

Grievance Procedure: Research, Teaching-only and Professional Services Staff

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1. Introduction

This procedure is designed to help staff and managers deal with grievance situations in the workplace in a manner which is fair and expeditious. Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that staff raise with the university concerning some aspect of their work.

It is the university's wish to find a solution to individual grievances and dignity at work concerns as early in the procedure as possible, ideally informally. An informal conversation is frequently the most effective means of resolving an issue.

The university is committed to protecting the dignity of its staff in their work and their interactions with others. [A Dignity of Work: Statement of Commitment](#) in this regard is available in the HR pages of the university's website.

This Grievance Procedure is available to members of research, teaching and professional services staff of the university, but not those working at the university via an agency or other such route.

Members of staff that wish to raise a grievance regarding the conduct of a student should refer to the university's [Misconduct Regulations \(Regulations concerning students\)](#)

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2. General principles

The following general principles will be adhered to in the operation of these procedures:

- The university and staff should raise and deal with issues promptly and should not unreasonably delay meetings, decisions or confirmation of those decisions.
- Managers and staff should act fairly, consistently and in good faith.
- Managers should carry out any necessary investigations to establish the facts of the case.
- A member of staff will have the right of appeal if they feel that a formal grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, in accordance with the process for appeals as outlined at section [5: Appeals](#)

Members of staff may be accompanied at a grievance meeting held under the formal grievance procedure by a fellow work colleague or a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union. Staff should provide the name of any representative who will be assisting with their grievance no later than three working days prior to the formal grievance meeting. As it is in all parties' interests to resolve grievances at the earliest opportunity, in making their choice, members of staff should bear in mind the practicalities of the arrangements. For instance, a member of staff may choose to be accompanied by a fellow work colleague or trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union who is suitable, willing and available on site rather than someone from a geographically remote location within reason.

If the member of staff's representative is unable to attend on a proposed date, the member of staff may suggest an alternative date within 5 days of the original date.

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The work colleague or trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union will be allowed to address the meeting to put and sum up the member of staff's case, respond on behalf of the member of staff to any views expressed at the meeting and given reasonable opportunity to confer privately with the member of staff during the meeting. The work colleague or trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union does not however have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the meeting if the member of staff does not wish it, or prevent the member of staff from explaining their case.

There may be situations where it would be helpful to seek external advice and assistance during the grievance procedure or after it has concluded. For example, where the grievance has arisen from a breakdown in relations between two or more individuals a facilitator might be able to assist in resolving the problem. The facilitator may where appropriate be an external consultant or an internal member of staff not directly connected with the grievance. The manager considering the grievance may recommend the use of a facilitator with the agreement of the member of staff and the individual(s) concerned.

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3. Informal grievance procedure

If a member of staff has a grievance relating to their employment, the matter should be raised initially with their immediate manager. Where it is this manager's action(s) or decision(s) that is the subject of the grievance, the member of staff should raise the matter with a manager of equivalent or greater seniority, ideally within the same department/faculty/division (or directorate).

The manager receiving the grievance will take appropriate steps to resolve the grievance as quickly as possible on an informal basis; this may involve asking another manager to consider the grievance. S/he will enquire into the grievance and will generally discuss it with the member of staff. Managers would be advised to keep a brief note of any grievance cases they deal with.

It is anticipated that most grievances will be resolved at the informal stage. If a grievance cannot be resolved informally, or the member of staff wishes to raise the matter formally, the formal procedure should be used, as provided at [Section 4: Formal grievance procedure](#)

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4. Formal grievance procedure

4.1 Let the manager know the nature of the grievance

If it has not been possible to resolve a grievance informally, or the member of staff believes that the grievance cannot be resolved informally, they should raise the grievance formally and without unreasonable delay with their line manager. Where it is this manager's action(s) or decision(s) is the subject of the grievance, the member of staff should raise the matter with a manager of equivalent or greater seniority, ideally within the same department/faculty/division (or directorate).

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This should be done in writing using [Appendix 1: Submission of a Formal Grievance form](#) and should set out the nature of the grievance, and the outcome(s) sought. The manager receiving the formal grievance should forward a copy of the form to their local [HR Adviser](#) who may arrange a formal meeting to consider the grievance, as appropriate.

4.2 Consideration of the grievance

The manager receiving the grievance may ask another manager to consider the grievance.

It is for the manager considering the grievance to determine how they wish to conduct any investigation into the matter. This should include giving the individual that raised the grievance the opportunity to explain their grievance at a meeting to the manager and provide any relevant supporting information. Any such meeting will usually be arranged within two weeks of receipt of the formal grievance.

The member of staff must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting and may be supported and accompanied to the grievance meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague (see [General Principles](#) section above). A member of the HR Department may be present in the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting will be for the member of staff to state their grievance, for those present to understand the full nature of the grievance, to discuss the grievance, and explore potential solutions. It may be necessary to undertake further investigation of the grievance, in which case the meeting may be adjourned in order to enable this to take place.

Should the meeting need to be reconvened, this must take place within a reasonable period of time and further meetings may be arranged, should this be required.

