

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

GRIEVANCES REDRESS MECHANISM

1. INTRODUCTION

Grievance redress mechanisms are institutions, instruments, methods, and processes by which a resolution to a grievance is sought and provided. This policy refers to the official process by which students (including prospective and former students) are able to pursue grievance redress and the timeframes in which the University of Benin will respond. Students may pursue a grievance redress, or lodge an appeal about decisions made through the grievance redress process. This includes decisions which involve the exercise of academic judgement, exclusion or suspension from University/course registration, administrative matters, the quality of administrative service, and the provision of facilities. The University will deal with any grievance redress in a transparent, professional and fair manner at minimal or no cost to the student. Devoted and satisfied students are important for the effective functioning of the University and the successful achievement of its objectives. In any large institution, it is also very natural for students to encounter both administrative and academic related grievances. It is the responsibility of management to formulate a mechanism for prompt resolution of such grievances so that the institution will continue to maintain its integrity.

The University of Benin is committed to protecting the interests of all students and provide a high standard of service to all the students. However, problems do occur and sometimes the service may not be up to the expectations of students. In such cases, a formal or non formal redress may be sought. The students referred to here are those with academic or administrative grievance against a decision made by the University as it relates program(s) or related services. Students are expected to be treated with fairness and respect in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University of Benin. The University does not condone unfair treatment of students by administration, faculty member and other staff.

No unfavourable action will be taken against any person who files a grievance redress. The University and its management will not penalize any student for seeking redress or complaint about services provided. The grievance redress will be investigated as fairly, openly and as quickly as possible. However, some complaints are complicated and may take some time to obtain the information needed to reach a fair decision. Anonymous grievance redress or request cannot be dealt with because a response cannot be provided. It is important to note that the identity of a complainant will not be disclosed without permission.

1.1 Goal

The goal of this policy is to resolve grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all the parties involved. This is important as the University of Benin provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and sustainable outcomes. Specifically, this policy aims to:

- i. Provide a clear procedure for addressing the grievance
- ii. Ensure that all reported grievances are treated
- iii. Protect the interests of all complainants expressing grievance and seeking redress.
- iv. Empower the University of Benin to address grievance effectively.

1.2 Principles of the complaint redress mechanism

This Grievance Redress Mechanism is anchored on the following principles:

- i. **Confidentiality**
To remain accessible, open and trusted, the grievance redress mechanism ensures that the identities of those who seek redress are kept confidential. This encourages people to participate, file complaints or act as witness. For example, the use of drop boxes etc.
- ii. **Objective and Independent**
The mechanism involves an objective and independent process devoid of conflict or interest.
- iii. **Transparency**
The process encourages comments and suggestions to enhance the welfare of all interested parties.
- iv. **Due Process**
Due process implies grievances are resolved according to established rules and principles and that the individual(s) be treated fairly.
- v. **Easy and Accessible**
The process to file complaints and seek redress is kept simple and easy to understand by all.
- vi. **Response Time**
Complainant(s) are assured of quick response.
- vii. **Socially Inclusive**
The grievance redress mechanism will allow complainants, no matter the level, to seek redress.
- viii. **Gender Balance**
The composition of all grievance Committees in the University of Benin will be gender inclusive.

1.3 Commitment of the University of Benin to Students as Regards Grievance and Redress

The University of Benin aims to investigate grievance redress in a way that:

- i. Is fair.
- ii. Motivates informal resolution of problems and facilitates their quick resolution.
- iii. Handles grievance redress with the needed seriousness and confidentiality.
- iv. Encourages feedback to make sure that the University of Benin can improve on service provision to all.
- v. Grievance is thoroughly and objectively investigated.

As part of the commitment, every attempt will be made to resolve issues on an informal basis in the first instance, without resolve to a formal procedure.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES

2.1. Scope

The University recognises two types of grievance redress: Academic and Non- Academic grievance redress. There is room for formal and informal reportage of grievances.

Informal grievances can be done through the following: Students Association Leaders, Staff Advisers, Head of Department, Senior Academics, Faculty Officers etc.

