

Policy: Student Grievance

It is College policy to ensure that all matters of concern to students (whether of an individual or general nature) are dealt with fairly and speedily, and that every reasonable effort is made to resolve the matter satisfactorily without the need to go to grievance. Where a student has followed the internal aspects of the College's Grievance Policy and remains unsatisfied with the outcome, the student has the right to escalate their complaint externally as detailed within this Policy.

Responsibility

Student

- * To consider the facts relating to the situation as objectively as possible, to study the grievance procedures and to follow them
- * To write down grounds for grievance, evidence and questions, and to keep copies
- * To discuss the grievance with the Acting Depute Principal and to be advised on the appropriate procedure
- * When requested, meet with agreed individual/s and discuss grievance topics
- * If unresolved, meet, when requested, with the Acting Depute Principal and discuss grievance topics
- * If unresolved, meet, when requested, with the Interim Joint Principal and present grievance.

At any stage, the student can seek and receive help in gathering evidence and presenting facts and be represented, or accompanied, either by a Lecturer, or by another student at Shetland College UHI, or in the case of a young person by a parent or guardian.

Acting Depute Principal

Every reasonable effort will be made at this stage to resolve the matter satisfactorily, without the need to proceed further:

- * Meet with the Candidate as soon as possible after matter is raised, explore grounds for grievance and arrange for next stage, if deemed necessary
- * To inform the Lecturer/Head of Section after reaching agreement with the student
- * To ensure that the grievance progresses through the recognised

procedure until a final decision is reached

- * To keep written records of dates, personnel, meeting issues and outcome, successful or unsuccessful – QF 15

Lecturer/Head of Section

- * To meet with the Student as soon as possible after request
- * To study evidence objectively and seek to resolve the matter if possible
- * To keep written records of dates, personnel, meeting issues and outcome, successful or unsuccessful – QF14
- * To inform the Acting Depute Principal of any outcome
- * To meet with the Student and Acting Depute Principal and/or Interim Joint Principal, if requested

Interim Joint Principal

- * To meet with the Student as soon as possible after request
- * To study evidence objectively, meet with other parties if considered necessary, and reach a decision
- * To inform the Student, formally, on the decision arrived at
- * To ensure remedial action is taken where a grievance has been upheld

Procedure: Student Grievance

Introduction

Information about the appeals and grievance procedures is an integral part of College procedure and provision at the start of each academic session; initially at pre-entry interview stage and later in student handout material.

Students may not complain about an academic judgement through the grievance process and must use the appeals process for this purpose.

Students have the right to complain to SQA about assessment-related matters (but not assessment judgements), if they remain dissatisfied once they have exhausted the college's internal complaints procedure.

If a student is undertaking a regulated qualification they have a further right to complain to SQA Accreditation once they have exhausted the college's internal complaints procedure and the SQA Awarding Body's complaints procedure.

Grievance

If a candidate believes they have grounds to lodge a grievance s/he should contact the Acting Depute Principal who will ensure that the grievance is followed as necessary, until a decision is reached.

Grounds for Grievance

When a student has a complaint about the programme s/he is following, which s/he feels would not be best addressed by the normal evaluation or appeals procedures.

When a student has a general complaint, has been unable to have it resolved and feels that grievance is the only avenue remaining.

Grievance System

The grievance procedure is as follows:

The grievance should be made within a reasonable time - normally within six months of the cause for grievance becoming known.

The College undertakes to complete the procedure within a reasonable time - normally within fourteen days of notification of grievance.

Stage 1: If students believe they have grounds for a grievance, where possible, your concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member, lecturer, college representative or student services office. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

At this point every attempt should be made to resolve the matter without the need to proceed to an official grievance. Where a grievance is raised we aim to provide a response within five working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should an official grievance be raised the student should contact the Acting Depute Principal and ask for appropriate action to be taken to rectify the situation.

Stage 2: If matter is not resolved and in the event of the student remaining unsatisfied, the Acting Depute Principal, will off an acknowledgement receipt within three working days and the Acting Depute Principal will arrange a meeting with the student to understand the grievance and why the student remains unsatisfied after stage 1 and a solution discussed. A full response will be offered within twenty working days. If the investigation will take longer than twenty days we will let students know and keep them informed of progress.

Stage 3: If matter remains unresolved and in the event of the student remaining unsatisfied, the Acting Depute Principal will then refer the matter to the Interim Joint Principal with the request that the relevant materials be considered, relevant parties consulted, and a decision made.

If a student remains dissatisfied about a matter not relating to assessment they can take their complaint the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). SPSO can be contacted in person or by post:

In Person:
SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh

By Post
SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh

EH3 7NS

EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Records

Evidence of grievance procedure implementation includes:

- Student induction programme
- Induction programme attendance log
- Record of Grievance **Forms QF14, QF15**

Evaluation/Review

The Acting Depute Principal undertakes monitoring of the implementation of the College's grievance procedure throughout the academic session.

All aspects of the College's provision are evaluated continuously and reviewed by the Senior Management team and Heads of Section throughout the session, and any changes to procedures and responsibilities are communicated to staff during appropriate meetings.

If students require to be made aware of any changes this will be done by the following methods:

- * Student services noticeboard
- * By lecturers to each student group
- * Individual email/handout to each student
- * Any alteration implemented will be mentioned at first guidance interview following change

Details of the Student Grievance Policy are included in the Student Handbook.