

Students Complaints Policy and Procedures

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| Version | 3.0 |
| Policy Code/Category | SU – 1.11.1/Student Grievance Processes |
| Purpose | To offer all students and interested parties the procedure to make a complaint |
| Scope | This policy is for all students. |
| DMS File Number | |
| File Location | Q Drive |
| Related Documents | |
| Key words | |
| Comments | |
| Prepared by | IP&E in collaboration with DVC-SE and DVC-AA Offices |
| Approved by | EMC |
| Approval date | October 2018 |
| Review date | 2021 |

Introduction

The University aims to provide a high standard of service to all students. However, problems do occur and sometimes the service may not be up to student expectations. In such cases, a formal complaint may be made.

The University aims to deal openly, fairly and effectively with any comments and/or complaints, and to offer an appropriate remedy to any student who is adversely affected by a service.

The University seeks to continuously improve its services and regularly monitors any comments and/or complaints received from students to ensure the utmost effectiveness of its practices and procedures for addressing them.

If a student wants personal and specific redress on a particular issue, this is defined as a complaint. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to resolve a complaint at the local point where it arises, with the member(s) of staff concerned.

In general, all complaints can be lodged by the student through the SU mobile application (see Appendix I), or through submission of a completed complaint form (see Appendix II and III) which is available on the University portal.

The University will not penalize anyone in any way for making a complaint about services provided. Complaints will be investigated as fairly, openly and as quickly as possible. However, some complaints are complicated and it may take some time to obtain the information needed to reach a fair decision.

Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with because a response cannot be provided. However, the identity of a complainant will not be disclosed without permission. Complaints will not be recorded on the student's record.

The University recognises two types of complaints: Academic and Non- Academic Complaints.

Academic Complaints

The University recognises the following under the category of an academic complaint. Complaints in relation to

- The Admission and Registration process and system
- The timetabling of lectures, tutorials and examinations
- A program or specific course (course content, documentation and materials, lecturer theatres, labs etc.)
- A member of the teaching staff (or Lab technicians)
- Academic advising
- Learning resources and the library
- Learner support
- Assessments
- Grades

- Absences
- Academic probation, and suspension
- Academic Integrity

Academic Complaint Procedures

If a student wants to comment or make a suggestion about improving one of the University's academic-related services or a program of study, this can be done informally by raising it directly with either the Student Faculty Representative, the Student Advisory Council or the relative member of Faculty staff.

If there is a general complaint relating to a program of study, it may again first be addressed informally with those concerned, or through the Student Advisory Council or the Student Faculty Representative. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to resolve a complaint at the local point where it arises, with the member(s) of staff concerned.

If a student wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she can do so through the SU mobile app or by submitting a specific form for this purpose which is available from the Student Portal (see Appendix II).

A student may bring along a friend or his/her Student Representative to any meeting to discuss a complaint. Permission however must be requested in advance to bring someone from outside the University to accompany the student (complainant).

Formal Academic Complaint Stage 1

If a complaint is not resolved informally, the student must provide details in writing to the **Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs (DVC-AA)** as soon as possible after the event(s) concerned, and normally within six weeks. Any delays may make it difficult to investigate. The student (complainant) must provide:

- His/her name & SU ID number
- contact address and telephone number
- SU email address
- program of study
- date on which the problem arose
- whether anyone else was affected, or saw what happened
- the response sought from the University

It is the student's responsibility to provide all the relevant evidence that supports the complaint. Where additional evidence emerges, it must be submitted as soon as possible.

An initial response to the complaint will be provided by the DVC-AA within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. In the meantime, the DVC-AA will delegate investigation of the complaint to a person or persons with no direct involvement in the issue. The person or persons will review all the evidence provided, arrange interviews where necessary, request more information and finally reach a conclusion which is presented to the DVC-AA.

If, at any time during this first stage, or later, the student wishes to revert to resolving the complaint informally, this can be done through the person investigating the complaint. Investigations will normally be concluded and a response made within one month of receipt of a complaint.

The response will indicate:

- how the complaint was investigated, and by whom
- the evidence used
- the conclusion reached
- if appropriate, the steps taken to rectify matters

It may not be possible to do exactly what was requested, but the complainant will be given the opportunity to say whether or not they are satisfied.

Formal Academic Complaint Stage 2 – Final Stage

If a complainant is not satisfied with the University's response and wants to pursue matters further, he or she should write formally (within 2 weeks of receipt of the response to stage 1) to the Vice Chancellor explaining the reasons for progression to stage 2.

If the Vice Chancellor wishes to proceed, the VC Executive Coordinator or VCO Manager will set up an Appeals Committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor (Chair) and composed of a Dean from a Faculty other than that of the student, the Director of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (secretary) and a student who is unknown to the student making the appeal and nominated by the Student Advisory Council. The complaint will be considered and a judgement will be reached. The result of the Appeals Committee will be communicated by email (to the student's SU email address) by the VC Executive Coordinator or VCO Manager.