2.1.1 Administrative/Academic Grievance Redress

The following are the Administrative/Academic grievance redress recognized by the University of Benin. These are grievance redress related to:

- i. Admission, clearance and registration process. (Admin)
- ii. Lecture, tutorials and examinations timetables. (Acad)
- iii. Programme or course content, course materials or text books. (Acad)

- iv. Issues arising from lecture' attitude towards students; lectures/classes/laboratories; etc (Acad)
- v. Interaction between course adviser and students (Acad)
- vi. Use of literacy/Learning resources (Admin)
- vii. Learner support
- viii. Continuous Assessments, grading and integrity of scripts and scores (Acad)
- ix. Issues of suspension, rustication and expulsion (Admin)

2.1.2 Non-Academic Grievance Redress

The following are recognized by the University of Benin under non-academic grievance redress. These are grievance redress in relation to:

- i. Events and activities on campus: staff and students (Admin)
- ii. Healthcare services in the University community which include staff and students (Admin)
- iii. Accommodation services on campus (Admin)
- iv. Transportation services on campus (Admin)
- v. University catering services – Quality of food on campus (Admin)
- vi. ICT services
- vii. Cases of bullying and harassment

2.1.3 Grievance that may not be Entertained

Some grievance redress may be superficial and may not be entertained. They are:

- i. Failure to follow laid down procedure for grievance redress
- ii. Grievance request that is harassing and repetitious.
- iii. Appeals against disciplinary decisions.
- iv. Any kind of harassment and bullying procedure.
- v. Refusal of admission to applicants who have not met admission requirement.

If the University decides that a grievance redress might not be entertained, the Dean of Students or the committee in charge will communicate giving reason (depending on the nature of the grievance redress) will write to the student explaining that the committee will end the consideration of the grievance and will give reasons for the decision. If the student decides to appeal against the decision, he or she may write to the Vice Chancellor who will review the decision taken by the committee.

Grievances by student may be escalated to the Vice-Chancellor while staff can escalate grievances to Council

2.1.4 Academic Related Grievance Redress Mechanism

If a student decides to make comment or suggestion about improving any academic related program or services, it can be done directly through student faculty representative (Faculty Governors) or through the Student Union or any member of faculty staff. It is however important to note that efforts should be made to resolve complaint locally before escalating (that is within the department/faculty/college/school), with the member(s) of staff concerned.

If a student wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she should do this by submitting a specific form (see appendix 1). Note that the form is available in the students' porter.

There are two stages in formal academic related grievance redress:

Stage One of Formal Grievance Redress Mechanism

If a grievance is not resolved informally or locally (that is within the department/faculty/college/school), the student must provide details in writing to the Deputy Vice

Chancellor (Academic) within five (5) working days after the event(s) happened. When grievance redress is sought, the student must provide the following:

- His/her name
- Matriculation Number
- Faculty/School/College
- Department
- Hostel, Block, Room Number if any
- Home Address
- GSM Number
- School email address
- Date at which the problem occurred
- Witness(es) if any
- The request/prayer from the University

It is important to note that the student that reported will be the one to provide all the relevant evidence(s) that supports the complaint if any.

Stage Two of Formal Grievance Redress Mechanism

If a grievance redress has been concluded in stage one and the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the University, he/she may write formally within 1 week of receipt of the response to stage one to the Vice Chancellor explaining the reasons why he/she is not satisfied with the conclusion in stage one.

The Vice Chancellor has the authority to revisit or not to revisit the appeal. If the Vice Chancellor wishes to proceed, he/she will set up another committee to review the process, evidences and the conclusion from the initial committee. The conclusion reached at this stage will be the final resolve of the complaint which will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor in writing.

2.1.5 Stages of Non – Academic Grievance Redress Mechanism

This also comprises of two stages made up of:

Stage One of Non – Academic Grievance Redress Mechanism

If a grievance redress is not informally resolved, the student should write to the Dean, Student Affairs within five working days after the event(s) had occurred. Just like in the academic grievance redress, the complainant must provide the following:

- His/her name
- Matriculation Number
- Faculty/School/College
- Department
- Hostel, Block, Room Number if any
- Home Address
- GSM Number
- School email address
- Date at which the problem occurred
- Witness(es) if any
- The request from the University

It is important to note that the student that reported will be the one to provide all the relevant evidence(s) that supports the complaint if any.

