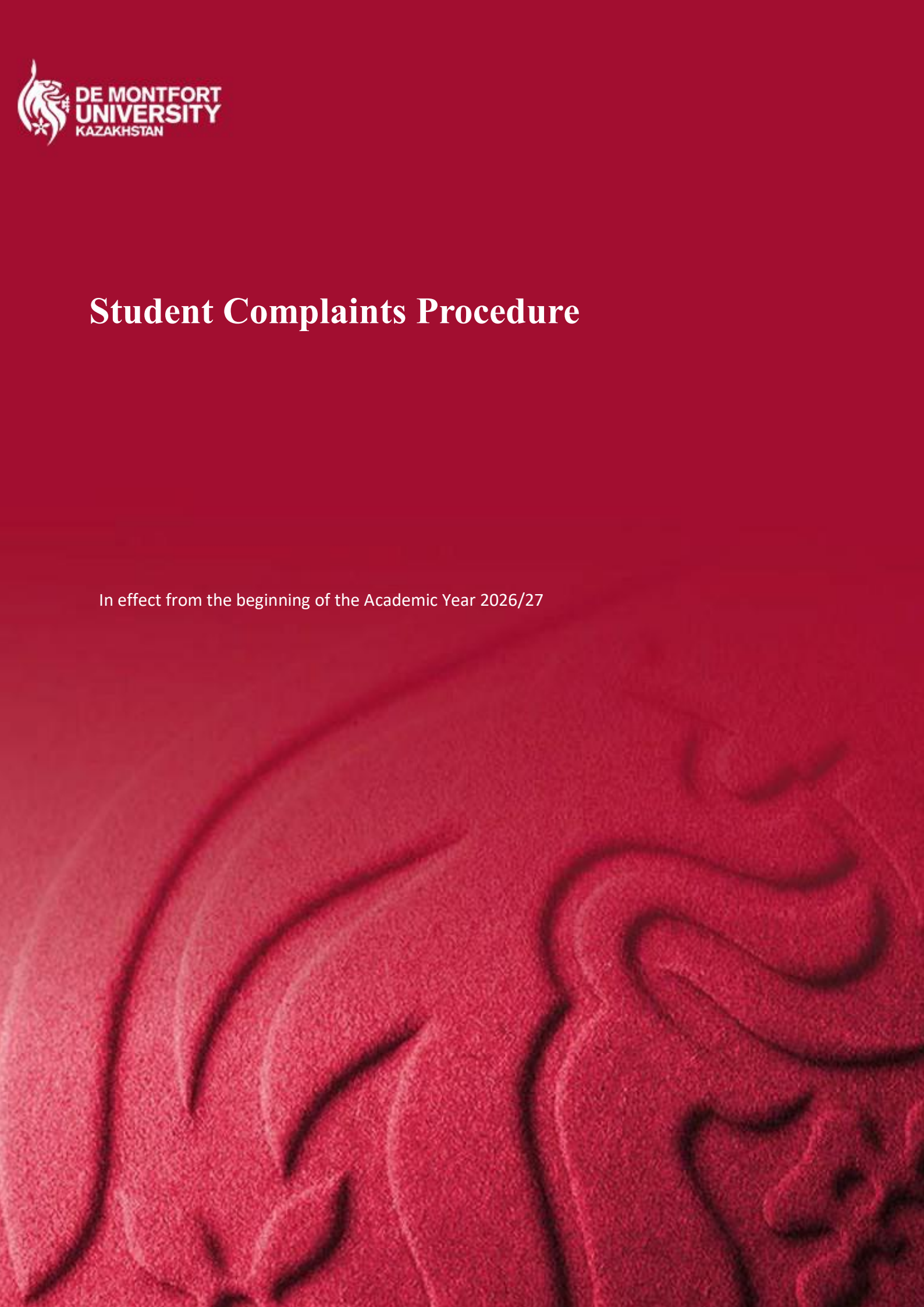
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY KAZAKHSTAN

