

COMPLAINT HANDLING GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to assist in the handling of student complaints not elsewhere addressed by other UM policies and procedures. For help deciding whether or not a student complaint can be resolved by existing policy/procedure:

- Review the student-related policies online: [Governing Documents: Students](#)
- Contact [Student Advocacy](#).

This document is a guideline only, and is intended to help students to bring forward complaints in a constructive matter.

Understanding Fairness

To decide which mechanism/support/service is the best option for a given student, it is helpful to understand how fairness works at the U of M. Whichever administrative staff makes a decision or hears a complaint, complete fairness requires **substantive fairness**, **procedural fairness**, and **relational fairness**. For detailed information about fairness and how to maintain it, view the [Understanding Fairness document online](#).

Bringing Forward a Complaint: A Step-by-step Process for Students

1. A complainant should first try to address their issue with the person directly involved (e.g.: professor in a course; graduate supervisor). Often complaints or concerns can be resolved quickly and easily in this way. For help resolving interpersonal conflict, contact the [Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management](#).
2. If the complaint is not resolved at the interpersonal level as above, the next step is to address the matter with the head of the respective Department.
3. If a complaint is still not resolved as above, it can be brought before the Dean or Director (or designate) of the respective Faculty/College/School or Administrative Unit.

NOTE: these levels will differ for undergraduate and graduate students. Please refer to the attached [flow chart](#) for further information

After Submitting a Complaint

After submitting your complaint, the administrator responsible for handling the complaint will attempt to facilitate a resolution to the matter. This may involve any or all of the following steps:

- Arrange individual meetings with the complainant and the respondent
- Advise the complainant of their options and what kinds of outcomes can be expected
- Investigate a complaint further, by contacting relevant individuals or offices for information
- Refer the matter to be considered by another administrator
- Determine an outcome or solution, and advise both the complainant or respondent
- Document all information related to the complaint resolution process

Sometimes a student may need help or advice with how to proceed. A student complainant can seek such help before starting the process, or at any time during the process. Campus offices that can help include:

- [Student Advocacy](#)
- [Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management](#)
- [UM Graduate Students' Association](#) or [Health Sciences Graduate Students' Association](#)
- [UM Student Union](#)
- [Student Counselling Centre](#)