The Dean, Student Affairs will respond to the complaint in writing within 5 working days. Depending on the nature of grievance, the Dean, Student Affairs may settle the grievance

informally otherwise, do an initial formal investigation with all the necessary evidences and forward the result of the initial investigation to the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor will in turn set up committee to examine the claims and the committee is expected to sit for one or two weeks depending on the nature of the grievance. If, at any time during this stage the student wishes to revert to resolving the grievance informally, this can be done by writing and stating the reason(s) why the grievance redress is withdrawn.

If approval is given for informal resolution, the complainant must revert to the committee the appropriate steps followed to resolve the problem.

Stage Two of Non- Academic Grievance Redress Mechanism

If a grievance redress has been concluded in stage one and the compliant is not satisfied with the response from the University, he/she may write formally within 2 weeks of receipt of the response to stage one to the Vice Chancellor explaining the reasons why he/she is not satisfied with the conclusion in stage one.

The Vice Chancellor has the authority to revisit or not to revisit the appeal. If the Vice Chancellor wishes to proceed, he/she will set up another committee to review the process, evidences and the conclusion from the initial committee. The conclusion reached at this stage will be the final resolve of the complaint which will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor in writing.

Any grievance redress that is referred to a committee that is set up shall be heard and decided by a five-person panel consisting of one student representative. The committee shall conduct any such proceeding as it deems appropriate. However:

- i. The committee may dismiss the complaint without further proceedings if it observed or established that it may violate the University regulations even if the facts alleged by the grievant were true.
- ii. The committee shall not consider any matters not included in the written complaint. If the committee feels the complainant did not have access to the facts necessary to make the complaint complete when first submitted, the committee may allow the complainant to submit an amended complaint within 48 hours.
- iii. The complainant and respondent shall have access to all documents considered by the committee but not necessarily the final report.
- iv. The committee shall produce a written report within fourteen (14) working days of the day it was assigned. The decision shall include findings of facts, a statement of the policy that is alleged to have been violated, an opinion on the validity of the complaint and, if appropriate, remedial recommendations.

Grievance Redress beyond the University of Benin

No part of this document precludes either the student from seeking redress through a court of competent jurisdiction or an outside enforcement agency. However, students are encouraged to exhaust all available internal mechanism (formal and informal) to achieve a resolution of an academic or non- academic grievance before seeking redress outside the University.

Appendix 1

Grievance Redress Form

Student(s) with grievance must complete this form and present to the office of the Head of Department who forwards comment(s) to the Dean of the Faculty with all supporting evidence(s).

If student has tried to resolve his/her grievance informally, please state the steps that have been taken and who the matter was raised with.

What was the outcome of the grievance redress and why is the student not satisfied?

Grievance not resolved at this level informally at the department/faculty level should be forwarded with comment by the Dean of the faculty to the Vice Chancellor.

Grievance redress that is anonymous will not be considered because a response cannot be provided. The identity of a complainant will be kept confidential.

Please, fill the spaces below:

- Name of Student:
- Matriculation Number:.....
- Faculty/School/College:.....
- Department:.....
- Hostel, Block, Room Number if any:.....
- Residential Address:.....
- GSM Number:.....
- School email address:.....
- Date at which the problem occurred:.....
- Name of Person(s) involved:.....
- Witness if any:.....

Please state clearly and concisely the main points of your complaint. You should also include details of dates, locations, and any witness(es).

If the complaint involves several students, please complete the above information for each complainant on an additional sheet as appropriate. Please, also inform that additional sheets is added or attached to this form.

.....
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Select the Grievance Type:

- The Admission and Registration process ()
- A program or specific course (course content, documentation and materials, lecture theatres, laboratories etc.) ()
- A member of the teaching staff (or Lab technicians) ()
- Academic advising ()
- Learning resources and the library ()
- Learner support ()
- Continuous Assessments/Examination ()
- Grades ()
- Absent cases ()
- Academic probation, and suspension ()
- Academic Integrity ()
- Others ()

Details of complaint: *(Attach all evidence(s) supporting the claim)*

Please suggest any future action that can be taken by the UNIBEN to prevent this issue recurring.