Student Complaints Procedure

In effect from the beginning of the Academic Year 2026/27



Contents:

1. Introduction 3
2. Scope 3
3. Responsibilities 4
4. What will not be dealt with under the SCP 4
5. Complaints relating to behaviour by staff and students 5
6. Where a complaint falls into one or more policies 5
7. Third-party complaints 6
8. Anonymous and confidential complaints 6
9. Group complaints 7
10. Frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints 7
11. Timescales for making complaints 8
12. Focus on Early Resolution 8
13. What students can expect from the process 9
14. What the University asks of Students 10
15. Confidentiality 10
16. Dignity and Respect 11
17. The three stages of the SCP 11
18. Grounds for escalation 12
19. Mediation 12
20. Making a complaint 13
21. Stage 1 – Early Resolution 13
22. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint 14
23. Stage 3 – Review 16
24. Monitoring and review 17
25. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 17
26. Related policies and standards/documentation 17
27. Appendices 18
28. Document and version control information

1 Introduction

1.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about something a provider has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.

A complaint may relate, but is not limited to:

- the quality and standard of service provided by the University, including teaching and learning provision.
- failure to provide a service as advertised or reasonably expected.
- unsuitable facilities or learning resources.
- failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative or academic process

1.2 The University recognises the importance of effective complaints management as both a tool and a source of information for service improvement. The University recognises the right of current Students and recent Alumni to raise concerns about the services it provides.

1.3 The Student Complaints Procedure should be read in conjunction with the other University's statements and policies which might apply to the concern the students wish to raise.

2 Scope

2.1 All students of the University can use the Student Complaints Procedure (SCP).

2.2 All complaints must be raised within three months of the concern arising.

2.3 Alumni at the University can use the SCP to raise complaints once they have graduated, but the matter being raised must have occurred within three months of the complaint being submitted.

2.4 It is recognised that any complaints procedure needs to be flexible as well as consistent, to respond to the many different issues which arise

3 Responsibilities

Academic Committee

3.1 The Academic Committee is responsible for ensuring the Student Complaints Procedure is in line with the Student Development Services and the Academic

Staff.

3.2 Academic Director and Heads of Academic Departments and Head of Student Development Services have a day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring all students and recent students at the University are supported in raising complaints about something the University has or has not done.

Students

3.3 Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and raising complaints promptly and supported by appropriate evidence.

Consequences of Non-compliance

3.4 Failure to act in accordance with this policy or to comply with any arrangements put in place to receive, investigate, monitor and respond to a student complaint will be considered a serious matter. It shall be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure for students and staff.

3.5 If a student has any concerns about a potential breach of this policy, a report of their concerns should be submitted initially and without delay to the Academic Director and Student Development Services team, who will allocate it to an appropriate member of staff to investigate.

4 What will not be dealt with under the SCP

4.1 Academic appeals or other matters that relate to Assessment Board decisions. Appeals against Assessment Board decisions are managed by the Academic Quality Services team. They are handled under a separate appeals procedure set out in the General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students. Any complaint made under the SCP that appears to be an academic appeal will be referred to the Academic Quality Services team for consideration. If you require further information about the academic appeals procedure, please contact aqs@dmuk.edu.kz, and the team will assist you.

4.2 Complaints about University Policies will not be accepted unless there is one or more elements to the policy that are evidently detrimental to many students. Feedback on policies is welcome and should be sent to sds@dmuk.edu.kz in the first instance. Feedback will be taken into account at the next policy review point.

5 Complaints relating to behaviour by staff and students

5.1 Concerns around a staff member's behaviour should be raised promptly with an appropriate staff member within the faculty, i.e. a Personal Tutor, to support, where possible and appropriate, an informal resolution. Where this is not appropriate and/or a student remains dissatisfied with the informal resolution, they may raise a formal complaint by contacting the Student Development Services team or submitting the appropriate form, available on the University Website or Student Portal.

