



SEDBERGH INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Staff Grievance Procedure	
Version	2024.1
Effective from	April 2024
Extent of Policy	Sedbergh International Summer School
Policy Owner	Gemma Newton
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Circulation	Staff

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Grievances can arise from a variety of sources. They can arise among members of the staff, with the Course Directors or with the COO. This procedure applies to all members of staff of Sedbergh International Summer School (“the Summer School”) regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. However, this policy does not form part of any member of staff’s contract of employment and the Summer School may amend it at any time.
- 1.2 The Summer School is committed to creating an environment of positive working relationships. To create and protect such an environment, the Summer School has policies and procedures which enable staff to raise concerns and for these to be addressed. However, this policy is not intended to inhibit reasonable and effective management of staff and where action is being taken under capability or disciplinary procedures, it will not automatically be suspended where a grievance is raised.
- 1.3 The Summer School operates a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable staff to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where a member of staff is directly affected by the matter in question, or where they feel they have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, they may raise the matter under this Grievance Procedure.

- 1.4 This procedure is designed to enable Course Director, COO and employees to foster good relations by:-
 - 1.4.1 Discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
 - 1.4.2 Assisting the resolution of individual grievances in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality;
 - 1.4.3 Enabling grievances to be settled as near as possible to their point of origin; and
 - 1.4.4 Ensuring that grievances are dealt with fully, promptly and fairly.

- 1.5 In some circumstances, it may not be appropriate for this procedure to be used:
 - 1.5.1 If a member of staff's grievance relates to matters which are being investigated or are connected with current disciplinary proceedings or any disciplinary sanction that has been imposed against that member of staff, the member of staff should usually follow the separate disciplinary appeals procedure.
 - 1.5.2 The Summer School has a separate procedure for dealing with complaints of discrimination, harassment or bullying, and members of staff should refer to that procedure if they have such a complaint.
 - 1.5.3 This procedure will not apply in respect of any collective disputes. Please refer to the HR Dept for further information or guidance if you think this might be the case.
 - 1.5.4 This procedure applies only to members of the staff of the Summer School and does not apply to former employees of the Summer School.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 The aim of the procedure is to deal with any grievance at an appropriate level, within a reasonable timescale and to the satisfaction of all those involved.

- 2.2 All complaints made under this procedure will be treated seriously and with discretion. Proceedings and records of any grievance will be kept as confidential as possible, but members of staff must appreciate that complaints cannot always be formally investigated on an entirely confidential basis.

- 2.3 Every effort will be made to hold a meeting to discuss the member of staff's grievance or appeal (see Stage 2 and 3, below), and to provide a decision, within the relevant timescales provided under this procedure. However, if the matter is a complex one or if it requires detailed investigation, or if the relevant personnel are unavailable, it may not be possible to meet those timescales. In these circumstances, the member of staff will be informed of the reason(s) for the delay, and the timescale in which a meeting will be held or a decision can be expected.

- 2.4 The member of staff should make every effort to attend any meeting arranged to discuss their grievance. A note taker will also be present, and will keep a record of what is discussed and any outcomes agreed at the meeting.

- 2.5 A member of staff may be accompanied (if he/she reasonably requests) to any grievance meeting at which their grievance is discussed with them, and at any subsequent appeal hearing, by another member of staff of the Summer School, or other chosen companion, to be agreed in advance.
- 2.6 It is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure that their chosen companion is willing to accompany them and is available to attend the meeting. If the member of staff's chosen companion is unavailable on the proposed date of the meeting, the meeting may be postponed by up to five working days at the member of staff's request.
- 2.7 The members of staff's chosen companion shall be allowed to address such a meeting to put and sum up the member of staff's case, respond on behalf of the member of staff to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the member of staff during the meeting. The chosen companion shall not have the right to answer questions on the member of staff's behalf, address the meeting if the member of staff does not wish it or prevent the Summer School from explaining its case.
- 2.8 Members of staff have the right to appeal against the Summer School's decision in respect of their grievance, as provided for below.
- 2.9 Whilst the Summer School will consider all grievances raised by employees under this procedure, employees are encouraged to act responsibly by ensuring that grievances are not submitted which are vexatious, malicious or otherwise not made in good faith. Such complaints place an unnecessary burden on the Summer School and may cause distress for anyone who may be the subject of that grievance.

