



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Grievance Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

The University is committed to providing a positive working environment where employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We recognise that sometimes concerns and issues occur and you may need support to resolve them. This policy explains how to raise a grievance and the steps that will be taken to find a resolution as swiftly as possible.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and relates to issues or incidents that have occurred in work or in a work related situation. It does not apply to those who are no longer working at the University.

The policy does not apply to matters collectively agreed with the University's recognised trade unions.

### 3. Eligibility

You must raise a grievance within three months of the event or series of events that have caused you difficulty, unless there are exceptional reasons why you weren't able to do so.

### 4. Definitions

**Companion** is a person who can attend meetings/hearings with you. They are normally a work colleague or trade union representative. You may also ask for someone to be with you if you have particular needs e.g. if you have a disability you may ask to have someone who is familiar with your condition. Your companion is also someone you can talk to about your case outside of grievance meetings/hearings. A companion cannot be someone who is a witness in your case.

**Confidante** is a person from your workplace who can support you during the grievance process if you choose not to have a companion at meetings/hearings. Your

confidante must keep all details of your grievance and the procedure confidential. They cannot be someone who is a witness in your case.

**Conflict of interest** is a private, personal or commercial interest which could influence or interfere with a person's objectivity.

**Grievance** is a concern, problem or complaint related to your work or workplace that is causing you disadvantage, harm or upset.

**Mediation** is a meeting or meetings where an independent person helps resolve differences between people. It is voluntary and the content of any meetings is confidential.

**Respondent** is an employee or worker who is being complained about.

**Vexatious grievance** is an unreasonable, groundless or untrue complaint or one which aims to cause difficulty for someone else rather than seeking a resolution to a problem.

## 5. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- 5.1 The grievance procedure does not take the place of normal communication with your manager and colleagues. You should try and resolve most issues by talking to your manager at an early stage.
- 5.2 Everyone involved in the process will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Everyone is entitled to be listened to and put forward their points of view.
- 5.3 The focus is to resolve concerns as swiftly as possible and without damaging working relationships. It is not primarily about imposing a punishment on others. Throughout the process you will be encouraged to identify a resolution and where possible without escalation to the formal stages.
- 5.4 The process will be kept as confidential as possible and information about a case will only be shared with those directly involved or affected. This means that you must not talk about proceedings with anyone else at work other than those assigned to deal with your grievance and your chosen companion or confidante.
- 5.5 All genuine grievances, raised in good faith, will be dealt with promptly and fairly. Vexatious or trivial complaints will not be considered.

- 5.6 The people identified to investigate or review grievances will have the relevant background or training to properly consider cases, particularly where they involve interpersonal difficulties or potential discrimination or harassment.
- 5.7 If your concern relates to another University policy you must follow the full procedure specified in that policy, including the appeal. This means that you cannot raise a grievance if there is an appeal mechanism available, for example within: flexible working policy, capability policy, disciplinary policy etc.

## **6. Links to Other Relevant Policies and Guidance**

You may find it useful to refer to other relevant University policies and guidance which you can find on the [HR webpages](#):

[Grievance Policy Guidance](#)

[Policy on Conflict of Interest](#)

[Disciplinary Policy](#)

[Mediation](#)

[Statement on the handling of allegations of antisemitism](#)

## **7. Policy History and Review**

Approved Date:	March 2020
Approved By:	CJCNC
Date of Next Review:	1 December 2026

## Grievance Procedure

This procedure should be followed if you have a grievance that you wish to resolve.

If you are an employee or worker who is being complained about you should refer to Appendix I.

If you are asked to be a witness in a grievance case you should refer to Appendix II.

### 1. Finding a Resolution

It is in the interests of everyone involved if concerns can be resolved without moving to a formal process. Finding an informal resolution generally means that your issue is sorted out more quickly and stops it escalating and causing you further distress. It also means that your working relationships with colleagues or others are less likely to be affected as the aim is to reach an outcome in a more open, relaxed and amicable way.