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Declaration by Complainant(s)

I (we), the undersigned, submit this form in pursuant of grievance redress mechanism. I agree under the regulations governing students of the University of Benin that any information given on this form may be shared with appropriate parties in the genuine resolution of my complaint including, where necessary, anyone I have complained about. I also give explicit consent that records relating to my studies or other associated matters (including those relating to assessment and/or requests made by me for mitigating circumstances to be considered and held by Academic and/or other University departments including Registry services, student affairs may be accessed, as necessary, in order to investigate my grievance. I further declare that this complaint is submitted in good faith.

Name & Signature of Complainant:

Date:

Head of Department's Comment:

Name:

Signature & Date:

Dean's Comment:

Name:

Signature & Date:

Please, the Dean should explain in detail how the grievance redress was investigated and by whom, the evidence used, the conclusion reached if appropriate, and the steps taken to rectify matters before forwarding to the Vice Chancellor.

Appendix 2

Staff Grievance Redress Form

Student(s) with non-academic complaint(s) must complete this form and present it to the office of the Head of Department who forwards comment(s) to the Dean of the Faculty with all supporting evidence(s).

Complaint(s) not resolved at this level informally at the department/faculty level should be forwarded with comment by the Dean of the faculty to the Dean of Students within five working days after the event(s) occurred.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered because a response cannot be provided. The identity of a complainant will not be disclosed without permission otherwise will be treated as divulging official secret.

Please, fill the spaces below:

Name of Staff:

Identification Number:.....

Faculty/School/College:.....

Department/Unit:.....

Home Address:.....

GSM Number:.....

School email address:.....
Date at which the problem occurred:.....
Name of Person(s) involved:.....
Witness if any:.....

Select the Grievance Redress Type:

- Student activities ()
- Student healthcare services ()
- Student accommodation services ()
- Student transportation services ()
- University catering services ()
- General cleaning ()
- IT services ()
- Others (Please, explain in details):

Please provide details about the complaint:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Please indicate a reasonable outcome or future action you want in resolution to your complaint.

Please suggest any future action that can be taken by the UNIBEN to prevent this issue from recurring.

If the complaint is on behalf of a number of students, please complete the above information for each complainant on an additional sheet as appropriate. Please notify that there is an additional sheet of paper attached.

Before a complaint may be reported formally, all reasonable steps must have been exhausted to resolve the complaint informally. If you have tried to resolve your complaint informally, please say what steps you have taken and who you reported the matter to.

What was the outcome and why are you still not satisfied?

Declaration by Complainant(s)

I (we), the undersigned, submit this form in pursuant of grievance redress mechanism. I agree under the regulations governing students of the University of Benin that any information given on this form may be shared with appropriate parties in the genuine resolution of my complaint including, where necessary, anyone I have complained about. I also give explicit consent that records relating to my studies or other associated matters (including those relating to assessment and/or requests made by me for mitigating circumstances to be considered and held by Academic and/or other University departments including Registry services, student futures may be accessed, as necessary, in order to investigate my grievance. I further declare that this complaint is submitted in good faith and is neither malicious nor infuriating.

Name & Signature of Complainant:

Date:

Head of Department's Comment:

Name:

Signature & Date:

Dean's Comment:

Name:

Signature & Date:

Please, the Dean should explain in detail how the complaint was investigated and by whom, the evidence used, the conclusion reached if appropriate, and the steps taken to rectify matters before forwarding to the Dean, Student Affairs Division. If not satisfied, the Dean, Student Affairs Division forwards to the Vice Chancellor.

Dean, Student Affairs Division Comment:

Name:

Signature & Date:

Vice Chancellor's Comment:

Names of Committee members:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Detailed findings of the Committee:.....

Action agreed upon:

Names & Signature of Committee members:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

The report from the committee is forwarded to the Dean, Student Affairs Division who finally reports to the Vice Chancellor.