3. Mediation

- 3.1 The Summer School aims to resolve disputes in the workplace. Where appropriate, the Summer School and its staff may consider resolving disputes through mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process and will only take place with the agreement of both parties. Mediation will be conducted by a mediator (who may be from outside of the Summer School). The role of the mediator will be to facilitate a mutually acceptable agreement in relation to the dispute by identifying common aims and objectives, re-establishing lines of communication and developing proposals for settlement between the parties. The mediator will be independent and neutral to the dispute.
- 3.2 If an agreement is reached through mediation, the mediator may require the parties to sign a written agreement setting out the terms agreed.
- 3.3 Mediation may be attempted at any stage of the grievance procedure. If both parties agree to mediation, the grievance procedure will be suspended whilst mediation is attempted. In the event that a mutually acceptable agreement is not reached through the mediation process, the grievance procedure will be reconvened at the point of adjournment.

- 3.4 Either party may end mediation proceedings at any stage and revert to the formal grievance procedure.

4. Procedure

4.1 Stage 1 – Raising grievances informally

Where possible, members of staff should first raise any complaint or grievance connected with their employment by discussing it informally with their supervisor or line manager or, where the grievance involves another member of staff, by trying to resolve it directly with the person concerned. As an alternative, and if the complaint relates to his/her supervisor or line manager, the member of staff can discuss the matter on an informal basis with another manager. Where the member of staff's complaint cannot be resolved informally, it should be raised using the formal procedure set out below.

4.2 Stage 2 – Formal written grievance

If a member of staff's complaint remains unresolved, or if the member of staff was unable to raise the matter informally, the member of staff should set out, in writing his/her grievance and send it to his/her supervisor or line manager. If the problem relates to the supervisor or line manager, the grievance will be dealt with by the next appropriate supervisor or manager, or, if no other suitable manager is available, by the Course Directors or Business Development Director, and the member of staff may choose to send it directly to them.

- 4.3 If a Course Director, or Business Development Director wishes to raise a grievance he/she should contact the COO. If this is not appropriate due to the COO's involvement with the grievance, he/she should contact the Chairman of Governors.

- 4.4 The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of the complaint, including the relevant facts, any relevant dates, and the names of individuals involved. In some situations, the Summer School may ask the member of staff to provide further information.

- 4.5 The person considering the grievance will investigate the circumstances of the grievance and invite the member of staff to attend a meeting with him/her to discuss the grievance. The time involved in respect of investigating any grievance will depend upon the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case, however, normally, the grievance meeting will be arranged within five working days of receipt of the member of staff's written complaint.

- 4.6 Following the meeting, the person considering the grievance will prepare a summary of the member of staff's complaint, his/her decision and the solution(s) proposed (if any). Normally, a copy of this document will be provided to the member of staff within five working days of the meeting, and a copy will be placed on the individual's personnel file. The member of staff shall be notified of the right to appeal against the decision, if he/she is not satisfied with it.

4.7 **Stage 3 - Appeal**

If the grievance has not been resolved to the member of staff's satisfaction at Stage 2 of this procedure, the member of staff must inform the person who made the decision of his/her wish to appeal and the grounds of his/her appeal. The appeal should be lodged, in writing, within five working days of the member of staff receiving notification of the original decision.

4.8 Where possible, the appeal will be dealt with impartially by someone who has not previously been involved in the case, and an appeal meeting will normally be arranged within 5 working days of receipt of the member of staff's request to appeal. The original written grievance, the record of the grievance meeting and the decision will be passed to the individual dealing with the appeal, which will normally be as follows:

4.8.1 one of the Course Directors or COO will hear the appeal where the original grievance was heard by a supervisor or line manager; or,

4.8.2 the Chairman of the Governing Body will arrange for a sub-committee of the governing body to hear the appeal where the original grievance was dealt with by a Course Director or COO.

4.9 If a Governor made the decision that is being appealed to the Chairman, he/she will not be entitled to sit on the appeal sub-committee.

4.10 The COO or sub-committee that hears the appeal will normally inform the member of staff in writing of the Summer School's final decision within five working days of the appeal meeting. The member of staff will have no further right of appeal.