

## **Grievance & Appeals Procedure**

**Document Date:** January 2022  
**Purpose:** To set out the procedure staff should follow if they wish to raise a complaint about their employment or appeal a decision that has been made in connection with the outcome of a grievance or disciplinary sanction.  
**Audience:** Permanent and casual staff

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 All employees are covered by this policy, which helps Royal Holloway Students' Union ensure that complaints, concerns, and problems to do with employment are dealt with fairly and consistently. It does not form part of your employment contract but applies regardless of how long you have worked for us.
- 1.2 We reserve the right to amend this policy at any time, or to depart from it, depending on the conditions of each case.
- 1.3 You should only use this procedure to raise a grievance connected with your employment. If a complaint is made against you it will be dealt with under our Disciplinary & Capability Procedure
- 1.4 We also have separate policies covering:
- harassment and bullying (Dignity At Work Policy)
  - whistleblowing (Whistleblowing Policy)

### **2. Taking informal action**

- 2.1 If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with, we strongly encourage you to start by talking it over with your line manager to see if it can be resolved informally.
- 2.2 If your grievance is about your manager, or you do not want to raise it with them for some other reason, you should instead notify a senior manager or someone from the HR team [suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk).
- 2.3 If the informal approach does not resolve your problem, or if the matter is serious and you wish to raise the matter formally, you should refer to the formal action section of this procedure.

### **3. Taking formal action: First stage / Submitting a formal grievance**

- 3.1 You will need to set out the details of your complaint in writing. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive. You should include as much specific detail as possible and, where possible, include dates, names of individuals involved and any other relevant facts or evidence. Please also tell us clearly that you want to lodge a formal grievance.

3.2 You will also need to explain clearly what resolution you are seeking. For example, if it is a policy change you are seeking – tell us.

3.3 You should email your grievance to [suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk).

3.4 To ensure our investigation is fair and thorough, your full cooperation will be expected. How we investigate will depend on the nature of your grievance. We will usually meet with you to seek further information and clarification. We may also need to interview others.

#### **4. Taking formal action: Second stage / Attending a grievance hearing**

4.1 We will invite you to a meeting, usually within ten working days of you lodging your grievance. The meeting is your opportunity to explain your problem and how you think we should resolve it, and we ask that you make every effort to attend.

4.2 You can bring somebody with you to the meeting. This will typically be a work colleague (full details in paragraph 6 below). You must let us know as soon as possible if either you or your companion is unable to attend the meeting and we will try to reschedule.

4.3 We may record the meeting for notetaking purposes, but we will not do so without telling you. You are also invited to record the meeting if you wish, but please tell us as we would consider it discourteous to the managers involved for you to make a covert recording.

4.4 After the meeting, we will take any investigative steps that we consider appropriate. Sometimes this will involve looking at documents, or interviewing other people. We will not allow you to participate in this part of the investigation (for example, you will not be allowed to question other people directly). Sometimes, we may ask you for more information or for another meeting.

4.5 We will keep written records of what takes place during the grievance procedure, including summary notes from meetings.

4.6 Where possible, we will tell you our decision, and let you know if we plan to take any action to address your grievance, within 10 working days of the final investigation meeting. It is our responsibility to protect personal information which means that it is unlikely that you will be made aware of what specific action has been taken.

#### **5. Taking formal action: Third stage / Appealing the decision**

5.1 You can appeal in writing within 10 working days of us giving you our decision. You should address your appeal to [suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:suhrteam@su.rhul.ac.uk) and you must explain clearly why you are appealing. You should also give us any new evidence you may have acquired since the initial investigation was completed.

5.2 We will invite you to a meeting, usually within 10 working days of you lodging your appeal. Wherever possible, the appeal meeting will not be led by the manager who held the original grievance meeting. You may be accompanied by a work colleague, in line with the process outlined in paragraph 6 below.

5.3 The final decision will be sent to you in writing. We try to do this within 10 working days of the appeal hearing. You do not have any further right to appeal against our decision.

## **6. Your right to be accompanied**

6.1 You are entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague at any meeting called under this policy.

6.2 If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work causes operational problems.

6.3 Your colleague can, if this is your preference, explain the key points of your grievance to the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meetings. They must not, however, answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent the hearing manager from asking questions or outlining their views.

## **7. Mediation**

7.1 In certain circumstances it may be helpful if mediation is used to try to resolve issues.

7.2 Mediation can be used at any stage of the Grievance Procedure.

7.3 Mediation involves an independent, impartial person working with both sides to find a solution. The mediator may be someone from within the organisation or someone who is external.

7.4 Both parties need to agree to mediation before this course of action progresses.