5.2 The complaint will be shared with the relevant Head of the Department with responsibility for responding to the complaint. The relevant Head of the Department will review the complaint and undertake any necessary investigations before providing a written outcome.

5.3 Allegations of sexual misconduct and harassment can be reported using the same form. These complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Sexual Misconduct and Assessment Policy and potentially referred to a Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy.

6 Where a complaint falls into one or more policies

6.1 If a student raises a complaint or appeal which does not fall neatly into the category of either a complaint or an appeal, or if the concern contains issues of complaint and an appeal, the Student Development Services team will advise the student which issues will be looked at under which procedure. This will be irrespective of the procedure the students used to formally raise their concerns.

6.2 A student's concern may be managed under an alternative procedure if that is appropriate. The University may consider all matters together, particularly if the findings of a complaint are likely to influence an appeal decision. The student will be advised of any implications of following both procedures simultaneously, and we may suspend one procedure pending the outcome of the other.

7 Third-party complaints

7.1 The University expects students to engage directly with the University when raising complaints. Complaints made by third parties on behalf of a student will not usually be accepted unless there are valid reasons why a student is unable to engage. The University will make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with a disability have an equitable opportunity to engage with university processes.

8 Anonymous and confidential complaints

8.1 The University will not respond to anonymous complaints. Still, issues raised in anonymous complaints may be investigated if, at the University's discretion, such investigations are justified. The University may also use anonymous complaints to help inform its practice. The University does, however, recognise that students may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In such cases, the Student Development Services will try to resolve the issue without disclosing the student's identity. It must be borne in mind that:

- It may be difficult to investigate complaints without revealing the identity of the student.
- It may be possible to make preliminary investigations without revealing the identity of the student, but if the allegations are serious or the case is complex, the student may need to be identified if the case is to be pursued further. In such instances, the Student Development Services will discuss the situation with the student before the case proceeds.
- The person or department which is the subject of a complaint may recognise the student because of the issues or allegations raised.

8.2 No Student will suffer reprisals, academic or otherwise, for making a complaint.

9 Group complaints

9.1 Should a group of students have a complaint, the students can submit a collective complaint and nominate one student as their representative in pursuing the complaint, provided that all students provide their personal consent under the requirements of the Data Protection policy and confirm the accuracy of any evidence and information submitted to support their complaint. If a student does not provide personal consent, they will not be included in the investigation or resolution of the collective complaint. When a complaint is submitted and investigated collectively, the group will receive a collective response. Outcomes for group complaints cannot be tailored for individual students. If a student seeks an individual outcome, an individual complaint must be submitted.

9.2 The University does not accept petitions or complaints posted on social media as complaints under the Student Complaint Procedure. All concerns must be submitted via the complaints process as outlined in these regulations. See the Student Social Media policy for guidelines on sharing views on social media.

9.3 When investigating certain types of complaints, it may be that the investigation can only be progressed if the student or students, and not solely their representative, participate in an investigatory meeting.

10 Frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints

10.1 The University reserves the right to decline to investigate a complaint at any stage of the procedures if it considers that the complaint is being presented in an unreasonable or unfair way or is having a negative impact on university staff. The Student Development Services may ask to stop, present their complaint in a more reasonable manner, or behave differently.

10.2 Should the student's complaint is determined to be trivial, if it is being pursued in such a way that it is having a seriously negative effect on staff or the university, or if the student is seeking a remedy that lacks any serious purpose or value the complaint will be closed and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken if the student is found to have breached the Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy.

11 Timescales for making complaints

11.1 All stages of the process have a timeline and deadlines, but with the flexibility for the student or the University to request an extension to those deadlines where there is a good reason to do so, for example, changes in workload for either party that could not have previously been foreseen.

