Chapter 12 Student Complaints / Grievances

Procedures for Resolving Student Grievances

General Guidelines for Making Complaints

The procedures stipulated below are specifically for resolving a complaint which a student may have against staff member(s) of the University or any administrative or academic matters concerning one of the Faculties/School/Academies, teaching departments, offices, units, institutes or centres of the University.

1 **Complaints on Administrative/Academic Matters**

Normally, complaints on administrative or academic (including programme/ course) matters should be directed to the relevant Head of the teaching department, office, unit, institute or centre concerned or Dean of the relevant Faculty/School or Academy Executive (Co-)Director. For details, please refer to the guidelines.

2 **Complaints Concerning Discrimination**

If the complaint or grievance is a matter concerning discriminatory acts handled under the Equal Opportunities Policy (see Chapter 4.6), the matter should be referred to the Equal Opportunities and Disability Access Officer.

3 **Complaints Lodged Directly with the President**

Complaints should only be lodged directly with the President after the complaint has gone through the normal channels and the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigations or the student is able to give reasons why the complaint should not be dealt with via normal channel(s). In both situations, the student should provide clear details including names of both parties, relevant facts, the nature of the complaint and any available evidence to support the investigation. On receipt of a formal complaint, the President may refer the complaint to the Student Affairs Committee. The Committee shall investigate and will normally follow the procedures stated below.

Before the Hearing

3.1 The Chairperson of the Student Affairs Committee shall nominate members of the Hearing Committee in accordance with the

membership composition for approval of the President. To ensure impartiality and accountability, the membership composition of the Hearing Committee is listed below:

Chairperson	Director of Student Affairs or a staff member appointed by the President
Members	a. An Associate Dean from the concerned faculty/school/academy or a senior staff from the concerned unit b. A senior staff from an uninterested unit c. A student representative from an uninterested unit
Secretary	A staff from the Student Affairs Office

3.1.1 In the event that the Chairperson of Student Affairs Committee or his/her Department/Centre/Unit/Office is the party against whom the complaint is made, the President shall decide upon the appropriate action to be taken including the appointment of an alternate Chairperson for the case.

3.1.2 In the event that the Secretary of the Student Affairs Committee is the party against whom the complaint is made, the Chairperson shall decide whether there is a need for the change of the Secretary of the Committee for the case.

3.2 The student(s) shall lodge a complaint in writing and a copy of the statement shall be given to the person(s) against whom the complaint is made.

3.3 All parties shall normally be given not less than five working days' notice of the date, time and venue of the Committee hearing.

3.4 The Hearing Committee shall inform both parties of the proposed composition of the Hearing Committee in writing normally five working days before the Committee hearing. Should any party object to the composition of the Hearing Committee, he or she shall state reasons to the Chairperson in writing at least three working days before the hearing. The Chairperson may decide whether the Hearing Committee composition shall be changed with endorsement from the President.

3.5 Each party shall inform the Hearing Committee in writing of the witness(es)' name(s) who will appear before the Hearing Committee, at least four working days in advance of the hearing. Supporting documents shall be submitted to the Hearing Committee four working days before the hearing.

3.6 The staff member or office(s)/unit(s)/department(s)/centre(s) against whom the complaint is made may submit a written statement to the Hearing Committee in response to the student's/students' complaint at least three working days before the hearing. The Hearing Committee shall decide whether a copy of statement shall be given to the complainant(s).

The Hearing

3.7 Hearings shall be simple but guided by the principle of fairness and impartiality. Normally, both parties are not permitted to bring in legal representation or to involve legal representation at the hearing as the procedure is an internal matter of the University.

3.8 Both parties shall have the right to:

(i) appear before the Hearing Committee;

(ii) present evidence to the Hearing Committee; and

(iii) call witness(es) with the permission of the Hearing Committee.

3.9 Deliberation of the Hearing Committee shall be confidential and held in closed session.

3.10 The Hearing Committee shall hear presentations of all parties concerned, normally without the opposing parties present. After individual/group presentations are heard, the Hearing Committee may need to ask all parties to provide further information for the hearing.

Recommendations by the Hearing Committee

3.11 The Hearing Committee shall complete its inquiry as soon as possible and preferably within one month from the date of its first meeting.

3.12 In case the Hearing Committee cannot come to a unanimous conclusion, all recommendations shall be made by a majority of votes. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

3.13 The decision of the Hearing Committee shall be final and be reported

to the President for approval. Both parties shall be informed of the outcome normally within seven working days of the decision made.

3.14 During all stages of the proceedings, the details of the complaint and the Student Affairs Committee document must be handled by all parties concerned in the strictest confidence.

For enquiries, please contact the Student Affairs Office at 2948 6720.

Equal Opportunities

The University is committed to providing a productive study and work environment which promotes fairness, positive interpersonal attitudes and equal opportunities for all its students and employees. In Hong Kong, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, disability, family status or race in education, employment and other specific fields. Please visit the webpage of Equal Opportunities Campus (http://eocampus.eduhk.hk) to learn more about the Equal Opportunities Policy and relevant resources.

You are welcome to contact the Equal Opportunities and Disability Access Officer at 2948 6012 or eodao@eduhk.hk for information or assistance. The content of such conversation will be treated confidentially.

Assistance for Students with Special Educational Needs

The University is committed to offering appropriate support services to students with special educational needs to enhance their participation in academic activities and campus life. Please visit the website to learn more: https://www.eduhk.hk/sao/en/info/counselling_services/sen/about_us/. For enquiries or assistance, please call 2948 6251 or email to saosen@eduhk.hk.