



Mirpur University of Science & Technology (MUST) Mirpur AJ&K

GRIEVANCES / COMPLAINT POLICY

1. **INTRODUCTION.** Mirpur University of Science & Technology (MUST) recognizes that from time to time, students, faculty and staff may encounter academic and administrative issues or concerns which they wish to raise and have addressed. This Policy aims to encourage the prompt and effective resolution of such issues or concerns in a constructive, fair and equitable manner. It also aims to settle or redress any grievances at the lowest managerial level by methods acceptable to all parties as far as may be feasible.
2. **SCOPE.** The Grievances/Complaint Policy provides a framework within which complaints raised by students, academic and non-academic staff in relation to their 'grievances'.
3. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**
 - 3.1. Where appropriate, the university will seek to resolve issues on an informal basis, which may include the option of seeking resolution through a process of mediation or facilitated meeting(s).
 - 3.2. Each step and action under the procedure will be undertaken as quickly as practicable and without unreasonable delay.
 - 3.3. One is entitled to reasonable preparation time ahead of being required to attend an investigation, grievance or appeal meeting.
 - 3.4. Meetings will be conducted in a manner that enables all parties to explain their cases.
 - 3.5. The complainant must take all reasonable steps to attend any meetings which he/she is required to attend. If one fails to attend a Grievance or Appeal Hearing, one will be provided with a final invitation to attend a second Hearing. If one does not attend the second Hearing, consideration will be given to reaching a decision in one's absence on the evidence available.
 - 3.6. The complainant has a right to appeal against the outcome of the grievance.
 - 3.7. All written records, including documentary evidence and witness statements, will be classified as confidential in line with current legislation and held within the Director's Office in accordance with the University's records retention schedule.

- 3.8. While addressing any grievance, Academic Freedom is extended to all academic individuals, which includes freedom (within the law) for such individuals to:
- 3.9. Hold and express an opinion;
- 3.10. Question and test established ideas and received wisdom; and
- 3.11. Present controversial or unpopular points of view.
- 3.12. All formal written complaints will be submitted to and monitored from a centralized place to ensure effective monitoring, timely redressal, and further implementation of any outcome.

4. GRIEVANCES/COMPLAINT REDRESSAL PROCEDURE

4.1. Informal Opportunity to Resolve Grievance

- 4.1.1. Every effort will be made, wherever possible, to resolve issues on an informal basis in the first instance. Therefore, one should initially raise their concerns with their In charge/ Head of Department. If the complaints regarding one's In charge/ HoD, he/she should raise their concerns with an individual at the next level of the management structure within the Section/Faculty, (which may be the Dean/ Director), who will either him/herself look into the matter or nominate another appropriate individual to take the matter forward.
- 4.1.2. The parties will be offered the opportunity to engage in a process of mediation or facilitated meeting(s) to resolve the situation. They will also be given the opportunity to suggest potential solutions to resolve their grievance.
- 4.1.3. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of informal grievance redressal and wants to further escalate the complaint, the following procedure is to be followed:

- 4.2. **Formal Grievances/Complaint Redressal.** In order to ensure the prompt and effective resolution of any formally submitted issues or concerns in a constructive, fair and equitable manner, Mirpur University of Science & Technology (MUST), has designated specific office bearers to administratively process these complaints. In addition, the following offices may be reached out for the purpose. These include:

4.3. Office of the Registrar

- 4.3.1. The office of the Registrar will be responsible for formally handling all written complaints.

4.4. Grievance Committees

- 4.4.1. **University Grievance Committee.** The composition of University Grievance Committee (UGC) is as under:-

i. Senior Dean	Chairman
ii. 1x Professor /Associate Professor MUST	Member
iii. Director QEC	Member
iv. Any Official as deemed necessary by Chairman	Member
v. Additional Registrar	Member/Secretary

5. Process for Formal Grievances/Complaint Redressal

5.1. Complaint Logging

- 5.1.1. Once a complaint is formally submitted to the respective Director or Registrar Office, the following procedure will be followed:
- 5.1.2. The complaints will be logged in a systematic way, and a complaint/ diary number will be generated and provided to the complainant.
- 5.1.3. The Director office will keep the original complaint in record, and will send a copy to the respective In charge / HoD (Designated Individual). If the grievance is regarding applicant's Incharge, it will be sent to an individual in the next level of the management structure.

5.2. Stage 1: Section/Departmental Level Consideration

- 5.2.1. Once the complaint is received by the Designated Individual in section/department/faculty, he/she is required to review the complaint.
- 5.2.2. The Designated Individual, at this stage may or may not contact the applicant for further information or documents, or may call the applicant for a meeting.
- 5.2.3. The Designated Individual will submit a formal response to the director's office within five working days.

5.2.4. Section / Department Level Decision

- 5.2.4.1. The Director Office will communicate the section/department Level response to the complainant.
- 5.2.4.2. If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, a formal confirmation of satisfaction will be taken from the complainant, the matter will be formally closed, and filed in records.
- 5.2.4.3. If the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint and the section / department level response along with any additional documents will be automatically forwarded to the respective University Grievances/Complaint Committee. UGC will have 15 working days to formally respond to the complaint.

5.2.4.4. Grievance Not Upheld

- 5.2.4.4.1. If committee decides that the grievance should not be upheld, the applicant will be advised that the matter has been concluded.
- 5.2.4.4.2. The applicant will also be advised of their right to appeal against the outcome before the University Grievance Committee.

5.3. Stage 3: Appeal to Competent/ Appellant Authority

- 5.3.1. If the applicant remains dissatisfied following the UGC's decision, he/she may invoke the final stage of the formal Grievance Procedure which involves the grievance being heard by the competent authority the competent authority may constitute an appeal committee. Notification of an intention to appeal against the outcome (including the full grounds for appeal) must be made in writing within 5 working days from the date of issue of the decision. The detailed grounds of the appeal should be lodged within 10 working days from the date of the original intimation of intention to appeal.
- 5.3.2. The chairman appeal committee will hold the committee meeting as soon as conveniently possible and may call all/any concerned parties for their input.
- 5.3.3. **Appeal Committee Decision.** Once the committee has come to a decision, it will communicate the decision to the applicant, and will return all documentation along with the decision to the respective UGC, who will then file/submit the to respective Office for record keeping.
 - 5.3.3.1. **Grievance Upheld/Partially Upheld.** Where the grievance is upheld or partially upheld, the applicant will be notified of this. In addition, the committee will normally seek to recommend constructive solutions to resolve the concerns which were raised, and advise all parties of the timescale for their implementation and review. Such solutions will be passed on to the respective authorities for review and subsequent implementation.
 - 5.3.3.2. **Grievance Not Upheld**
 - 5.3.3.2.1. If committee decides that the grievance should not be upheld, the applicant will be advised that the matter has been concluded.
 - 5.3.3.2.2. The applicant will also be advised of their right to appeal against the outcome before the University Grievance Committee.