Where a grievance has been brought concerning the action(s) or decision(s) of a specific individual(s), the manager will notify the individual(s) against whom the grievance has been raised that a grievance has been submitted by the member of staff and provide them with a copy of the grievance. The individual(s) will be invited to attend a meeting with the manager where they will have an opportunity to provide a statement and any relevant papers in response to the grievance.

In general, all written information received by the manager considering the grievance (including witness statements) will be shared with the member of staff that has raised the grievance, and the individual(s) against whose actions or decisions the grievance is being made.

Nothing in this procedure precludes the manager considering the grievance to hold more than one meeting with any of the parties involved.

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4.3 Outcome decision

Following the meeting and any subsequent investigation, the manager that has heard the grievance decides on what action, if any, to take.

The outcome letter will normally be issued to the member of staff within ten working days from the conclusion of the grievance meeting. The letter will usually summarise the nature of the grievance, the investigation that was conducted, the decision, the reason for the decision and any

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outcome for work and working practices as a result of the decision. If this timescale cannot be met, for example, because of ongoing investigation, the manager will write to the individual to explain this.

A copy of the decision letter will also be provided to any individual(s) against whose actions/decisions the grievance was brought. The individual(s) may submit in writing any dissenting comments in connection with the decision and these will form part of the record, but will not affect any decision that the manager takes regarding remedy.

If any complaint is considered frivolous, vexatious or invalid the manager identified to consider the grievance shall dismiss the grievance.

The member of staff that raised the grievance should be informed that they can appeal if they feel that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved.

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5. Appeals

A member of staff who is not satisfied that their grievance has been satisfactorily resolved may appeal. The member of staff should write to their local [HR Adviser](#) within ten working days of receipt of the decision letter. The letter should state that the grievance has not been resolved to the member of staff's satisfaction and the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome. The remedy or outcome sought should be specified in the letter from the member of staff.

The appeal should be dealt with by a manager who has not previously been directly involved in the case and ideally from another area, usually senior to the person who considered the grievance. Appeals should be considered without unreasonable delay and at an appeal meeting and at a time and place which should be notified to the member of staff in advance.

Staff have a right to be accompanied at any such appeal meeting as outlined in the [General Principles](#) section above.

The outcome of the appeal should be communicated to the member of staff in writing without unreasonable delay. This will be the end of the internal grievance process.

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6. Overlapping grievance and disciplinary/capability cases

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during a disciplinary/capability process the disciplinary/capability process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary/capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Where a grievance concerns the outcome of a disciplinary/capability matter, this grievance procedure would not usually be appropriate. Instead, members of staff should refer to the appeals process within the university's [Capability and Disciplinary Procedures](#) for non-academic staff.

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The procedure does not apply to redundancy dismissals or the non-renewal of fixed-term contracts on their expiry.

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7. Keeping records

Managers should keep a written record of any grievance cases they deal with.

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8. Support available

8.1 For members of staff: Employment assistance programme

Support is available from the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP provides independent expert advice on both home and work concerns. Experts can provide practical information, fact sheets and packs, referrals to services in the local area and services such as short-term telephone counselling. This service is entirely independent from the university and is confidential. The EAP is paid for by the university and is free to university employees. For further information and contact details please see the relevant page of the King's [internal website](#)

8.2 For managers

To register your interest in receiving training in handling grievances raised by members of staff, please email od@kcl.ac.uk.

This policy only applies to the members of staff of King's College London.

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APPENDIX 1: Submission of a Formal Grievance

Your details

Full name	
E-mail	
Work telephone number	
Job title	
Department	
Faculty/Directorate	
Your manager/supervisor's name	
Your fellow work colleague or trade union representative's name (if applicable):	

Details of the Formal Grievance

This written statement will form the basis of any subsequent grievance meetings and any investigations, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance. If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place. Please provide specific examples and, where applicable, dates, times, names of witnesses present etc when relevant events occurred and details of any attempt made to resolve the issue. Expand this space as necessary, but please keep your complaint as succinct as possible.

Desired Outcome

Outline the outcome that you are seeking from this formal grievance.

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Data Protection

Access to this information regarding the grievance will be, shared with the people necessary to consider the grievance, This is normally restricted to:

- the manager that receives the grievance submission,
- any manager(s) appointed to undertake an investigation/appeal,
- the university's Human Resources staff,
- any individual that the grievance is raised against,
- any trade union representation or chosen accompanied fellow work colleague.

Witnesses should be provided with sufficient information to allow an effective investigation for the grievance procedure.

We will only share or disclose the information with other parties, as set out in line with the Data Protection Act.

The information may be used in an anonymised fashion to help the university assess its policies and practices in order to ensure that they are inclusive.

By signing this form you consent to the university processing, both manually and by electronic means, your personal data as may be necessary for the proper administration of your employment, both during and after your employment, provided that proper regard is given to such data protection principles as may be in force.

By signing this form you also consent, as this is a submission of a formal grievance, that the contents of this form may be shared with the respondent(s) and relevant parts may be shared with witnesses, as appropriate.

Please send this form to your manager for consideration, or, if they are the subject of your grievance, a manager of equivalent or greater seniority.

Your signature	
Print name	
Date	

Managers: Please forward a copy to your local [HR Adviser](#)