Non-Academic Complaints

The University recognizes the following under the category of a non-academic complaint. These include complaints in relation to:

- Student activities
- Student healthcare services
- Student accommodation services
- Student transportation services
- University catering services
- IT services
- The campus

Non- academic complaints procedures should not be used for the following:

- notification of mitigating circumstances for assessments
- appealing against academic results (although a successful complaint may be followed by an appeal against an academic assessment)
- dealing with academic offences (for which there are separate procedures)

- dealing with disciplinary offences (complaints about the behaviour of students are dealt with through the relevant disciplinary procedures)
- making disclosures in the public interest ('whistle blowing')

Non-Academic Complaint Procedures

If a student wants to comment or make a suggestion regarding improvement of one of the University's services, it can be done informally by raising the issue directly with the relevant person(s) concerned.

However, if a student wants personal and specific redress on a particular issue, this is defined as a complaint. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to resolve a complaint at the local point where it arises, with the member(s) of staff concerned.

If a student wishes to make a formal complaint, a specific form for this purpose is available from the Student Portal (see Appendix III). Alternatively, students may use the designated SU mobile application to lodge their complaint.

Formal Non-Academic Complaints: Stage One

If a complaint is not resolved informally, the student must provide details in writing to the **Pro. Vice Chancellor Student Affairs & Engagement (PVC-SAE)** as soon as possible after the event(s) concerned and normally within six weeks. Any delays may make it difficult to investigate. The complainant must provide:

- his/her name & SU ID number
- contact address and telephone number
- SU email address
- program of study
- date on which the problem arose
- whether anyone else was affected, or saw what happened
- the response sought from the University

Where additional evidence emerges, it must be submitted as soon as possible.

The PVC- SAE will provide an initial response within 5 working days. In the meantime, the PVC-SAE will delegate the investigation of the complaint to a person(s) with no direct involvement in the issue. The person or persons will review all the evidence provided, arrange interviews where necessary, request more information and finally reach a conclusion which is presented to the PVC- SAE.

If, at any time during this stage the student wishes to revert to resolving the complaint informally, this can be done through the person investigating the complaint.

Investigations will normally be concluded and a response made within one month of receipt of a complaint.

The response will indicate:

- how the complaint was investigated, and by whom
- the evidence used
- the conclusion reached
- if appropriate, the steps taken to rectify matters

It may not be possible to do exactly what was requested, but the complainant will be given the opportunity to say whether or not they are satisfied

Non-Academic Complaint Stage 2 - Final Stage

If a complainant is not satisfied with the University's response and wants to pursue matters further, he or she should write formally (within 2 weeks of receipt of the response to stage 1) to the Vice Chancellor explaining the reasons for progression to stage 2.

If the Vice Chancellor wishes to proceed, the VC Executive Coordinator or VCO Manager will set up an Appeals Committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor (Chair) and composed of a manager from a department other than that of the student complaining against, the Director of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (secretary) and a student who is unknown to the student making the appeal and nominated by the Student Council. The complaint will be considered and a judgement will be reached. The result of the Appeals Committee will be communicated by email (to the student's SU email address) by the VC Executive Coordinator or VCO Manager.

Note

Legal action may be taken if a false complaint is made against a member of staff or a student.

Appendix I

Process Mobile Application



English

جامعة صحار
SOHAR UNIVERSITY 

اسم المستخدم 

كلمة السر 

تذكرني

دخول

Appendix II

Student Academic Complaints Form

A student with an academic complaint must complete this form and present it to the office of the Dean of Faculty with all supporting evidence. If a student's academic-related complaint is not resolved informally at the Faculty level, the student (or other complainant) must provide details in writing to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs (DVCAA) as soon as possible after the event(s) concerned and normally within six weeks. Any delays may make it difficult to investigate. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with because a response cannot be provided. However, the identity of a complainant will not be disclosed without permission. A complaint will not be recorded on the academic record.

This form should not be used for the following:

Notification of mitigating circumstances for assessments (there is a separate mitigating circumstances form)

Appealing against academic results (there is a separate appeal against an academic assessment form)

Dealing with disciplinary offences (complaints about the behavior of students are dealt with through student affairs)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Student Name | | Student Identity Number | |
| Faculty | | Program | |
| Student SU email address | | Telephone Number | |
| Date the incident happened | | Name of anyone else involved | |

Select the Complaint Type:

- The Admission and Registration process and system
- The timetabling of lectures, tutorials and examinations
- A program or specific course (course content, documentation and materials, lecturer theatres, labs etc.)
- A member of the teaching staff (or Lab technicians)
- Academic advising
- Learning resources and the library
- Learner support
- Assessments
- Grades
- Absences
- Academic probation, and suspension
- Academic Integrity

Details of the Event: *(please attach all evidence supporting the claim)*

Deans Comment:

Indicate how the complaint was investigated and by whom, the evidence used, the conclusion reached if appropriate, the steps taken to rectify matters. It may not be possible to do exactly what was requested, but the complainant will be given the opportunity to say whether or not they are satisfied.

Dean Name
(Print)

Signature

DVC Academic Affairs Comment *(where applicable):*

DVC-Academic
Affairs

Signature

Agreed Actions

By whom

Appendix III

Student Non-Academic Complaints Form

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Student Name | | Student Identity Number | |
| Faculty | | Program | |
| Student SU email address | | Telephone Number | |
| Date the incident happened | | Name of anyone else involved | |

Select the Complaint Type:

Hostel
 Transportation
 Nutrition
 Cleaning
 Other

Please provide details about the complaint:

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Staff comments on the complaint:

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Signature

Department comments on the complaint

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Stamp & Signature

PVC - SAE comments if not resolved by the Department

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Stamp & Signature