If you have a problem or concern you should speak to your manager as early as possible and explain the issue and what you would like to see happen to resolve it. Your manager will talk to you about your situation and agree with you how to deal with it.

If your concern relates to your manager you should contact their manager for help to deal with your concern.

It may take time for your manager to look in to your concern and put in place some actions to resolve your difficulties. However they will always aim to find a resolution as quickly as possible and will keep you updated with progress. Your manager will write to you summarising your discussion and the steps taken to resolve your concern.

### 2. Formal Resolution

#### 2.1 Raising a Grievance

If you haven't been able to resolve your concern with your manager's help or you feel that the issue is too serious or sensitive to follow that approach, you may raise a formal grievance. You must do this by completing the [grievance form](#).

You must explain on the form what your concern is, how it has affected you and how you've tried to resolve it so far.

You must also specify what remedy you would like to solve the difficulty you are experiencing. For example, you might want a person to stop behaving in a certain way towards you.

If you don't specify what outcome you are looking for your grievance can't be followed up and you will be asked to review and resubmit your grievance form.

If your grievance relates to issues that took place over three months ago it will not be considered, unless there are exceptional reasons which prevented you from raising your concerns at the time, for example if you have been on long-term absence from work. Complaints of harassment, as defined by law, or discrimination will not normally be time-bound.

You must submit the grievance form to your manager unless they are the subject of your grievance. In that case you should send the form to their manager.

Your grievance form will be reviewed by the manager who received it, who will discuss its content with a HR Partner to determine if your grievance can be considered under this policy and if so how to proceed. This could include meeting you to discuss alternative ways of solving your concern, other than through the formal process. For example, if your concern relates to your working environment it might be possible to review changes to your workspace without the need for formal meetings. The manager will inform you if your concern will not be considered under this policy.

If you have a complaint which does not affect you personally but you feel is an issue that needs to be looked at, you should complete the grievance form but indicate that it is not a personal grievance. For example, if you witnessed unacceptable behaviour and believe it needs to be addressed. Your complaint will be investigated but will be dealt with outside the grievance process. The manager who received your form will confirm how your complaint is being dealt with.

If you raise a grievance during your notice period we will make every effort to investigate your concern and hold a hearing before you leave. However if there is not sufficient time to do this we will investigate your concern and provide you with a written response.

## **2.2 Support during the grievance process**

It is essential that the grievance submission and any interviews or hearings are kept confidential so must not be discussed with anyone who is not involved in the case. However, we recognise that it is important to have someone to support you or seek advice from during the process. You may have a trade union representative or work colleague with you at your investigation interview and hearings. This person is known as your 'companion'.

We understand that you may not want to be accompanied at your investigation interview or hearings but would value the opportunity to have someone from the workplace to talk to and support you through the grievance process. Therefore you can nominate someone from the workplace to be your confidante and you are able to talk to this person confidentially about the case. Your confidante must not disclose any details about the case to anyone else and they cannot be a witness in the case.

## **3. Investigation**

### **3.1 Grievance Investigating Officer**

Your manager or another suitable manager will take on the role of Investigating Officer to look into your grievance. Your manager will normally be the Investigating Officer unless your grievance relates to them, or if there are particular circumstances which mean an independent manager is best placed to investigate your concern. There may however be times when someone external to the University will be appointed to undertake this role.

If you have made a complaint about another person (the respondent) they will be told that you have raised a grievance about them and the Investigating Officer will send them a copy of your grievance form.

### **3.2 Grievance Interview**

The Investigating Officer will write to you and arrange to meet, normally within two calendar weeks of receiving your grievance form. You may bring a companion to this meeting if you wish. The Investigating Officer will have a note taker with them and may have a representative from HR. If you need any adjustments or special arrangements to attend this meeting you must let the Investigating Officer know in advance, as they may not be aware of your circumstances for example, if you need a room with a hearing loop. You must let the Investigating Officer know, in advance, if you are bringing a companion to the interview or the name of the person who will be your confidante, if you have chosen to have one.

