



Grievance Procedure

Reference number of this document	IR0153
HEMIS classification	
Aim	To grant any employee who has a grievance or problem that has arisen from their employment at Stellenbosch University (SU) the right and the opportunity to lodge their grievance and discuss it with an eye to resolving it, if possible, to mutual satisfaction
Type of document	Procedure
Accessibility	General (external and internal)
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Previous reviews	
Owner of this procedure	Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel
Institutional functionary (curator) responsible for this procedure	Chief Director: Strategic Initiatives and Human Resources
Date of approval	
Approved by	SU Council
Keywords	policy, procedure, provisions

The core of the procedure

A grievance is regarded as any feeling of dissatisfaction that an employee may experience concerning their employer, workplace, colleagues or any other aspect of their employment.

No matter that can be dealt with by means of collective bargaining or consultation (or a combination of the two), no matter related to the outcome of collective bargaining or consultation (or a combination of the two) and no appeal against disciplinary measures or termination of employment **is to be considered a grievance for the purposes of this procedure** and therefore will not be handled with reference to this procedure.

This procedure also does not apply to grievances that have arisen from sexual harassment; Stellenbosch University (SU) handles such grievances with reference to the document **Sexual Harassment: Policy and Procedure for Staff**, which was drafted specifically for that purpose.

1. Introduction

SU accepts that employees who are aggrieved by any aspect of their employment are experiencing a problem, since such grievances directly affect people's job security, job satisfaction and relationships at work.

2. Basic principles of the procedure

- 2.1 All staff members, whatever their post level, are granted **the right and the opportunity** to air their grievances without fear of victimisation.
- 2.2 SU acknowledges that all staff members have the need for grievances to be dealt with and, if possible, resolved by means of the following:
 - 2.2.1 opportunities for staff members to turn to a higher authority should they feel that their grievances were not considered with the required insight or empathy;
 - 2.2.2 free access for staff members to staff meetings for the purposes of advice and support regarding the resolution of grievances;
 - 2.2.3 this procedure being available to all staff members;
 - 2.2.4 grievances being dealt with consistently, equitably and speedily; and
 - 2.2.5 allowing groups who feel aggrieved to lodge their grievances by means of one or two representatives.

3. Aim of the procedure

The aim of this procedure is to offer all staff members the following:

- 3.1 a formal channel for bringing their grievances to the attention of their immediate superiors or, if necessary, a higher authority;

- 3.2 a procedure for handling and resolving grievances at the earliest opportunity possible; and
- 3.3 a procedure for resolving grievances as equitably as possible in the circumstances.

4. Procedural steps

All periods indicated below are the maximum time allowed for the relevant step in the procedure for resolving grievances, unless a different arrangement has been made with the employee concerned.

If the grievance is resolved at some point in the process, this must be recorded in the minutes and signed by both parties. If the process fails to produce a resolution, the minutes just need to state this. Both parties must receive a copy of the minutes. Annexure 1 contains documentation in this regard.

Step 1

SU staff members who have a grievance must lodge it firstly by completing paragraphs 1 to 3 of Annexure 1 and submit it with their **immediate superior** (or with the person designated by the superior to handle grievances in his or her absence). However, if the grievance is about the immediate superior concerned or their delegate, or about a person at a higher level of seniority than the immediate superior concerned or their delegate, the aggrieved person must lodge the grievance at such higher level. The person with whom the grievance was lodged must perform the following tasks during the grievance interview to the best of their abilities but within their delegated powers:

- a. Listen in private to the staff member's case.
- b. Encourage the staff member to put their case openly and honestly.
- c. Obtain all facts about the grievance and differentiate between facts and opinions.

The person with whom the grievance was lodged must try to resolve it as speedily as possible, but at least within five working days after the grievance has been lodged in writing, unless a different arrangement has been made with the employee concerned.

The person with whom the grievance was lodged must complete and sign the applicable section of Annexure 1 and have the aggrieved person sign it, too.

