the Disputes Resolution Scheme.

4. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICY / PROCEDURE / RESOURCES

Lincoln University Procedures

Student Appeals, Complaints and Grievances Policy

Lincoln University Policies

[Prevention of Bullying Harassment Policy](#) [Code of Conduct Policy](#)

Regulations (Lincoln University Calendar)

Student Discipline Regulations

General Course and Examination Regulations: Regulation L Hardship

Internal

LUSA Student Rep Handbook

External

[Office of the Ombudsman](#)

[NZQA – Disputes Resolution Scheme](#)

The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) [Code of Practice 2016 \(including Amendments 2019\)](#)