At your interview you can explain your grievance in more detail and clarify what outcome you are looking for. The Investigating Officer may explore with you if a resolution can be found at this stage without matters progressing further.

Talking about your grievance can be a difficult experience but it is important to focus on the key issues you highlighted in your grievance form and not stray in to other matters or incidents. Therefore the Investigating Officer may need to manage the interview to keep discussion to the points you have raised in your grievance form and ensure that the meeting stays within a reasonable timeframe.

A note of your interview will be sent to you after the meeting so that you can confirm that it accurately reflects what was discussed. The note will be a summary, i.e. it will not be a verbatim note of everything discussed in the meeting.

### **3.3 Investigating your Grievance**

After meeting with you the Investigating Officer may decide that more information needs to be gathered, documents have to be reviewed or other people need to be interviewed. The Investigating Officer will advise you if they are going to carry out further such investigation. If your grievance is about another person (the respondent) the Investigating Officer will meet them to get their views on the situation. Other witnesses or relevant people may also be interviewed.

In some cases the Investigating Officer might ask to meet you again if they feel they need additional information or to allow you to respond to details gathered during the investigation.

This means that it can take some time to investigate your grievance fully but you will be kept up to date with how it is progressing. The Investigating Officer will always aim to complete the investigation in a reasonable timeframe and will let you know if timelines change for any reason.

At the end of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will write a report detailing their findings. In some cases, for example if you have raised issues relating to a University policy or general terms of employment, the Investigating Officer may also make recommendations about how your grievance can be resolved.

The Investigating Officer will submit their report to another manager who has been appointed as Chair of a Grievance Hearing. The Chair will be a manager who has not had previous involvement in your case.

## **4. Grievance Hearing**

### **4.1 Written Notice of Grievance Hearing**

The Chair will write to you:

- asking you to attend a Grievance Hearing and giving details of the arrangements. The hearing will normally be attended by the Investigating Officer.
- advising you of your right to be accompanied at the meeting by a companion.

They will also send you a copy of the Investigating Officer's report. The report will normally contain copies of notes from any investigatory interviews that have taken place, including yours, the respondent's and any witnesses', if applicable.

The Chair will also send a copy of the Investigating Officer's report to the respondent. They will not send a copy to any witnesses.

Due to data protection, some notes or statements may be redacted (i.e. blocked out so they cannot be read). This will normally be if, for example, there is mention of another person whose



personal data cannot be shared with you or the respondent. It will not be to protect the identity of those who took part in the investigation.

You will be given at least one calendar week's notice of the hearing.

You must let the Chair know in advance if you are bringing a companion to the hearing. It is your responsibility to notify your companion of the arrangements and to provide them with any documentation they may require to prepare for the hearing.

If you need any adjustments or special arrangements to attend the hearing you must let the Chair know in advance, as they may not be aware of your circumstances.

If you have any further information that you want to present at the hearing you must pass this to the Chair at least three working days in advance of the hearing.

#### **4.2 Rearranging your Grievance Hearing**

You are expected to attend the hearing on the scheduled date. If you or your companion are unable to attend you must let the Chair know as soon as possible. You may request a postponement and suggest alternative times and dates normally within one week of the original date. Where a suggested alternative is feasible, the hearing will be postponed.

While every attempt will be made to accommodate the availability of your companion, a postponement can only be agreed provided it does not cause unreasonable delay or disruption. Therefore if your companion is unable to attend at the rearranged time you should select a different companion who is able to be there.

If you fail to attend the rearranged hearing without good reason the Chair may continue with the hearing in your absence and a decision will be made based on the evidence available.

#### **4.3 The Hearing**

At the hearing the Chair will discuss the Investigating Officer's findings with you and the Investigating Officer and listen to what you both have to say, with the aim of trying to find an

amicable and practical resolution to your grievance. A representative from HR may be there to advise the Chair on process and there will be a note taker.

In some cases the Chair may be accompanied by another manager. This will depend entirely on the nature of your grievance. For example, it may be helpful for another manager who has relevant expertise in the issues raised in your grievance to accompany the Chair. There will always be another manager if your grievance alleges inappropriate conduct by another person.

