



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for The University of Queensland

This is what was found by PlatyPod at The University of Queensland on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**

Staff and students are given these avenues to report or address discrimination (with three hyperlinks):

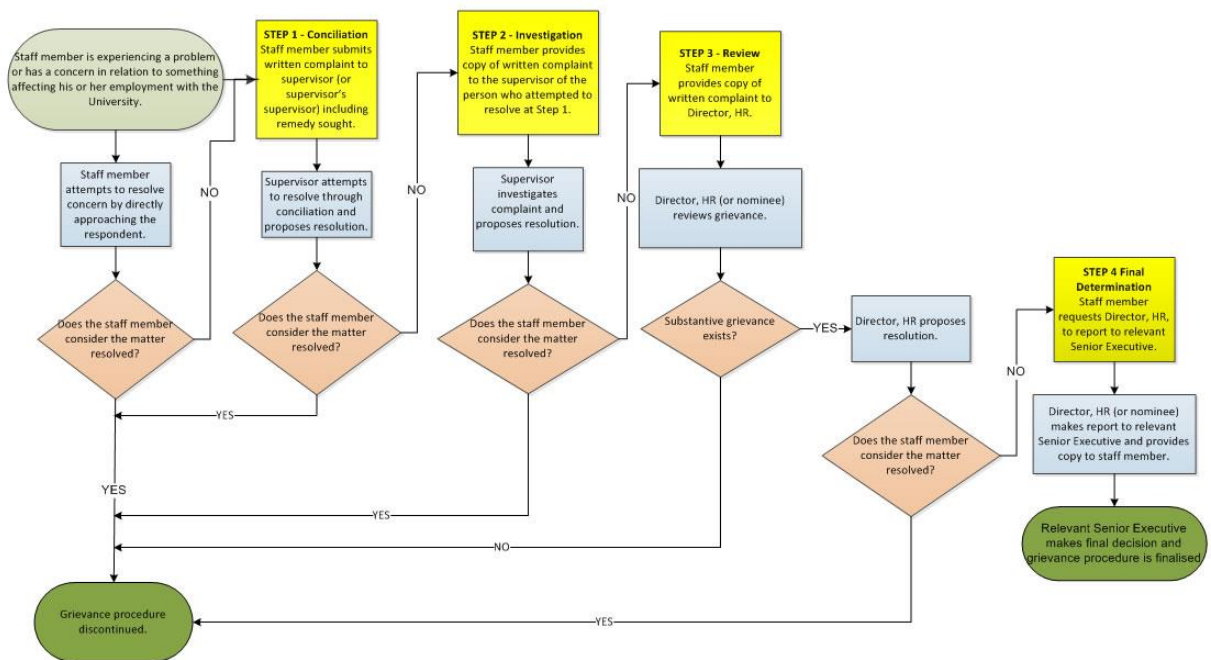
- supervisor
- a [Discrimination and Harassment Contact Officer](#)
- our [Sexual Misconduct Support Unit](#) or [First Responder Network](#)
- your [HR Client Services team](#)
- a member of the Workplace Relations team
- Workplace Diversity and Inclusion.

Volunteer staff can train to become Discrimination and Harassment Contact Officers (DHCO), who are available for students and/or staff for informal discussion. To become a DHCO, staff require permission from their direct supervisor. DHCO cannot formally speak for or progress paperwork for anyone. Their role is detailed here: <https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/human-resources/conduct-ethics/discrimination/contact-officers>. It should be noted that DHCO are asked where possible and as appropriate, to encourage parties to utilise the lower-level, informal processes available to them. “DHCOs will not:

- engage in advocacy on behalf of an individual
- undertake mediation or investigation
- become involved in the formal grievance resolution process prescribed by policy in any way other than as described in the role description
- act as a DHCO in situations where they may have a conflict of interest. In these situations, they are to refer the person to another DHCO.”

- The University of Queensland policies are linked here:
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au>
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.70-equity-and-diversity>
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.70.03-racism>
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.60.02-student-grievance-resolution>
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/5.70.08-staff-grievance-resolution>

○ *Link - Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies.* There is no unique policy for the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences. As far as Platypod is aware, there are no independent and formal lab, advisor or supervisor documents that outline group policies or expectations for behaviour.



Note: This is a quick reference guide only and should be used in conjunction with the Staff Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedures. Time limits apply.

○ *Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?*
 These section policies are not regularly reviewed. They were last reviewed in October 2014. There is no direct information on how to go about changing policy, yet there is a name and contact provided at the end of the policy outline. It is presumed interested parties would contact them to address changes and questions.

○ *Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?*
 No they are not public.

● **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**

○ *Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?*
<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.70.03-racism>

<https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/human-resources/conduct-ethics/discrimination/prevent>

There is a list of about 30 individuals for different academic programs. An interested party could use this list for a first contact point.

- *Can reports be made online? Where? No. Anonymously? No.*

There is not a designated online portal for complaints. Also, there is no anonymous link for complaints. However, there is an email and phone number provided on this page:

<https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/human-resources/conduct-ethics/discrimination/find-contact-officer> as well as the appropriate person to contact.

For cases of sexual harassment, assault and rape, there are anonymous, informal reports that can be made through the “Respect” initiative by:

- submitting a confidential online form
- calling +61 7 3443 1000
- emailing: sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au

By contacting Respect, the Sexual Misconduct Support Unit will get into touch with you to provide support, safe haven, and resources as needed. <https://respect.uq.edu.au/support/sexual-misconduct-support-unit-smsu>

- *Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?*

Unknown

- *Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?*

This information is not explicitly stated, for cases of racism and cases of bullying/harassment that do not fall under sexual harassment/misconduct.

- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**

- Staff actions: Informal resolution with third party present (third party must not be registered barrister/lawyer; union representatives are ok), training through HR, disciplinary action, termination

- *Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?*

Student: The level (minor, moderate, serious) of misconduct determines which decision-maker decides an allegation of student misconduct and the available penalties: Head of School, Executive Dean, or Disciplinary Board, respectively. An Integrity Officer will first launch an initial investigation within 20 days of the filed grievance. Integrity officers will make a decision that may involve counseling of the party by the officer, remedial activities and workshops, or to involve the decision-maker above with more serious grievances. Resolutions for serious misconduct is mandatory campus service, monetary compensation to aggrieved parties up to AUD500, weekly suspensions, cancellation of enrolment, full suspension at UQ up to 5 years, and expulsion. Appeals are heard by the Senate Discipline Appeals Committee.

<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.60.04-student-integrity-and-misconduct>

Staff: It appears the supervisor or next overseeing supervisor evaluates this, or alternately a DHCO. If the final decision is unacceptable to the filing party, the grievance can be reviewed

(see hierarchy picture above) by a series of administrative staff, HR, and then escalates to the senior administration level. There is no timeline specified other than “in a timely manner”.

<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/5.70.08-staff-grievance-resolution>

<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.70.06-discrimination-and-harassment#Procedures>

○ *Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?*

No. Filing individuals are unable to track their grievance progress outside of email correspondence.

○ *Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?*

Yes. See information above.

Example: Ongoing as of 3 Feb 2021- James Allen (UQ graduate student) filed a grievance in early 2020 on bullying/harassment by his supervisor. A link to his open letter to UQ describes lack of transparency and long timelines associated with UQ process in his case:

<https://twitter.com/jamesecology/status/1338357338449862656>

● **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**

○ Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender can be found through DHCO and UQ Ally networks (not formalised)

○ Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.

○ Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.

● **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**

Unfortunately there is no resource available for raising issues or proposing changes to policy and procedure.