

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Human Resources and Organisational Development



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2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This policy applies to all members of staff employed by University of Staffordshire and University of Staffordshire Services Limited other than “holders of senior posts” as determined by the Board of Governors on the basis defined in the University’s Articles and Instruments of Government.
- 2.2. Workers who are not employees of either of the above organisations and who are aggrieved with their personal employment circumstances should normally follow the grievance procedure of their own employer.
- 2.3. This policy was implemented following consultation with the University’s recognised Trade Unions, UCU and UNISON.
- 2.4. It is the University’s aim to ensure that employees with a grievance relating to their employment can have the grievance dealt with fairly and impartially.
- 2.5. The University encourages an open and honest relationship with its employees and hopes that most matters of concern to an employee can be resolved by discussion with the immediate line manager in the course of normal day to day work. The University encourages its employees to raise matters informally before invoking the formal procedures as it is in the interest of all parties to resolve matters at the informal stage wherever possible.
- 2.6. In order to achieve informal resolution, management should seek advice from their Human Resources Business Partner and members of staff are encouraged to seek support from the Employee Assistance Provider, a member of Human Resources & Organisational Development or their Trade Union representative.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. A grievance is a problem or concern regarding personal employment circumstances that may affect an individual or a group of individuals. Where it affects a number of individuals, this is known as a collective grievance.
- 3.2. The University has two routes for resolving grievances. The informal approach should normally be followed in the first instance. Where this does not resolve the matter, the individual(s) may raise a formal grievance. The University has a Procedure for Resolving Workplace Grievances, which will be followed in these circumstances.
- 3.3. The aim of this policy and the Procedure for Resolving Workplace Grievances is to provide a fair and consistent approach for the consideration of employee grievances. Every effort will be made to deal with grievance issues as promptly as possible and by a person at an appropriate level.

- 3.4. In some circumstances, the complaint should be raised under a separate University policy, such as discipline, bullying and/or harassment, grading of posts, or matters more appropriately dealt with under the Public Interest Disclosure Policy. Further, this policy does not apply to issues relating to conditions of service, including local collective agreements, except for allegations that those agreements are not being observed.
- 3.5. Where a grievance or appeal is submitted on behalf of a number of employees, the University will request that a single employee be appointed as a point of contact for dealing with the grievance under the Procedure for Resolving Workplace Grievances. If the University receives grievances or appeals from two or more employees (submitted separately), where the University believes that the subject matter of those grievances or appeals is substantially similar, the University reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to require those grievances or appeals to be consolidated, so that they are dealt with as one grievance or appeal under the procedure, on the grounds of efficiency.
- 3.6. In cases where a grievance involves another employee, that person shall be advised by management of the substance of the grievance so that they can be given an opportunity to respond. This may include providing redacted evidence, where appropriate. The individual who raised the grievance will be consulted by the line manager or investigating officer if this is the case before any documents are released.
- 3.7. At any formal stage of the procedure an employee may be accompanied by an employee colleague or accredited Trade Union representative. This may also be appropriate at the informal stage if all parties agree. The colleague or Trade Union representative can speak and confer with the employee during the meetings but may not answer questions on behalf of the employee. If the employee's colleague or Trade Union representative is unavailable for a meeting, the employee can request a delay to the meeting. The University will delay the meeting, once, for up to 5 days to enable the colleague or Trade Union representative to be present. A member of the University's Human Resources and Organisational Development Department will be involved at the formal stages of the procedure, together with any other specialist/technical expert if this would assist consideration of the issues.
- 3.8. Arrangements which applied before the grievance was lodged will normally continue to operate until the procedure has been completed. In exceptional circumstances, the nature of an employee's grievance may require a temporary adjustment to their or a colleague(s) working arrangements. Any such temporary adjustment would not be a predetermination of the outcome of the grievance, nor any form of disciplinary sanction, and would be taken with no detrimental effect on pay. Such exceptional circumstances should be discussed fully by the line manager with Human Resources and Organisational Development before any actions are taken.
- 3.9. An individual should refer to the University's Procedure for Resolving Workplace Grievances for guidance on the procedure to follow in the event of a workplace grievance.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1. The University is committed to investigating allegations fully, fairly and as quickly as possible and recognises the importance of confidentiality in dealing with grievances.
- 4.2. Confidentiality is important, particularly in the early stages when an individual may wish to seek advice and explore options for resolution. However, once any actions, either informal or formal commence that directly involve others, the individual(s) concerned will need to be informed about the nature of the complaint.
- 4.3. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible in respect of all parties whilst seeking a solution.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1. Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this policy and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken.

6. OPERATIVE DATE

- 6.1. This policy was approved by the University's Senior Leadership Team on 12 December 2022. This revised policy will take immediate effect.