After the discussion the Chair will close the hearing to consider all the information that has been presented.

A note of the hearing will be sent to you so that you can confirm it accurately reflects what was discussed. The note will be a summary, i.e. it will not be a verbatim note of everything discussed in the meeting.

#### **4.4 Outcome of Grievance**

The Chair will write to you within one calendar week of the hearing to confirm the outcome and any actions to be taken to resolve your grievance. For example, they might recommend mediation as a step to improve working relationships. You will be advised if no action is to be taken and why.

The Chair will advise you of your right of appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your grievance.

If your grievance is about another person they will also receive a letter from the Chair confirming the outcome. They will be given details of any actions to be taken to resolve your grievance which specifically relate to them.

In some instances the Chair might decide that there is sufficient evidence that the issues relating to the respondent are serious and that they have a case to answer. This would mean that the respondent's conduct will be considered by a disciplinary panel under the Disciplinary Policy. If that is the case you will not need to be interviewed again. The findings from the grievance investigation will be sufficient for the disciplinary process.

Once the disciplinary panel has reached a decision about the respondent's conduct they will also consider what information, if any, should be shared with you. The Chair of the disciplinary panel will liaise with the representative from HR about how best to communicate any information to you. Data protection means that you will not be told, if, or what disciplinary action has been taken.

## **5. Appeal**

### **5.1 Making an Appeal**

If you do not believe that your grievance has been resolved satisfactorily you may appeal by completing the [grievance appeal form](#). You must send the form to your Head of HR within two calendar weeks of receiving the written notification of the outcome of your Grievance Hearing.

The appeal is not a re-hearing of your original grievance so you must explain clearly on the form the basis on which you think the outcome is wrong or unfair or why any action or measures taken to resolve your grievance are inappropriate.

An Appeal Convenor will be appointed to hold an Appeal Hearing with you. They will not have had any previous involvement in your grievance and will be at least the same grade as the manager who heard your grievance/chaired your grievance hearing.

If your grievance appeal is about another employee or worker they will be told that you have made an appeal and will be given a copy of your appeal form by the Appeal Convenor.

If you raise an appeal during your notice period we will make every effort to hold an appeal hearing before you leave. However, if there is not sufficient time to do this we will provide you with a written response.

### **5.2 Written Notice of Appeal Hearing**

The Appeal Convenor will write to you:

- asking you to attend an Appeal Hearing and giving you details of the arrangements. The hearing will normally be attended by the manager who heard your grievance/chaired the hearing

- advising you of your right to be accompanied at the hearing by a companion.

You will be given at least one calendar week's notice of the hearing and it will normally take place within four weeks of your appeal letter being received by the Head of HR.

You must let the Appeal Convenor know in advance if you are bringing a companion to the hearing. It is your responsibility to notify your companion of the arrangements and to provide them with any documentation they may require to prepare for the hearing.

If you need any adjustments or special arrangements to attend the hearing you must let the Appeal Convenor know in advance, as they may not be aware of your circumstances.

### **5.3 Rearranging the Appeal Hearing**

You are expected to attend the Appeal Hearing on the scheduled date. If you or your companion are unable to attend you must let the Appeal Convenor know as soon as possible. You may request a postponement and suggest alternative times and dates normally within one week of the original date. Where a suggested alternative is feasible the hearing will be postponed.

While every attempt will be made to accommodate the availability of your companion, a postponement can only be agreed provided it does not cause unreasonable delay or disruption. Therefore if your companion is unable to attend at the rearranged time you should select a different companion who is able to be there.

If you fail to attend a rearranged Appeal Hearing without good reason a decision may be made regarding your appeal in your absence, based on the evidence available.

### **5.4 The Appeal Hearing**

At the hearing the Appeal Convenor will discuss the outcome of your Grievance Hearing and ask you to explain the reasons for your appeal. This will not be a rehearing of your original grievance but will focus on why you think the outcome of the Grievance Hearing was wrong or unfair.