11.2 Complaints should be raised at the Early Resolution stage within three months of the matter becoming apparent.

11.3 The University will endeavour to provide an outcome to the Early Resolution complaint within 15 working days of the complaint having been received. Once an outcome has been provided at the Early Resolution stage, a student or their representative, in cases where a student is unable to present their case themselves, has 10 University working days to escalate their complaint to a Formal Complaint, together with supporting evidence.

11.4 The University will endeavour to provide an outcome to the Formal complaint within 15 University working days. Following communication of the written outcome of the Formal Complaint, the student or their representative, in cases where students cannot present their case themselves, has 10 University working days to escalate their complaint for a Review, stating the grounds for progressing to a Review.

11.5 International students must make themselves aware of immigration implications should consideration of their complaint extend beyond their permission to stay. A student would not typically be required to be present at the University for a complaint to be investigated, though participation in an investigatory online interview or other means may be necessary.

12 Focus on Early Resolution

12.1 The University is committed to providing a high-quality service to our students throughout their courses of study to graduation and beyond as part of the DMU global community. The University actively encourages feedback on all aspects of the teaching and learning experience and other services provided by the University. However, there may be occasions when the level of service received falls short of that which might reasonably be expected.

12.2 The aims of the Student Complaints Procedure are:

- to resolve complaints in a timely, effective and fair manner.
- to resolve complaints in the area in which they arise.
- to improve service delivery and the student experience.

12.3 Options for early resolution, such as mediation (facilitated discussion), see section 8, should be considered wherever possible. A fair and thorough investigation of formal complaints will be undertaken when necessary.

12.4 The University is committed to providing an inclusive environment. No person (student, staff or visitor) shall be unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, age, disability, religious or political beliefs, disability, economic situation or offending background. No person shall be discriminated against or adversely affected for making a complaint.

13 What students can expect from the process

13.1 The purpose of the SCP is to provide students and alumni with a clear, consistent and transparent method of raising concerns and complaints, to resolve conflicts, and to bring about change when appropriate.

13.2 The University will ensure that students are not disadvantaged either academically or personally if they choose to raise a complaint. The University understands the importance of trust and confidence that all parties must have in this process. Any student raising a complaint may continue their studies whilst the complaints procedure is conducted. If a student believes they are being disadvantaged for raising a legitimate complaint, they should contact the Student Development Services team.

13.3 At each stage of the procedure, the University will endeavour to find a solution to the issues raised that is mutually acceptable for all parties concerned. This will not always be possible, and students may not agree with the resolution that is offered.

13.4 The University offers students a three-stage procedure for raising complaints, and there must be clear grounds for escalation at each stage.

13.5 At each stage, the student will be given an outcome of their complaint. A mutually appropriate resolution may be found, the complaint may be upheld, and reparation made, or the complaint will be dismissed. At each stage, the students will be given information on how to escalate their complaint and the grounds on which they can do so.

14 What the University asks of Students

14.1 The University expects students to engage directly with the University when raising complaints. Complaints made by third parties on behalf of a student will not usually be accepted unless there are valid reasons why a student is unable to engage, see paragraph 14 of this chapter.

14.2 The University actively encourages students to raise any low-level concerns initially by talking to a member of the University community, see paragraph 9.1 of this chapter.

14.3 When submitting a complaint, students are asked to clearly state the issue of their concern and what outcome is being sought. Students must also provide supporting evidence to assist the University in investigating complaints. It is important that students submit their concerns as clearly and accurately as possible to assist in an early outcome.

15 Confidentiality

The University aims to manage student complaints confidentially. Only a limited number of people will need to know the details of the complaint for it to be investigated. Depending on the stage of the Student Complaints Procedure, these people will include staff who administer and manage the complaint, who undertake the investigation, are named in the complaint or are witnesses to the matters it raises, or who are asked to review a complaint outcome at the final stage of the procedures.

16 Dignity and Respect

All students and staff engaging in the Student Complaints Procedure must behave with dignity and respect for each other. The process may be halted where unreasonable behaviours occur. The University may make use of the Student Misconduct and the Disciplinary Policy where behaviours constitute misconduct.

