

1. Purpose of this Information sheet

This tool kit is designed to provide practical information, tools and templates to assist staff in reporting, managing and resolving complaints under the Complaint Resolution (Staff) Procedure. It should be read in conjunction with the [University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021 \(as amended\)](#) and the [Behaviour and Conduct Policy](#).

2. What types of complaints can be raised under this procedure?

The University is committed to removing barriers to the reporting of complaints. The Complaint Resolution Procedure may be used to raise complaints about the inappropriate or unacceptable conduct of other staff when undertaking the responsibilities of their position, representing the University, or involved in University activities and/or with other members of the University community. Complaints can include unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying, interpersonal conflict, or other actions of staff that impact on the ability of an individual or team to work effectively and/or productively.

Serious matters, that may amount to an allegation of misconduct, serious misconduct, research misconduct, fraud or corruption are not appropriate for resolution under the Complaint Resolution (Staff) Procedure and will be referred for action under the University's Enterprise Agreement (as amended), or the relevant policy. Protected disclosures are managed under the [University's Whistleblower Policy](#). Criminal or unlawful conduct should be notified to the Police or the [Office of Public Integrity \(OPI\)](#).

3. What is the most appropriate type of complaint resolution process for my complaint?

Many complaints can be resolved informally, without requiring further intervention. The complainant, either on their own, or supported by their supervisor can approach the respondent to discuss and/or try to resolve their complaint. Where informal processes are not successful or if the complainant is not confident to resolve the complaint informally, the formal complaint resolution procedure may be appropriate. The [complaint resolution decision matrix](#) may be useful in identifying the best approach to resolve a complaint.

The University's Complaint Resolution Procedure is a flexible and interchangeable process. An unsuccessful attempt to resolve a complaint by the informal process can proceed to a formal process as necessary.

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4. Formal Complaint Resolution

A formal complaint resolution process is an appropriate approach to resolve complaints, where:

- The informal processes have not been successful;
- The parties are unable or unwilling to attempt resolving a complaint through an informal process;
- The matter is serious or sensitive; or
- The complainant is not comfortable in resolving the complaint themselves or with assistance.

To initiate the process, the complainant is required to put their complaint in writing to their supervisor or the supervisor's supervisor (if the complaint is with the supervisor). A [template](#) is available to assist in detailing the particulars of the complaint.

On receipt of the written formal complaint, the supervisor will notify the complainant that they have received the complaint and decide how to proceed with resolving the complaint. This may involve the assessment and/or investigation of the complaint.

The supervisor assumes management of the complaint, but will take into consideration the outcome wanted by the complainant. Some complaints can be resolved by the supervisor, without the need for investigation. If investigated, on receipt of the report from the investigator. The supervisor will decide on the resolution and communicate with the parties.

5. Do I have a say in what the outcome of a complaint is?

Yes, even if your complaint is handled formally, you will normally be asked by your supervisor or HR Advisor, what it is that you want the outcome to be. On notification of how the supervisor wishes to resolve a formal complaint, the complainant and respondent will each have an opportunity to respond and/or agree to the proposed resolution and/or interventions.

6. What is a reasonable outcome of a complaint resolution process?

Typical outcomes under the Complaint Resolution Procedure include:

- Putting a stop to behaviour that has caused offence;
- The complainant no longer feels aggrieved;
- Improved relationships between parties to the complaint;
- An apology;
- Return to a productive work environment.

7. Typical interventions to resolve the complaint?

- Mediation
- Training
- Coaching
- Counselling support

8. Will my complaint be managed confidentially?

The University is committed to the removal of barriers to reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment, which may be disclosed confidentially. Confidential disclosures of wrongdoing, including public interest disclosures are covered under the University [Whistleblower Policy](#). All other complaints will be managed confidentially, to the extent that it is reasonably practicable to do so. Parties to the complaint and witnesses have a responsibility to maintain their own and the confidentiality of other parties to the complaint.

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9. Who will investigate my complaint?

Where an investigation is required, the University may use an internal (staff member) or external investigator. An HR Advisor will provide guidance on the choice of investigator. Where an internal investigator is used, it will be someone from a separate area of the University to either the complainant or respondent, someone whose neutrality is not compromised and is at least HEO8 or Level D.

10. How can I be sure that the complaint is resolved?

The supervisor will monitor to ensure that any agreed actions have been taken and that there is no recurrence of the matter which gave rise to the complaint. They will then close the complaint and notify the parties.

11. Who can close a complaint?

The complainant can withdraw their complaint at any time and it will be closed.

The supervisor may close the complaint once resolved or at any time, if:

- The complaint is ill-founded;
- The complaint is unsubstantiated;
- The complaint is vexatious; frivolous or malicious; or
- There is no likelihood of a resolution between the parties.

12. What if I am not satisfied with the outcome, is there an option to review a complaint?

A complainant can only seek a review by an internal reviewer if the complaint relates to academic workload allocation under clause 8.3.9.4 of the University of Adelaide [Enterprise Agreement](#) (as amended).

13. When will the University take direct action?

The University may take direct action to:

- Investigate a matter or report criminal or unlawful conduct, which may include investigating a complaint that the complainant has withdrawn;
- The University does not require a complaint to be raised to take direct action.

14. Who can I seek further information from?

- You can discuss any unfair treatment, including discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying with a [Fair Treatment Contact Officer \(FTCO\)](#). They are able to provide information about University Policies and Procedures, including the complaint resolution (staff) procedure.
- You can obtain specific advice from your [HR Advisor](#).
- If you require counselling support you can contact a [University EAP provider](#).

15. How long will it take to resolve the complaint?

The duration of the process will depend on the completeness of the information provided, the complexity of the complaint, whether it is handled as an informal or formal complaint, or requires investigation, and the process taken to resolve it. The university aims to effectively manage all complaints in a timely manner.

16. Must I use the template to raise a formal complaint?

To raise a formal complaint, it must be put in writing, detailing the particulars of the complaint. You can write a letter or email correspondence, or you can use the [template](#) provided.

Even if you chose not to raise your complaint on the [template](#), we recommend that you use it as a guide to the information you should provide about the complaint.

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Similarly the [template](#) acts as a guide for supervisors who have responsibility for attempting to resolve complaints.

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