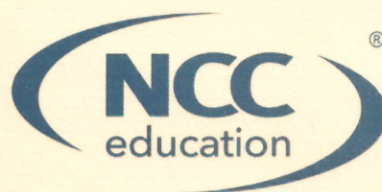




**SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN
UNIVERSITY**



**Awarding
Great British
Qualifications**

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



1. Introduction

South Mediterranean University is committed to providing high-quality academic, administrative, and support services to its students, staff, applicants, visitors, and other stakeholders. The University seeks to prevent complaints arising through the effective delivery of its services and the continuous improvement of its practices.

The University will handle all complaints fairly, objectively, confidentially, promptly, and without discrimination, bias, or prejudice. No complainant will be disadvantaged, penalized, or subjected to any form of adverse treatment as a result of submitting a complaint in good faith.

The University is committed to addressing complaints promptly and efficiently, identifying appropriate remedies where a complaint is upheld, and using complaints as an opportunity to improve the quality and effectiveness of its services.

The University welcomes constructive feedback and encourages individuals to raise concerns through the appropriate channels.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a clear, transparent, and consistent procedure for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints concerning the services, decisions, conduct, or practices of the University.

The Policy is intended to ensure that complaints are:

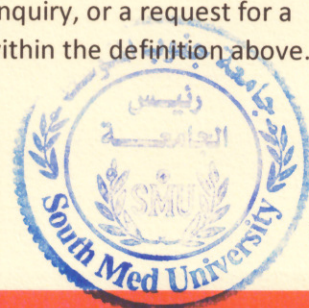
- handled promptly, fairly, and objectively;
- investigated thoroughly and proportionately;
- treated confidentially, subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements;
- resolved, where possible, at the earliest appropriate stage;
- recorded and monitored appropriately; and
- used to support continuous improvement within the University.

3. Definition of a Complaint

For the purposes of this Policy, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or otherwise, concerning the quality, delivery, administration, conduct, decision-making, or other aspect of a service provided by, or on behalf of, South Mediterranean University, where the complainant expects a response or remedial action.

A complaint is distinct from a routine request for information, an academic enquiry, or a request for a service unless the matter involves an expression of dissatisfaction that falls within the definition above.

4. Scope



This Policy applies to complaints concerning University services, including, but not limited to:

- academic and teaching services;
- administrative and student support services;
- communication and customer service;
- staff or representative conduct;
- University procedures and decisions; and
- other services or activities provided by or on behalf of the University.

Where a complaint relates to a matter governed by a separate University procedure, regulation, or applicable external requirement, the University may refer or transfer the matter to the appropriate procedure. The complainant will be informed where this occurs.

5. Complaints Procedure

The University aims to resolve complaints **as promptly, fairly, and efficiently as reasonably practicable**.

5.1 Submission of Complaints

Complaints may be submitted in writing or electronically through the University's official complaints and feedback portal:

<https://www.smu.edu.ly/feedbackandcomplain/>

or via the email: k.jleta@smuni.ly

Where possible, a complaint should include:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- a clear description of the matter giving rise to the complaint;
- the date(s) on which the matter occurred;
- the name(s) or department(s) concerned, where known;
- any relevant supporting documentation or evidence; and
- the outcome or resolution sought by the complainant, where applicable.

The University may request additional information or documentation where this is reasonably necessary to investigate the complaint.

5.2 Verbal Complaints



Where a complaint is initially made verbally, including by telephone, the University may request that the complainant provide the complaint in writing before a formal investigation is commenced.

Where appropriate, University staff may assist the complainant in recording the substance of the complaint in writing. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the complaint is accurately documented and can be investigated fairly.

5.3 Acknowledgement and Initial Assessment

Upon receipt, the complaint will be reviewed and referred to the appropriate department, officer, or investigating manager for consideration.

The University may conduct an initial assessment to determine:

- the nature and scope of the complaint;
- the appropriate person or department responsible for investigating it;
- whether additional information is required;
- whether another University procedure applies; and
- whether any immediate action is necessary.

Where appropriate, complaints may be escalated to a more senior member of management to ensure impartiality and appropriate oversight.

5.4 Investigation

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly, objectively, and proportionately, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the issues raised.

The investigating manager or designated officer may:

- review relevant records, correspondence, and documentation;
- obtain information from relevant departments or members of staff;
- request further information from the complainant;
- interview relevant individuals where appropriate; and
- seek specialist or legal advice where necessary.

Any person involved in investigating a complaint must, as far as reasonably practicable, be sufficiently independent and free from any actual, potential, or perceived **conflict of interest**.

The University will consider relevant evidence before reaching a conclusion and will maintain an appropriate record of the investigation.



5.5 Response Times

The University aims to provide a substantive response to complaints within five (5) working days of receipt, where reasonably practicable.

Where the nature or complexity of a complaint requires a longer investigation, the University may extend the response period. In such circumstances, the complainant will be informed of the delay and, where appropriate, provided with an update on the progress of the investigation.

Where a full response cannot reasonably be provided within twenty (20) working days, the University will provide the complainant with a progress update within that period, explaining the reason for the delay and, where possible, indicating when a substantive response is expected.

Postal complaints may require additional time to be received and processed. Accordingly, the applicable response period will normally commence from the date on which the complaint is received by the University.

5.6 Outcome of the Investigation

Following completion of the investigation, the University will provide the complainant with a written response setting out where appropriate:

- the issues considered;
- the outcome of the investigation;
- the reasons for the decision reached;
- any corrective or remedial action to be taken; and
- any further internal review or escalation process available to the complainant.

Where a complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or otherwise found to have merit, the University will take reasonable and proportionate steps to remedy the matter and prevent, where practicable, its recurrence.

Where a complaint is not upheld, the University will provide an appropriate explanation based on the evidence and findings of the investigation.

5.7 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints will be handled with an appropriate degree of confidentiality and information will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to access it for the purpose of investigating, managing, or resolving the complaint, or where disclosure is required or permitted by law.

The University will process personal information relating to complaints in accordance with applicable data protection, privacy, and confidentiality requirements.

5.8 Protection from Detrimental Treatment



No individual will be subject to retaliation, victimization, intimidation, discrimination, or other detrimental treatment for making a complaint in good faith.

However, complaints that are deliberately false, malicious, abusive, vexatious, or made for an improper purpose may be dealt with in accordance with the University's applicable disciplinary or conduct procedures.

6. Record Keeping and Monitoring

The University will maintain appropriate records of complaints received, investigations undertaken, outcomes, and any remedial or corrective actions.

Complaint records may be reviewed periodically to identify recurring issues, risks, service deficiencies, or opportunities for improvement.

Where appropriate, anonymized or aggregated complaint information may be used for quality assurance, governance, risk management, service improvement, and regulatory or accreditation purposes.

7. Continuous Improvement

The University regards complaints as an important source of feedback and an opportunity to improve its services.

Relevant departments and managers should consider complaint outcomes when reviewing policies, procedures, staff practices, and service delivery, and should implement reasonable corrective or preventive measures where recurring or systemic issues are identified.

8. Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the University to ensure that it remains appropriate, effective, and consistent with applicable legal, regulatory, accreditation, and institutional requirements.

The University reserves the right to amend this Policy where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, institutional structures, or good governance practices.

