

Academic Query and Grievance Procedure Guideline

2024



1 Objective

Students are expected and encouraged to make every effort to resolve complaints informally as they arise. Put differently, students should attempt to address matters within the internal structures of the department/school as most matters are solved in this manner. If a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved through this informal process, the complainant may follow the procedure and file the matter as a formal grievance. Formal grievances are the exception and not the norm.

All registered students, including special students, are granted the right and the opportunity to air their grievances without fear of victimization.

The EBSK acknowledges that all students have the need for queries and grievances to be dealt with and, if possible, resolved by means of the following:

- 1.1 opportunities for students to turn to a higher authority should they feel that their queries and grievances were not considered with the required insight or empathy.
- 1.2 this procedure being available to all students.
- 1.3 queries and grievances being dealt with consistently, equitably, and speedily; and
- 1.4 allowing groups who feel aggrieved to lodge their grievances by means of one or two representatives.

2 Clarification

- 2.1 Student: This refers to any individual who is officially registered, including special students, as a student within the Economic Management Sciences (EMS) Faculty.
- 2.2 EBSK representative The member of the EBSK who is responsible for the election, management and monitoring of class representatives and represents students during the grievance procedure.
- 2.3 Administrative queries These are queries related to matters such as the choice of modules, programmes, registration, credits, student fees, etc. These matters should be directed to the Registrar's office.
- 2.4 Query A query can be raised at any time and is usually resolved with little to no effort, not requiring a formal process to be resolved. The majority of queries raised are resolved through communication via the class representative and module lecturer. A query relates to situations of uncertainty where clarity is being sought by students where they are unsure of procedures relating to module expectations or outcomes. Queries usually arise because of miscommunication of information or from the need for more information. The query guideline procedure is outlined in Section 5(1)(2).
- 2.5 Academic grievance: A grievance is significantly more formal than a query and requires intervention from the EBSK and/or faculty

2 Clarification

management to be resolved. Grievances relate to matters of intentional action/inaction where there is certainty/clarity regarding the matter be considered, with need for additional parties for resolution of the matter due to disagreement or an impasse reached. A formal grievance is lodged once an academic grievance form has been filled out subject to Section 5(3)(4)(5) and all avenues have been followed to address the issue according to the query procedure.

2.6 POPIA:

The Protection of Personal Information Act, Act No. 4 of 2013

3. Scope

A. These Procedures may only be used by Students:

1. with a Query or Grievance regarding academic standing during their enrolment in the EMS faculty.
2. about an academic decision made about them by an agent (e.g., faculty or staff member, administrator, committee) of the EMS faculty that directly affects the student.

B. These Procedures may not be used:

1. in dealing with administrative queries.
2. in deciding or appealing issues relating to student discipline under the purview of Stellenbosch University.
3. in resolving any complaint, request, or question involving student records subject to campus procedures; or
4. by applicants for admission or re-admission.

4. Dealing with Grievance and Queries

Members must make use of the following channels and procedures in dealing with grievances and queries. Please note that the appropriate route form must be completed and kept up to date. The request will be referred back if this procedure is not followed.

1. The Query Guideline is outlined in Section 5(1)(2) and the Formal Grievance Procedure is outlined in Section 5(3)(4)(5) below.
2. There is no formal record of a query required unless further escalation is required.
3. All efforts should be made to resolve the query as formal grievances are exceptional.
4. A query can be escalated to formal grievance, subject to the procedure in Section 5(3), once the HOD is contacted, and a grievance form has been filled out.
5. Grievance procedures should be instituted within a month after the grievance occurred.
6. The EBSK Representative must follow up on all grievances lodged within one month after proceedings are instituted.
7. Grievances with pending outcomes should be noted and reported by the Departmental Representatives to the Head of Student Relations on a weekly basis until they are resolved.

Refer to Appendix A, for a visual representation of the phases outlined in the Query and Grievance Procedure.

Phase 1: Query

1.1. During phase one, the student will speak to the lecturer(s) concerned for the resolution of the query.

1.2 Where this is not possible (or the student would prefer anonymity based on the nature of the query), the student must go to the class representative to speak to the lecturer on their behalf.

1.3 If the query is not resolved after the student and/or the class representative has spoken to the lecturer, then the query can be addressed in Phase 2 with the assistance of the EBSK.

Phase 2:

2.1. If the class representative is unsuccessful in resolving the query, then they must contact the EBSK Departmental Representative.

2.2. In the case of a conflict of interest where the Departmental Representative is also enrolled for the class in which the query is lodged, the Head of Student Relations should be approached.

2.3. The EBSK Representative will also email the lecturer to discuss the matter, and if unsuccessful, the HOD will be contacted during Phase 3.

Phase 3: Formal Grievance

3.1 Once the HOD is involved then the query becomes a grievance, and a grievance form must be completed by either the complainant or the class representative on behalf of the student.

3.2 Completion of the academic grievance form is mandatory in this phase.

Phase 4

If the problem remains unresolved, the EBSK Representative and Head of Student Relations will consult the Vice-Dean of Learning and Teaching as empowered assignee of the Dean.