17 The three stages of the SCP

17.1 The SCP is intended to provide a streamlined process with a focus on local resolution. Students are expected to complete each stage of the process before escalating to the next if they have grounds to do so. The SCP has three stages.

17.2 Early Resolution is the stage where most concerns should be resolved swiftly and effectively, at the point at which a complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible. Early Resolution can be used for difficult interpersonal matters, where strategies such as mediation may be beneficial.

17.3 Formal Complaints are investigated by the Student Development Services team when a student wishes to escalate their complaint.

17.4 The final stage of the SCP is a Review by a Senior Management Team of the university, which has not previously been involved in the case. A Review is an analysis of the Formal Complaint decision, not a rehearing of the original complaint. The Senior Management Team can review the complaint outcome under the grounds outlined in this policy.

17.5 While there are three clear stages in the procedure, the people involved in the complaint may resolve matters informally at any point in any stage, with active engagement by the students and relevant others, prior to the final complaint outcome for that Stage being communicated to the student

17.6 This Procedure sets out the expected timescales for each stage of the process. We will always let you know if we are unable to meet the published timescale, and why.

18 Grounds for escalation

18.1 Students may escalate their complaint from Early Resolution to Formal Review if they are dissatisfied with the decision made on the grounds stated below:

- The complaint procedure was not followed correctly.
- New information that was not available earlier in the process can now be provided by the student.
- The outcome is wholly inappropriate based on the evidence provided.

18.2 The University recognises that students will not always be satisfied with the outcome of a complaint. The University will always investigate a complaint and ensure that the procedures are followed correctly and impartially, provided the grounds for the complaint are met.

18.3 All parties involved in the investigation and determination of the outcome of a complaint will be offered appropriate support by the University, through services established to enable the University to meet its duty of care towards Staff and Students. For students, the support services include:

- DMUK Wellbeing support
- Student Development Services team
- Academic Tutors

19 Mediation

19.1 Mediation can be undertaken at the Early Resolution and Formal Complaint stages of the SCP. This is a voluntary process in which an impartial, independent third party helps try to reach an agreement.

19.2 The parties to mediation follow a series of agreed steps. In mediation, the parties to the dispute, not the mediator, decide whether they can resolve the complaint and on what basis. Where all parties agree to mediation at the Formal Complaint stage of the SCP, revised timescales for the Formal Complaint will be agreed. If the resolution at the Formal Complaint stage is not acceptable to the student, they can request that it be escalated to the Review stage on one or more of the grounds listed above

20 Making a complaint

20.1 The University actively encourages students to raise any low-level concerns initially by talking to a member of the University community. That could be their Student Services Team, Programme Lead, Personal Tutor or another appropriate member of staff. Low-level concerns could be

- Access to a workspace
- Confirmation of deadlines
- Options available in the canteen

20.2 Students are encouraged to try to resolve their concerns independently, utilising the support services that the University can offer

20.3 If concerns are not resolved satisfactorily or it is not appropriate to try and resolve the issue informally, students can submit an Early Resolution Form found on our website or Student Portal.

20.4 Students will be expected to engage personally with the University when raising a complaint.

20.5 The **burden of proof** shall always be on the student; this means that the student must provide all the evidence they have to support the complaint they are making.

21 Stage 1 – Early Resolution

21.1 The Early Resolution Form once submitted, it will be forwarded by email to the Student Development Services team. If the concern involves multiple issues, the Head of the Student Development team will refer the complaint to the appropriate area and ensure that all communication with the student is collated.

21.2 Early Resolution is designed to address straightforward concerns informally, locally and expediently. The Student Development Service team may speak with the student to gather more details about their case or ask a relevant member of staff to work directly with the student.

21.3 The response to the student must be supported by a written outcome, which will be sent by the Student Development team. If mediation is required at the Early Resolution stage, the Student Development team will facilitate this with the Student Development Services team.