A representative from HR may be there to advise the Appeal Convenor on process and there will

be a note taker. In some cases the Appeal Convenor may be accompanied by another manager or managers depending on the nature of your grievance. For example, it may be helpful for another manager who has relevant expertise in the issues raised in your grievance to accompany the Appeal Convenor. There will always be another manager if your grievance alleged inappropriate conduct by another person.

After the discussion the Appeal Convenor will close the hearing to consider all the information that has been presented.

A note of the hearing will be sent to you so that you can confirm it accurately reflects what was discussed. The note will be a summary, i.e. it will not be a verbatim note of everything discussed in the meeting.

### **5.5 Outcome of Appeal**

The Appeal Convenor will write to you within one calendar week of the appeal hearing to confirm the outcome. The possible outcomes of your Appeal Hearing are:

- the Appeal Convenor may agree with the original decision and recommendations
- the Appeal Convenor may overturn or amend the original decision.

The Appeal Convenor may also conclude that additional actions need to be taken or make further recommendations.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

If your grievance is about another person they will also receive a letter from the Appeal Convenor confirming the outcome of your appeal. They will be given details of any additional actions or recommendations to resolve your grievance which specifically relate to them.

In some instances the Appeal Convenor might decide that there is sufficient evidence that the issues relating to the respondent are serious and that they do have a case to answer. This would mean that the respondent's conduct will be considered by a disciplinary panel under the

Disciplinary Policy. If that is the case you will not need to be interviewed again. The findings from the grievance investigation will be sufficient for the disciplinary process.

Once the disciplinary panel has reached a decision about the respondent's conduct they will also consider what information, if any, should be shared with you. The Chair of the disciplinary panel will liaise with the representative from HR about how best to communicate any information to you. Data protection means that you will not be told, if, or what disciplinary action has been taken.

## **6. Employees on Guaranteed Minimum Hours Contracts**

If you are employed on a guaranteed minimum hours (GH) contract and are required to attend a meeting or hearing at a time when you are not scheduled to be working, you will be paid for the time you spend in the meeting/hearing at your normal rate.

## **7. Conflict of Interest**

You or the respondent can ask for a different Investigating Officer, Grievance Chair or Appeal Convenor to be appointed if there is a genuine conflict of interest in relation to either of you or to the issues raised in the grievance. You must write to your Head of HR if you believe there is a conflict and specify what it is. The Head of HR will make an assessment about the person's objectivity and confirm their decision to you. If it is concluded that there is a conflict of interest a different manager will be appointed to carry out the role. You must refer to the [Conflict of Interest](#) policy before deciding to make an objection.

## **8. Small Collective Grievances**

Sometimes a number of people may raise the same grievance or an incident may have affected more than one person. If your grievance is part of such a collective issue it will normally be dealt with as one case. This means that one Investigating Officer will interview all parties affected and carry out one investigation.

## **9. Trivial, vexatious or malicious complaints**

You should only raise a grievance if you have a work related concern and are looking for a way to resolve it. You should normally have tried to sort out any issues informally and must not be

seeking to create difficulty or embarrassment for another person.

Your grievance form will be reviewed by the manager who received it, who will liaise with their HR Partner. If they have concerns about the nature or intent of your grievance they will discuss the matter with your Head of HR.

If your complaint is assessed as trivial, vexatious or malicious it will not be taken further. For example, it may be considered vexatious if you continually raise grievances about the same issue(s) or person(s) in spite of previous complaints having been investigated and concluded.

You will be notified in writing of any decision not to progress your grievance. If your complaint is deemed to be malicious, for example, falsely raised to cause difficulty for another person, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **If you have been complained about**

### **1. Introduction**

The University recognises that being involved in a grievance process can be distressing for all parties including if you are the person being complained about (the respondent). This section explains what you can expect if someone raises a grievance about you.

### **2. The Grievance**

The person raising a grievance (complainant) will outline their concern on a grievance form. This will include what resolution they are looking for. You will be contacted if someone raises a grievance about you, normally by your manager.

