
Policy Title: Complaints Resolution

Policy No: 1510

Approval Date: March 11, 2013

Approval Body: President's Office

Effective Date: March 11, 2013

Review Date: March 2014

Policy Statement

This policy describes mechanisms and venues for students to raise complaints or disputes of a serious nature, which are not related to individual academic decisions or sanctions imposed for inappropriate behaviours, and which students think have not been resolved satisfactorily at the appropriate department level. The policy applies to all UCW students who are currently enrolled or were enrolled 30 days prior to submitting their concerns for consideration.

This policy does not apply for decisions related to:

- Individual student academic performance;
- Admissions;
- Transfer credit;
- Or any other issue for which an appeals or review policy exists.

University Canada West (UCW) adheres to principles of administrative law and natural justice. All parties involved in hearing and responding student complaints will listen openly and respond objectively and fairly.

Purpose

This policy is designed to be used for issues that are unrelated to academic and non-academic decisions, appeals, or sanctions imposed for violations of the student Rights and Responsibilities policy. It provides an avenue for individual students or a group of students to raise complaints or seek resolution to disputes not addressed through existing appeal processes or resolved satisfactorily at the department level. For disputes related to academic decisions, students must use the *Academic Appeals* policy. For disputes related to sanctions imposed for non-academic offences, students must use the *Appeals for Non-Academic Discipline* policy.

Scope

A student or students must first raise the complaint with the appropriate department supervisor or manager. If a complaint pertains to a specific decision or incident, the complaint must be brought forward within 10 working days.

Students must provide a written summary of the complaint to the appropriate department supervisor or manager. The summary must include:

- Date of the submission;
- A clear statement of the issue, problem, or incident; when it occurred, and the related facts and information;
- Reasons why the complaint is being brought forward
- Clear statement of the remedy being sought or suggestions for action.

UCW does not accept nor will it address anonymous submissions.

The department supervisor or manager must provide a written response within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If the student(s) is not satisfied with the response, the student(s) may direct the complaint in writing, within 10 working days, to the Senior Administrator responsible for the department.

If the complaint involves the Senior Administrator of the department, the student(s) should submit the complaint to the Registrar. The Registrar will designate a Senior Administrator who is not involved in the complaint to investigate and provide a response to the student(s). Similarly, if the complaint is about the Registrar, the President will appoint another Senior Administrator to deal with the complaint.

The Senior Administrator conducts enquiries and/or investigations as necessary to determine whether the students' concern(s) are substantiated in whole or in part. Those enquiries may involve further discussion(s) with students or with appropriate UCW personnel. The Senior Administrator will refer to relevant University policies and procedures as part of the process of conducting inquiries with complainants or department staff.

The Senior Administrator will respond in writing to the student(s) within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, providing an appropriate response or resolution. A written copy of the decision will be provided to the appropriate department supervisor or manager and/or parties directly involved in the complaint. The Senior Administrator will submit all documentation related to the investigation and a copy of the decision to the Registrar for retention.

The Registrar shall track the timelines for responses to complaints and will retain all the documentation.

If the student(s) is not satisfied with the determination of the Senior Administrator, the student(s) must advise the Registrar in writing, providing reasons why the decision is not satisfactory, within 5 working days of receipt of the decision. The Registrar will immediately refer the matter to the President's Office for review.

The President's Office will respond to the student(s) within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If the President's Office requires more time to investigate and respond to the complaint, the student(s) will be notified of the extended time period.

The President's Office will either confirm or vary the determination of the Senior Administrator. If the issue is of a serious and/or complex nature, the President's Office may, in its sole discretion and cost, engage the services of a third party mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute. In such cases, the period for response may be extended.

The decision of the President's Office is final and binding except in the case of a complaint against the President, where the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the UCW Board of Governance.

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Word/Term	Definition
Complaint	A complaint involves a concern, problem or issue other than an academic decision or a disciplinary measure that is not covered by an appeals process approved under other UCW policies. Complaints may be of an academic or non-academic nature and may cover areas related to instruction, services, employees or university policies.
Mediator	An individual appointed to try to bring people and their disputes to early resolution through a conference. The mediator is an active participant in the discussions and attempts to work out a solution that is agreeable to the parties involved.

Related legislation

None

Related policies

Policy Number	Policy Title
5006	Academic Appeals
5011	Research Ethics
9004	Transfer Credit
9007	Admissions
9011	Appeals for Non-Academic Discipline
9013	Student Leave of Absence
9014	Student Rights & Responsibilities
6751	Information Privacy and Security
6750	Records Management Policy

Responsibility

The President assures that a Complaints Resolution Policy is in place and that the policy is implemented by the appropriate Senior Administrators. The Senior Administrators ensure that the approved policy is adhered to by faculty and staff members under their direction.

The Registrar is responsible for keeping the policy up to date according to the schedule for policy review.

The Registrar's Office maintains all records regarding cases that are brought forward under the Complaints Resolution Policy. The Registrar is also responsible for monitoring adherence to deadlines.

Department supervisors and managers are responsible for hearing and responding to complaints at the first level, for responding within the timelines specified in the policy, and for keeping all information related to the complaint for a period of one year.

Students are responsible for following the Complaints Resolution Policy and the timelines and for directing complaints or issued covered under other policies as outlined in the calendar

All parties involved in hearing and responding to student complaints are responsible for keeping all records and correspondence related to complaint investigations and decisions in accordance with relevant university policies. Complainants are responsible for keeping their own records of documentation and correspondence related to an appeal.

PROCEDURES

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A student(s) who has a complaint that is not covered by another policy for appeal or review directs the complaint in writing to the appropriate department supervisor or manager.

The department supervisor or manager provides a written response to the student(s) providing an explanation and/or resolution to the matter raised. The department supervisor or manager may contact the student(s) to get further information to clarify the issues or facts.

A student(s) who is not satisfied with the response from the department supervisor or manager directs the complaint in writing to the Senior Administrator responsible for the department explaining why the response provided was not satisfactory.

A student(s) who is not satisfied with the response of the Senior Administrator directs the complaint in writing to the Registrar.

The Registrar informs the student(s) in writing when the complaint has been received. The Registrar directs the complaint immediately to the Office of the President. If the complaint is about the President, student(s) sends the complaint directly to the Chair of the Board of Governance.

The President responds to the student(s) in writing with a final decision. If additional time is required to investigate the complaint or if the President determines that external mediation is required, the student(s) will be notified in writing.

The Registrar's Office will collect all relevant documents for record keeping and reporting purposes.