21.4 The aim at the Early Resolution stage is to reach a mutually agreeable outcome before the concern escalates to the Formal stage. Mediation can be requested by either the University or the student at this stage. Examples of how the University may deal with Student concerns at Early Resolution could be:

- Being empathetic and understanding
- Apologising where it is appropriate to do so
- Actively listening to the Student voice
- Clarifying reasons why decisions have been made
- Suggesting solutions
- Referral to mediation

21.5 In exceptional circumstances, complaints may be dealt with at the Formal Complaint stage without going through Early Resolution. A senior member of the University will decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to start a complaint at the Formal Complaint stage. The decision of this senior member of staff is final.

21.6 The University is committed to resolving concerns in a mutually beneficial way. The University acknowledges that the outcome for the student may not always be as anticipated, but will endeavour to provide a rationale for its decision-making. A Student may progress their complaint to the Formal Stage if they believe:

- The Early Resolution process has not been followed correctly,
- There is evidence now available that was not available previously.

21.7 Students can escalate the complaint to a Formal Complaint using the form found on our Academic Support webpages.

22 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

22.1 Each complaint that is escalated by a student to the Formal stage will be assessed on a case-by-case basis upon receipt in the Student Development Services team. The assessment will involve checking that the complaint has been submitted within the published timelines, using the right procedure, and in the correct format. This will result in one of the following outcomes:

- Referral to a different procedure (for example, to the Academic Appeals process)
- Rejection of the complaint (for example, due to lateness of submission or the grounds for escalation have not been met)

- Referral to Early Resolution (for example, if this stage has not been attempted)
- Referral to mediation (for example, where this will more likely result in swift and mutual agreement) and can be requested by the student or the University
- Referral to formal investigation by the Student Development Services (or their designated nominees)

22.2 The Formal Complaint stage does not allow for additional complaints to be added that have not previously been raised at the Early Resolution Stage.

22.3 If the University decides that a complaint is out of time or otherwise ineligible to be dealt with at the Formal Complaint stage of the SCP, the University will inform the student in writing within one month of its decision with a clear explanation of the reasons for the decision. The University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter, and the matter will be deemed closed.

22.4 If a complaint is deemed to be eligible for further investigation as a Formal Complaint, it will be allocated to a member of staff who has had no previous involvement in the matter to investigate. The staff member who has been allocated the complaint may contact the student, either face-to-face or by telephone, MS Teams, or another remote method, to confirm the purpose and scope of their investigation and manage expectations about possible outcomes.

22.5 The staff member may talk to staff and other students and consider documents and other relevant evidence. The outcome of this investigation will be communicated to the student normally no later than one calendar month from receiving the complaint, which outlines the process followed, the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any other recommendations

22.6 There may be times when this time scale cannot be met, for example, due to the complexity of the complaint, and the staff member will inform the student of the reason for the delay and the revised timescale. However, the University will make every effort to adhere to the stated timescale.

22.7 The University will write to the student with the outcome of the Formal Complaint, explaining the reasons for the outcome and providing evidence used in the decision-making process.

22.8 If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Formal Complaint but does not have grounds on which to escalate their complaint to the Review Stage,

23 Stage 3 – Review

23.1 If a student believes:

- the Formal Complaint process has not been followed correctly, or
- There is evidence now available that was not available previously; they can request to escalate the complaint for Review.

23.2 The Review form must be received by the University within 10 working days of the student receiving the Formal Complaint outcome. Students must identify the ground(s) on which they are making the complaint (as set out above). In addition, students must provide evidence in support of their case. Where evidence was not provided in support of their Formal Stage complaint, students must explain why this evidence was not available previously.

23.3 On receipt of a request for a Review, the Student Development Services team will undertake an initial assessment to check that the complaint is submitted within the appropriate deadlines, meets the grounds for stage 3 Review and is in the required format with supporting evidence.

23.4 A complaint without adequate grounds and evidence will be dismissed within 10 university working days of its being received.

