Student Complaints and Appeals

On this page you will find information to assist you to pursue a complaint about your student experience. The University is committed to resolve student complaints in an independent, unbiased and respectful manner.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any type of problem, concern or grievance about your studies, student life, the University or the University environment. Basically, this means anything that negatively affects your studies or experience at University can be raised as a complaint.

The way the university handles complaints is set out in the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

What should I do before making a complaint?

Try to resolve the issue yourself

This is called “Stage 1” or “local” resolution in the Student Complaints Procedure. Your first step should be to try to resolve your concerns directly with the people involved. This could be by reaching out to appropriate staff members, such as Staff at the Faculty Student Centre, Course Co-Ordinator, School Grievance Officer or the Head of School.

The following resources can help you to effectively resolve your complaint:

- **Educational Support Advisors** are available to discuss concerns and may be able to help you sort them out without lodging a complaint.
- The Student Advocate at [Arc@UNSW](#)
- The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit can provide information about the complaint process by phone (02) 9385 8515 or email [studentcomplaints@unsw.edu.au](mailto:studentcomplaints@unsw.edu.au)

Lodging a complaint

If you feel uncomfortable or have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your concerns with the relevant School or Business Unit, you can ask the University to consider your complaint centrally. This is called “Stage 2” resolution in the Student Complaints Procedure. To engage the centralised complaints process please lodge your complaint by using this [form](#).

To better support your claim, include as much evidence as possible. This might include copies of email exchanges notes of discussions you had, assessment pieces or marking schemes. The university will assess your complaint and may request more detail from you to assist in deciding how to handle the issues you raise.

Can complaints be Anonymous?

The University will maintain a record of all formal complaints on the complaints management system, at all stages of the complaints handling process. Records may also be kept of local level complaints.

The University respects the wishes of those wanting to remain anonymous. Please keep in mind however, the University’s ability to investigate an anonymous complaint may be limited and you will also not be provided the outcome
of your complaint.

For more detailed information please see the Student Complaints Procedure.

**Things to keep in mind**

**Don't leave it too late**

The Student Complaints Procedure requires that you must lodge a complaint within 12 months of becoming aware of the issue. The sooner you lodge a complaint, the quicker the issue can be considered and hopefully resolved. Records are more likely to be available and people who were involved can explain what happened.

**Remain respectful**

You might be dissatisfied about something, but please be mindful in communicating your concerns with courtesy and respect to the complaint handlers assigned to your case. They are available to respond to any questions you have about the complaint process.

**I've lodged my complaint. What happens now?**

Once you have lodged a complaint, the Student Conduct and Integrity Unit will assess the complaint and decide on whether an investigation is needed to proceed. They will notify you and provide you with the reason(s) on the decision.

If the Student Conduct and Integrity Unit does go ahead with the complaint, they will provide both yourself and the respondent(s) with the opportunity to present their cases. They may also seek clarification from those relating to the complaint, internal advice or advice from external agencies.

For more detailed information please see the Student Complaints Procedure.

**How long will all this take?**

Once you lodge a complaint online, you will receive acknowledgement within 24 hours. The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit will look to resolve the complaints process within 20 to 30 working days.

Please keep in mind that if you lodge an appeal after a final decision has been made, the process can take an additional 1 to 2 months from the day of lodgement.

**I'm dissatisfied with the process or outcome. What can I do?**

If you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint was handled, you may lodge an appeal. An appeal may only be lodged on the grounds of a lack of procedural fairness in the investigation process.

Procedural fairness is about ensuring that:

- People are provided with all necessary details of the complaint that has been made against them
- People are given a proper opportunity to respond to the complaint against them before a decision is made (including as to any mitigating circumstances)
- Persons involved in deciding an outcome do not have any bias or conflict of interest
- A decision is based only on relevant evidence.

Once a determination has been made by the Student Conduct and Integrity Unit, you will receive an email with an Appeal form to submit.

For more detailed information please see the Student Complaints Procedure.

**Can I escalate this issue further?**
You can lodge a complaint to an external agency at any time. External Agencies include:

**NSW Ombudsman**

**Anti-Discrimination Board**

**Australian Human Rights Commission**

**Independent Commission Against Corruption**

**NSW Police**

Please keep in mind that some external agencies may require you to have lodged an internal complaint first.

**Anything else I should know?**

Here you can discover contacts that can help you with your complaint and the process of making a complaint.

**Student Conduct and Integrity Unit**

The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit can provide information on the complaints process.

Phone: (02) 9385 8515

Email: studentcomplaints@unsw.edu.au

**Educational Support Advisor**

**Educational Support Advisors** are available to provide support in making a complaint, particularly at the informal level.

**Student Advocate**

For independent advice and advocacy, you can contact: Student Advocate at Arc@UNSW (http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/help)

**Administrative matters**

For a course-related complaint talk to your tutor, your lecturer or the course co-ordinator. Alternatively, you could seek advice from your School Grievance Officer or Head of School.

**Postgraduate Research Students**

**The Graduate Research School** is the central administrative and support unit for all higher degree research students and their supervisors at UNSW.

**Personal matters**

**Counselling and Psychological Services** [CAPS] offers individual counselling and support in helping students to find their way at university.
Where can I find the Policies and Procedures?

UNSW's Complaint Handling and related Policies

These two documents provide a framework for the resolution of complaints from UNSW students:

Student Code Policy

Student Complaint Procedure

Useful links

Policy@UNSW

Student Code Policy

Special Consideration – Illness and Misadventure

Academic Standing Rules

Student Complaints and Appeals

Document Version Date 27/05/2020

UNSW CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

https://student.unsw.edu.au/complaint