



QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

12 January 2011

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

The UTM is committed to provide to its student an education and services of highest quality. However, it may happen from time to time that students may feel aggrieved by our services and may raise concerns about the quality of education being provided to them. This document sets out the process to be followed for formulating complaints. A complaint may be of technical, academic, administrative or of general nature, and would consequently, follow different path before it is resolved.

2. When to formulate a Complaint?

Complaints are normally not entertained, when established procedures exist, for instance, Academic Appeal. In such cases, students should use the established procedures which are elaborated in the University Regulations and the Student Quality Assurance Handbook.

Therefore, the Complaints Procedure should **not** be used in the following cases:

- i) Request to review results of assessment. The Academic Appeal process should be used instead.
- ii) Request to review decision of the Academic Council in connection with a disciplinary case. In such circumstance, a letter of appeal should be sent to the Registrar.

3. Who should formulate a Complaint?

Complaints may be formulated by individual students or by several students who wish to make a joint complaint or by the Student Representative of the Cohort on behalf of a group of students.

4. Before formulating a Complaint

Student should try to resolve their grievances informally first within the Schools and Departments. This will normally provide the quickest solution and will avoid the formality of submitting a Complaint Form.

As a matter of principle:

- If the complaint concerns the computer lab, talk to the Technician on duty;
- If the complaint is of administrative nature, talk to the School Administrative Officer or his/her representative;
- If the complaint is of academic nature, talk to:
 - the lecturer or
 - the programme coordinator
- If the complaint concerns the Resource Centre, talk to the Librarian;
- If the complaint is of general nature, talk to the Administrative Officer in charge of the Student Affairs or his/her representatives.

You may also wish to talk to the Student Representatives on the School Board, Academic Council or the Board of Governors.

5. Formulating a formal Complaint

If the informal process explained in para.4 above did not resolve your grievance satisfactorily, you may wish to inform the person(s) again about the situation. If you reasonably believe that the matter would not improve, then you may lodge a formal complaint on the Student Complaints Form (copies of the form are available in the School Office).

The Student Complaints Form should be completed in order to provide information clearly on:

- i) The nature of the complaint with date(s) and time(s) and how you are being affected;
- ii) Any evidence which may be available to support your complaint;
- iii) Any action(s) you have taken, with date and time, to try resolving the complaint, either informally or formally;

For complaints of academic nature: Send the Form to the Head of School.

For any other complaints: Send the Form to the Registrar.

On receiving the complaint, a receipt of acknowledgement should be sent to the complainer, except if the complaint is anonymous.

6. Resolving the Complaint

Once the complaint has been received by the Head of School or the Registrar, sufficient and reasonable time has to be allowed for addressing the issues raised. Depending on the complexity and sensitivity of the complaint, it might take a day to 2 weeks before any outcome is seen. While resolving the complaint, relevant staff should be involved and, if necessary, the student may be called upon to provide further clarifications or any supplementary information which may be necessary.

If the grievance is found to be frivolous or vexatious, or no grounds or evidence can be found justifying the grievance, no further action would be given, and the complainer would be informed of same verbally or in writing, except if the complaint is anonymous. In any case, the student should be kept informed of any progress made with respect to the complaint.

7. Word of Caution

Students should act responsibly when formulating complaints, and should ensure that their complaints are relevant to the affairs of the University and are not harmful, damaging and injurious. In such cases, the complainer may be called upon to depone and may be subject to disciplinary measures by the University. Where required, the legislation of the country would be applied.