23.5 If the Review Request is accepted, it will refer to a Senior Management Team of the University that has not had any previous involvement in the matter being complained about. The Review Stage does not allow additional complaints to be added for review that were not previously raised at the Formal Stage.

23.6 The Review stage will not usually consider matters afresh or involve further investigation, but if new evidence is submitted and accepted, additional investigation may be required.

23.7 If the Review is successful and the Formal Stage decision amended, the student will receive a written explanation of the decision within 15 university working days of the Review Request being received.

23.8 If the Review is unsuccessful and the Formal Stage decision is confirmed, the student will receive a Completion of Procedures letter.

24 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed, monitored, and kept up to date by the Student Development Services team.

25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This policy is underpinned by DMUK's commitment to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and equitable environment where all individuals are valued, treated with dignity, and feel safe and supported to be able to study and work to their full potential. It aims to protect students from unacceptable behaviour by other students.

26 Related policies and standards/documentation

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy, as many relate to student and staff conduct.

- The General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students contains all general rules and regulations that apply to all DMU students.
- The Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy explains what action will be taken when reports of alleged sexual misconduct are received by the University.
- The Dignity and Respect Policy sets out expectations for students behaviors
- The No Space for Hate Policy aims to ensure students and visitors are able to challenge behaviour which does not respect the rights and dignity of others and to raise genuine complaints about hate, harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.
- The Unacceptable Behaviour Policy explains DMU's commitment to providing a fair, consistent and accessible service and outlines the actions that will be taken when unacceptable behaviours are demonstrated.

27 Appendices

The University will endeavour to adhere to the published timelines, but there may be occasions when this is not possible. The University will inform Students of any delays in the process.

Stage 1: Early Resolution

University Response Timeline	Considerations made	Outcome
Outcome sent to the student within 15 working days of receipt. *	What specifically is the complaint about, and which area(s) of the University are involved? What outcome is the student hoping to achieve? Is the complaint straightforward and likely to be resolved or responded to with minimal investigation or by using an existing University policy? Can another member of staff assist in seeking an informal resolution if I am not in a position to do so? What assistance or support can be provided to the student in taking this forward? Should the Student Development Services team (or their nominee) be asked if mediation might be appropriate in this case?	Either: Complaint upheld/partially upheld and remedy offered Or Complaint dismissed with an explanation why The student will be informed of the outcome in writing via email (including how to escalate to the Formal Complaint stage, and on what permissible grounds)

Student Response timeline – 10 working days from receipt of outcome in writing; after this time the complaint will be closed by the University

Stage 2: Formal Complaint and Investigation by the Student Development Services Officer

University Response Timeline	Considerations made	Outcome

Outcome sent to the student within 15 working days of receipt.	What are the specific key elements of the complaint? Why was Local Resolution at Stage 1 unsuccessful? Was any potential solution offered? What does the student seek to achieve by escalating the complaint to Stage 2? Do the students' expectations appear to be reasonable and achievable? Should the Student Development Services team be asked if mediation might be appropriate in this case?	Either: Complaint upheld/partially upheld and remedy offered Or Complaint dismissed with an explanation why The students will be informed of the outcome in writing via email (including how to escalate to the Review stage and on what permissible grounds)

Student Response timeline – 10 working days from receipt of outcome in writing; after this time, the complaint will be closed by the University

Stage 3: Review by a Senior Management Team of University Staff

University Response Timeline	**Consideration made**	**Outcome**
Outcome sent to the student within 15 working days of receipt.	Was there evidence of procedural irregularity at stage 2? What new evidence is available that was not available at stage 2? Would mediation be appropriate?	Explanation and evidence to the student made in writing via email Upheld/partially upheld and a remedy made or dismissed

28 Document and version control information

Version control information	Details
Policy number	SDS-07
Owner	Head of Student Development Services
Author	Head of Student Development Services
Approved by	President Sakina Zafar
Date of approval of this version	05/01/2026
Next review date	End of each academic year
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