



Grievance Policy and Procedure

It is the organisation's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. The organisation will try to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.

If employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage. It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the grievance hearing(s).

Procedure

Informal stage

If you have a grievance about your employment you should discuss it informally with your immediate manager. Your immediate manager will attempt to resolve this matter informally. Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to your immediate manager. You will receive a reply within five working days and a meeting will be arranged. You, any relevant witnesses and the manager will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official. The manager will give a response within five working days of the meeting and will inform the employee of the appeals procedure.

Stage 2 - Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the manager's response, you may appeal, in writing, to the relevant manager. Where possible the appeal should be dealt with by a manager who is impartial and has not been previously involved in the grievance. A meeting will be arranged, constituted as in Stage 1. The manager will give a response within five working days of the meeting. This decision will be final.

Investigations

The organisation is committed to ensuring that all grievances are investigated fully. This may involve carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and managers, as well as analysing written records and information. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

Notes: You may raise a complaint directly with a senior manager if it:

- concerns your immediate manager
- is of too personal or sensitive a nature to raise with your immediate manager.
- complaints concerning discrimination, bullying or harassment by your immediate manager (this may be done informally or formally, i.e. at Stage 2 of the procedure)

If your complaint concerns an alleged wrong doing or criminal offence by someone within the organisation, you should raise it immediately with a director, i.e. at Stage 3 of the procedure. See the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (known as the Whistle-blowers' Act) for details of the additional protection available for protected disclosures.

The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of a manager during the course of a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with a senior manager. The disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period if necessary until the grievance can be considered.

Employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from doing so. If your grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith, however, you will be subject to the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

A second management representative from another function may be invited to attend formal grievance meetings to act as a witness and note-taker.

The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Where there are good reasons, e.g. the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.

The organisation reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure.

For senior managers/directors and employees during their first year of employment, the organisation reserves the right to speed up the decision-making process and may choose to follow a shortened version of the above procedure.

This procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of employees' contractual rights. The contents may be subject to revision from time to time.

NB: The Capability policy should not be used in cases of misconduct. The disciplinary policy is the correct policy to use in these circumstances.