### **3. The Investigation**

A manager will be appointed as the Investigating Officer to look into the issues raised in the grievance. The Investigating Officer will be the complainant's manager or another manager, depending on the nature of the grievance. There may however be times when someone external to the University will be appointed to undertake this role.

The Investigating Officer will send you a copy of the complainant's grievance form. The Investigating Officer will start their investigation by interviewing the complainant. You will also be interviewed so that you can put forward your point of view. The Investigating Officer will have a note taker with them and might also have a representative from HR. You may have a companion with you at your interview if you wish. Sometimes witnesses will also be interviewed.

A note of your interview will be sent to you after the meeting so that you can confirm it accurately reflects what you said. The note will be a summary, i.e. it will not be a verbatim note of everything discussed in the meeting.

At the end of the investigation the Investigating Officer will produce a report. This will normally include notes of all interviews, including yours. Due to data protection, some notes or statements



may be redacted (i.e. blocked out so they cannot be read). This will normally be if, for example, there is mention of another person whose personal data cannot be shared with you. It will not be to protect the identity of those who took part in the investigation.

The report will be sent to the manager who has been appointed Chair of the Grievance Hearing. You and the complainant will receive a copy of the report from the Chair prior to the Grievance Hearing.

#### **4. Support during the grievance process**

We recognise that it is important to have someone to support you or seek advice from if you are the respondent in a grievance case. You may have a trade union representative or work colleague with you at your investigation interview. This person is known as your 'companion'.

We understand that you may not want to be accompanied at your investigation interview but would value the opportunity to have someone from the workplace to talk to and support you through the grievance process. Therefore you can nominate someone from the workplace to be your confidante and you are able to talk to this person confidentially about the case. Your confidante must not disclose any details about the case to anyone else and they cannot be a witness in the case. You must let the Investigating Officer know who your designated confidante is if you choose to have one.

#### **5. The Grievance Hearing**

This is a meeting where the Chair reviews the Investigating Officer's report with the complainant and tries to find a resolution to their issues. You do not attend the hearing.

#### **6. Outcome of the Grievance Hearing**

The Chair will write to you within one calendar week of the hearing to let you know the outcome. They may have concluded that some actions need to be taken or make some recommendations. For example, they might recommend that you and the complainant should engage in mediation.

If the Chair believes that there is sufficient evidence that the issues relating to your behaviour are serious and that you have a case to answer they will advise you that matters will progress to a

Disciplinary Hearing.

A manager will be appointed as Chair of the disciplinary proceedings and they will write to you asking you to attend a Disciplinary Hearing. You will be given at least one calendar week's notice. The findings from the grievance investigation will be considered in that hearing. There will not be a further investigation.

Details about the disciplinary process are set out in the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

## **7. Grievance Appeal**

The complainant has the right to appeal within two calendar weeks of being notified of the outcome of their Grievance Hearing. They may appeal if they believe the outcome is wrong or unfair or the actions or measures taken to resolve the grievance are inappropriate.

If they appeal you will be notified and given a copy of their appeal form. An Appeal Hearing will be arranged with a different manager (Appeal Convenor) who will review the grounds of the appeal with the Chair of the Grievance Hearing and the complainant. You do not attend the Appeal Hearing.

## **8. Outcome of the Appeal**

The Appeal Convenor will write to you within one calendar week of the appeal hearing to let you know the outcome. The outcome of the appeal is final and concludes the grievance process.

The Appeal Convenor may confirm, overturn or amend the original decision. Alternatively they may conclude that additional actions need to be taken or make further recommendations.

The Appeal Convenor may decide that there is sufficient evidence that the issues relating to your behaviour are serious and that you do have a case to answer, even if the Chair of the original Grievance Hearing did not reach that conclusion. The Appeal Convenor will advise you that matters will progress to a Disciplinary Hearing.