The aggrieved person may be assisted or accompanied by a fellow staff member of their choice.

Step 2

If the **immediate superior** (or their delegate, in their absence) fails to resolve the grievance or if the grievance concerned was about the staff member's immediate superior or their delegate, or about a person at the same or a higher level of seniority than the immediate superior concerned or their delegate, the staff member may refer the matter in writing to the next **higher managerial level** with notification to their immediate superior or their delegate.

The higher-level manager must try to resolve the grievance as speedily as possible, but no longer than five working days after the grievance has been referred in writing, unless a different arrangement has been made with the employee concerned. The outcome of step 2 must also be documented in Annexure 1 and signed.

The aggrieved person may be assisted or accompanied by a fellow staff member of their choice.

Step 3

If no agreement has been reached by this stage, or if the grievance is about a person at a higher level of seniority than the staff member's immediate superior or their delegate, the grievance must be referred to the **third managerial level**.

The third-level manager must try to settle the grievance within five working days after it has been referred, unless a different arrangement has been made with the employee concerned. The outcome of step 3 must also be documented in Annexure 1 and signed.

The aggrieved person may be assisted or accompanied by a fellow staff member of their choice.

At this point the third-level manager or the aggrieved person may appeal to the Division of Human Resources (HR) for assistance in the form of mediation.

Step 4

If the grievance cannot be resolved at third-level management to the aggrieved person's satisfaction, or if the grievance is about a person at third-level management, the manager or the employee must refer it in writing for resolution to the vice-rector who oversees the division concerned. In the case of a division that reports directly to the Rector, grievances must be referred for resolution to the person that the Rector has designated for this purpose.

The vice-rector concerned or the person that the Rector has designated must try to resolve the grievance as speedily as possible, but no longer than ten working days after the grievance has been referred in writing, unless a different arrangement has been made with the employee concerned. The outcome of step 4 must also be documented in Annexure 1 and signed.

The aggrieved person may be assisted or accompanied by a fellow staff member of their choice.

At this point the internal procedure is concluded.

SU requires grievances to be recorded as grievances at the University. In this regard SU requires both the aggrieved person and the line manager concerned to report the grievance to HR by sending a copy of the document(s) used to lodge the grievance to the Director: Employee Relations.

5. Supporting documents

Item no.	Name of document	Status <i>(e.g. identified, in process or approved)</i>
	None	

6. Related documents

Item no.	Name of document	Status <i>(e.g. identified, in process or approved)</i>
	Annexures 1, 2 and 3	Identified

MINUTES OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Personal particulars of aggrieved person(s)

Name and surname _____

Environment/Department/Division _____

Short description or summary of the reason for the grievance:

Desired outcome:

1. Level at which the grievance was lodged initially: Step 1

2. Level at which the grievance was resolved: Step 2

3. Recommendation or agreement according to which the grievance was handled or resolved

OR:

Brief summary of the reasons why the grievance could not be handled or resolved at this level (if applicable):

The grievance was referred for the next step in the procedure.

Signature(s) of aggrieved person(s)

Date

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Signature of line manager or mediator

Date

MINUTES OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: Step 2

Personal particulars of aggrieved person(s)

Name and surname _____

Environment/Department/Division _____

Short description or summary of the reasons why the grievance could not be handled or resolved at the previous level, but was referred for the next step:

Desired outcome at this level and the extent to which it must resolve the grievance(s):

The grievance was referred for the next step in the procedure.

Signature(s) of aggrieved person(s)

Date

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Signature of line manager or mediator

Date

If the grievance could not be resolved at this level, the internal process is regarded as concluded, leaving the aggrieved person(s) free to take the matter further outside the University.

Annexure 3

	Date lodged or referred	Date resolved or referred for the next step	Signature of aggrieved person	Job title, name and surname of the person who has handled the grievance	Name of the person against whom the grievance was lodged	Signature of the person handling the grievance
Step 1						
Step 2						
Step 3						
Step 4						