Phase 5

If the problem is still not resolved, the EBSK representative and Head of Student Relations will consult the Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, as a last resort.

6. Grievance records

6.1. A copy of the grievance record should be sent to the EBSK Head of Student Relations at the conclusion of each stage. The Head of Student Relations will be responsible for the recordkeeping of all the grievances filed.

6.2. The complete record of a Grievance will consist of the original Grievance; the record of each formal decision made at each step of the process, recorded on the Grievance Form; and all findings of fact, recommendations, and conclusions of any University administrator. The record will include formal consent of the student for the disclosure of his/her academic results and related information, as and when deemed necessary by the lecturer involved, in order to ensure compliance with POPIA.

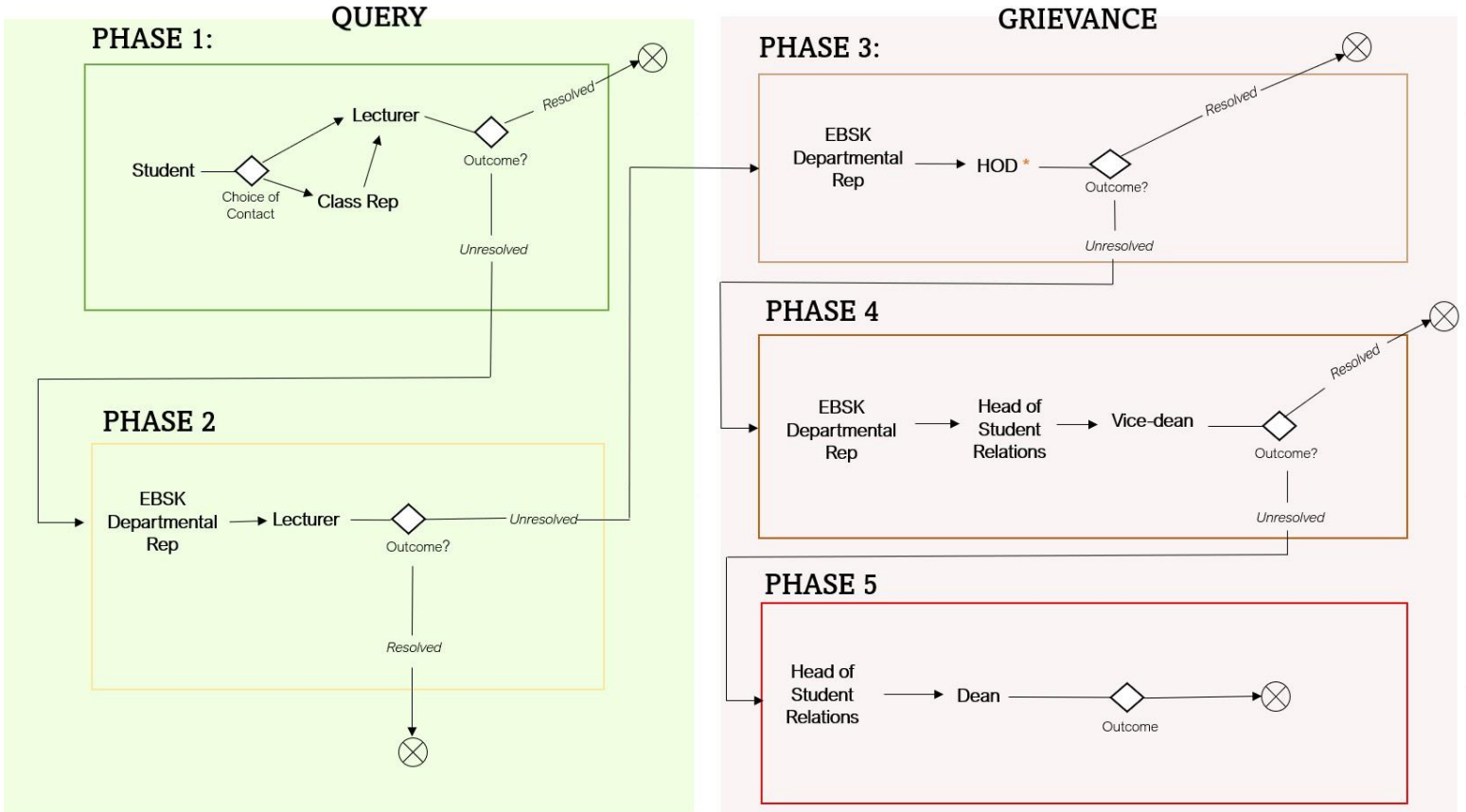
6.3. The record of a Grievance will be preserved in its entirety for at least two (2) years following the final resolution of the Grievance. After two years, maintenance or destruction of Grievance records will be handled in accordance with the policies of the University Archives Department.

6.4. Once the grievance process is complete, the EBSK Head of Student Relations must compile “the complete record of grievance X” and all such grievance records will be kept via email on the ebsk@sun.ac.za mailbox. He/she will also formally inform all parties involved of the outcome and closure of the matter via email.

6.5 All documents which are made a part of the complete record of the Grievance will be accessible to the Grievant for review on written request.

7. Appendices

Appendix A. Visual Representation of Query and Grievance Procedure



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