A manager will be appointed as Chair of the disciplinary proceedings and they will write to you

asking you to attend a Disciplinary Hearing. You will be given at least one calendar week's notice. The findings from the grievance investigation will be considered in that hearing. There will not be a further investigation.

Details about the disciplinary process are set out in the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

## **9. Confidentiality**

It is essential that everything relating to the grievance case, including any meetings you are involved in or any correspondence is kept confidential. This means that you must not talk about your involvement or proceedings with anyone other than those assigned to deal with the grievance and your chosen companion or confidante. You must not talk about the case with the complainant or any witnesses.

## **10. Conflict of Interest**

You or the complainant can ask for someone different to be appointed as Investigating Officer, Grievance Chair or Appeal Convenor if there is a genuine conflict of interest in relation to either of you or to the issues raised in the grievance. You must write to your Head of HR if you believe there is a conflict and specify what it is. The Head of HR will make an assessment about the person's objectivity and confirm their decision to you. If it is concluded that there is a conflict of interest a different manager will be appointed to carry out the role. You must refer to the [Conflict of Interest](#) policy before deciding to make an objection.

## **11. Notification to Professional or Funding Bodies**

If you are a member of a professional body or are funded by a third party organisation such as a Research Council we may be required to notify them that a grievance has been raised about you. Your Head of HR will write to you to confirm if this is the case.

## Being a witness in a grievance case

### 1. Introduction

The University recognises that being involved in a grievance process can be distressing for all parties including if you are asked to be a witness in a case. This section explains what you can expect if you are a witness.

### 2. The Grievance

The person raising a grievance (complainant) will outline their concern on a grievance form. They may state that you were a witness to events referred to in their grievance.

### 3. The investigation

A manager will be appointed as the Investigating Officer to look into the issues raised in the grievance. The Investigating Officer will be the complainant's manager or another manager, depending on the nature of the grievance. There may however be times when someone external to the University will be appointed to undertake this role.

As part of the investigation the Investigating Officer will interview those people involved in the case including any witnesses to events. Names of witnesses might be put forward by the complainant or by the respondent (the person being complained about). Sometimes the Investigating Officer may decide for themselves that a certain witness should be interviewed to give their views.

If you are identified as a witness you will be asked to attend a meeting with the Investigating Officer. You will be told in advance of the meeting what incident or issue the Investigating Officer wishes to discuss with you. The Investigating Officer will have a note taker with them and may also have a representative from HR. You may have a companion with you if you wish but your meeting cannot be rescheduled if your companion is unavailable at the scheduled time. A companion is normally a work colleague or trade union representative.

A note of your interview will be sent to you after the meeting so that you can confirm it accurately reflects what you said. The note will be a summary, i.e. it will not be a verbatim note of everything discussed in the meeting.

In some cases the Investigating Officer may ask you to provide a written statement rather than being interviewed.

At the end of the investigation the Investigating Officer will produce a report which will include the note of your interview or your statement if you provided one. This will be seen by the managers dealing with the grievance as well as the complainant and respondent, if applicable. You will not receive a copy of the report.

Where data protection applies some notes or statements may be redacted (i.e. blocked out so they cannot be read). This will normally be if, for example, there is mention of another person whose personal data cannot be shared with other parties. It will not be to protect the identity of those who took part in the investigation.

If you have concerns about your notes being shared you must tell the Investigating Officer the reasons and they will decide what to include in the report.

#### **4. Grievance Procedure**

After the investigation another manager known as the Chair will hold a Grievance Hearing with the complainant to decide the outcome of the grievance. You will not normally need to attend this or any Appeal Hearing.

#### **5. Conclusion of Grievance Process**

Your involvement will normally end after the investigation. You will not be told the outcome of the case as this must be kept confidential for data protection reasons.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

It is essential that everything relating to the grievance case, including any meetings you are involved in or any correspondence you receive, is kept confidential. This means that you must not

discuss your involvement with anyone else at work other than those dealing with the case and your chosen companion. You must not discuss the case with the person who has raised the grievance, the respondent or any other witnesses.

If you need more information about the grievance process you should contact your HR Partner.