

SERVICOM UNIT
VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE
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GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

1. Overview

A centralized grievance redress mechanism in the University of Benin, Benin City has been designed to handle complaints and concerns from Students, Departments, Faculties, Institutes, Units, and Staff in a fair, timely, and transparent manner. It provides a structured process for resolving issues, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to a mechanism for addressing grievances. This system often includes a committee or cell dedicated to reviewing and resolving complaints, aiming to prevent and address unfair practices and promote a positive learning and working environment. When a complaint has been made the Complainant has the right to have his or her concerns investigated and a full and prompt response given by SERVICOM.

1.1. A Complaint may be made to the SERVICOM Unit about any matter connected with the exercise of the University's functions or by anyone affected by the actions of the University or its Employee. This mechanism aim to:

- a. Find out what happened
- b. Assure the Complainant that their concerns have been addressed, and involve them in decisions about how their complaint was handle
- c. Make sure a Complainant receive an apology where this is appropriate in line with the principles for remedy.
- d. Take into account the outcome of any investigation from the complaints in order to improve the way the University's functions
- e. Ensure that no employee of the University embarrassed by false complaints

1.2. This policy

This policy and the supporting University's Complaint procedure has been written in accordance with the requirements of SERVICOM.

1.3. Key aspects of University of Benin centralized grievance redress mechanism:

- a. **Accessibility:** The service should be easily accessible to all stakeholders, with clear and simple procedures for submitting complaints.

- b. **Transparency:** The process should be transparent, with regular updates on the progress of complaints and clear communication to all parties involved.
- c. **Fairness:** The service should ensure that all complaints are treated fairly and impartially, with decisions based on merit and evidence.
- d. **Timeliness:** Complaints should be addressed promptly, with reasonable deadlines for resolution to prevent prolonged disputes
- e. **Effectiveness:** The service should be effective in resolving complaints, with a high success rate in finding solutions that satisfy all parties

1.4. Benefits of a centralized grievance redress service:

- a. **Improved student and staff satisfaction:** By providing a reliable mechanism for addressing concerns, the service can improve overall satisfaction and morale
- b. **Reduced conflict and disputes:** A well-functioning system can help prevent minor issues from escalating into major conflicts
- c. **Enhanced Institutional reputation:** A transparent and effective grievance redress system can enhance the University's reputation for fairness and accountability.
- d. **Promotion of a positive learning and working environment:** By addressing grievances promptly and fairly, the service can contribute to a more positive and productive environment

2. **Grievance Handling Process**

2.1. **Submission of Grievances**

- **Channels:** Grievances can be submitted through multiple channels, including:
 - **Email:** Dedicated serving Unit email address: servicomuniben@uniben.edu
 - **Physical Submission:** Complaint forms are available at the SERVICOM office
 - **Hotline:** A toll-free number for verbal complaints on 09155660000
- **Information Required:** Complainants are expected to provide their name, contact information, a detailed description of the grievance, any relevant documents, and suggested solutions (if any)

2.2. **Acknowledgment**

Upon receipt of a grievance, the Unit will acknowledge it within 24 hours and provide the complainant with a reference number for tracking purposes.

2.3. **Initial Assessment**

The Unit conducts an initial assessment within 48 hours to categorize the grievance, determine its validity, and identify the responsible Department for further investigation

2.4. **Investigation and Resolution**

Investigation: The Unit investigates the grievance in collaboration with relevant Departments. This process should be completed within ten working days..

Resolution: Based on the investigation, the Unit proposes a resolution, which is communicated to the complainant. The resolution process should be completed within 15 working days from the date of grievance submission

2.5. **Appeal Process**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, they can appeal to the Vice Chancellor as the Executive Director responsible to the Board for Complaints within ten days of receiving the resolution.

The Vice Chancellor reviews the appeal and makes a final decision within 7 days

2.6. **Closure**

A grievance is considered closed when a resolution has been implemented, and the complainant has either accepted the resolution or the appeal process has been exhausted.

3. **Monitoring and Reporting**

3.1. **Performance Monitoring**

Indicators: Key performance indicators (KPIs) include the number of grievances received, resolution time, satisfaction rate, and the number of unresolved grievances.

Monitoring: The Unit regularly monitors these indicators and submits quarterly reports to the Vice Chancellor

3.2. **Reporting**

Internal Reporting: Quarterly reports detailing grievance trends, resolution status, and systemic issues are submitted to the Vice Chancellor.

Public Reporting: An annual summary report is published on the SERVICOM's website, highlighting key achievements, challenges, and improvements

4. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**

4.1. **Awareness and Outreach**

Workshops and Training: Regular workshops for University Staff and Students to ensure understanding and effective use of the GRS.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Use of media, social platforms, and public forums to raise awareness about the GRS.

4.2. **Feedback Mechanism**

A feedback system is integrated into the GRS to collect suggestions for improvement from complainants and stakeholders. This feedback is reviewed quarterly to enhance the GRS's effectiveness

5. **Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation**

5.1. **Confidentiality**

All information related to grievances, complainants, and investigations is treated as confidential. Only authorized personnel have access to such information

5.2. **Non-Retaliation**

The University adopts a strict non-retaliation policy, ensuring that no complainant is subject to any form of harassment or punitive action as a result of lodging a grievance

6. **Policy Review and Updates**

The GRS policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the SERVICOM Unit to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. Updates will be made to align with legal changes, emerging challenges, and stakeholder feedback.

7. Implementation Strategy and Resources

The GRS will be implemented across all Faculties, Institutes, Units, Staff and Students of the University of Benin, Benin City.

Budget: Allocation of sufficient budgetary resources to ensure the effective operation of the GRS, including technology, personnel, and public awareness activities

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Signed:
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