

UMO Students' Complaints Procedure

This is a formal complaints procedure to be used when an initial attempt to rectify a problem has not worked, or the matter is deemed to be more serious.

UMO believes that students should be entitled to have any complaints about their specialist mentoring effectively handled. Students should feel free to be able to make a complaint secure in the knowledge that it will be fairly investigated.

The complaints procedure comprises a number of stages and can be used to complain about any aspect of a student's mentoring programme that falls within the remit of UMO.

The student is expected to formally notify UMO that the complaints procedure is to be used, explain clearly what the problem is and what outcome they are seeking. The complaint should be made within one month of the cause of the complaint at the latest, although the sooner the matter is raised the better.

Stage 1 Informal Frontline Resolution.

If applicable, the complaint should be made directly to the person involved. The mentor is expected to listen to the complaint and try to resolve it in a straightforward, reasonable and prompt manner. Mentors dealing with complaints are encouraged, whenever practical, to meet with the student to establish the precise cause of the dissatisfaction, to explore the remedy sought by the student and to foster a mutual understanding of the issues involved. The complainant should be free to bring along a friend for support if they wish. If appropriate, the University or College's Disability Department should be informed.

In particular, the following should attempted to be established by the mentor:

- Is this a complaint concerning UMO, or should the complainant be directed elsewhere (e.g. the University or College's Disability Department)?
- What specifically is the complaint about and how is UMO involved?
- What outcome is the complainant hoping for and can it be achieved?
- Is this complaint straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
- Can the complaint be resolved on the spot by providing an apology, explanation or alternative solution?
- Is there another UMO representative, or member of the University or College staff who could assist in seeking a frontline resolution?

Resolution may be achieved by providing an on-the-spot explanation of why the issue occurred and/or an apology and, where possible, what will be done to stop this happening in the future. If responsibility for the issue being complained about lies in the mentor's area of work, every attempt will be made to resolve the problem at source.

Although informal, the mentor should make notes of the meeting and keep a record of the agreed outcome. Notes should be shared with the student and also filed with UMO. The student should be notified that the matter is deemed to be resolved, and advised of the availability of Level 2 of the complaints procedure, if the complaint is not upheld.

Level 2 Formal Investigation

This stage is for:

- (a) Complaints that have not been resolved at the informal frontline stage.
- (b) Issues that are more complex and for which the informal stage is inappropriate.

The student should complete the **UMO Complaint Form A** to set out:

- What their complaint is about
- What the supporting evidence is
- Why the informal resolution was unsuccessful
- What outcome they want.

The form should be sent to info@universitymentoring.org

An investigation will be carried out before a written response is provided to the complainant with 25 working days. The investigation and its outcome must be fair and reasonable.

The UMO Complaint Form A must be submitted within 1 month of the notification of the outcome of Level 1.

Level 3 Appeal

The complainant may appeal against the outcome of Level 2 if the complaint is rejected. They should complete **UMO Complaint Form B** to set out:

- Why they believe the decision made at Level 2 was not fair or reasonable
- How the procedure for the Level 2 complaint was procedurally incorrect and how this made a significant difference to the outcome of their complaint.

If the complainant provides evidence of one of both the points above, UMO will arrange a further investigation to be placed by a reviewer who has not been involved in the process in anyway up to this point. In reaching a decision the reviewer is expected to be fair and reasonable. A complaint without adequate grounds and evidence will be dismissed.

Complaint Form B should be submitted within 1 month of notification of the outcome of the Level 2 complaint. A decision will be made within 25 working days and communicated to the complainant.