

Complaints Procedure (Non-student)

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1 Introduction and scope

- 1.1 The university takes all legitimate complaints seriously and seeks to deal with all complaints promptly, fairly and effectively to resolve any issues and, where possible, prevent such issues from reoccurring. Wherever possible, the university will endeavour to resolve issues informally without recourse to a formal procedure.
- 1.2 Individuals external to DMU who wish to raise a complaint against the university should use this procedure. This might include parents of students, applicants, visitors, agency workers or contractors, external organisations working in partnership with the university, or members of the public.
- 1.3 This procedure should not be used by DMU employees, by or on behalf of students or by or against members of the university's Board of Governors. Instead the following routes should be followed:
 - 1.3.1 Student complaints (for current, prospective or former students) should be raised via the **Student Complaints Procedure**.
 - 1.3.2 DMU employees should raise the matter with their line manager informally in the first instance and, if a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, will have recourse to the **Grievance Procedure**.
 - 1.3.3 Complaints made by or against members of the university's Board of Governors should be reported directly to the Clerk to the Board.

2 Confidentiality and anonymity

- 2.1 If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you. However, if your complaint concerns an individual eg a DMU employee, it will be necessary for them to know who has made the complaint and the names of any witnesses, unless there are compelling reasons why you or any witnesses wish to conceal your identity.
- 2.2 We do not encourage anonymous complaints. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether the complaint is credible. We hope that individuals will feel able to voice concerns openly under this policy.

3 How to complain

Stage 1

- 3.1 A complaint may be sent to supportoffice@dmu.ac.uk or in writing to: Head of Academic Support Office and Student Appeals and Conduct Officer, Student and Academic Services, Student Gateway, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester LE1 9BH. It will help us to deal quickly and fully with your complaint if you can state that you are making a complaint and set out your concern in writing as clearly as possible.

- 3.2 We will send an acknowledgement of your complaint. Our aim is to do this within five working days. Your complaint will then normally be passed to an appropriate person who is in a position to consider it in the light of relevant experience. For example, if your complaint is about a member of academic staff the matter will normally be raised with the relevant Head of Department/School or the relevant PVC/Dean.
- 3.3 We will endeavour to resolve your complaint as promptly as we can, but if it gives rise to serious issues we may need to take time in order to investigate it properly. We will aim to respond as soon as possible, normally within 30 working days. If we cannot provide a final response within that time, we will contact you to provide an update, an explanation of the delay, and an indication of when a final response can be expected.
- 3.4 If appropriate, the university will seek to resolve complaints informally in the first instance. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, or informal action is not appropriate in the circumstances, the university will consider whether to refer the complaint to a formal university procedure eg the disciplinary procedure, Anti-fraud Policy, Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Misconduct in Research - Investigation Procedure, or the Student Complaints Procedure.
- 3.5 If, following an initial assessment of the relevant facts, a decision is taken to refer the matter to another procedure, you will be advised of this as part of our response to your complaint. If your complaint is about a member of staff we may not be able to inform you of any subsequent action taken because we will owe a duty of confidentiality to that individual. For example, we may as part of our response to your complaint inform you that we have decided to consider the complaint under the disciplinary (or other) procedure, but you will not be entitled to know the outcome of those proceedings.

Stage 2

- 3.6 We expect most complaints to be resolved at stage one. However, if you consider that the response you have received is not fair and appropriate, you may request a review of your complaint by a more senior person. You should do this within 10 working days of receiving a stage one response. We will aim to respond as soon as possible, and normally within 30 working days. If we cannot provide a final response within that time, we will contact you to provide an update and an indication of when a final response can be expected.

4 Malicious or vexatious complaints

- 4.1 The university is under no obligation to respond to complaints which have an improper purpose or effect, such as harassment of staff, or to repeated submissions of a complaint to which a final response has been provided as described in this procedure. Before refusing to correspond further in respect of a complaint considered to be vexatious we will give due warning to the complainant.
- 4.2 If it is proven that a complaint has been made against a DMU employee maliciously or in bad faith, the university may take any action it considers to be appropriate. Support /counselling will also be offered to the employee.

5 Records and monitoring

- 5.1 All complaints received will be recorded for monitoring purposes and so that we can review the outcomes of cases to check that the proper procedures have been followed, to identify

any points that can be learned from those cases and implement any necessary changes to prevent a reoccurrence.

- 5.2 A copy of all correspondence and other documents will be retained in accordance with the applicable university procedure and in compliance with our data protection policies and practices.