

## GUIDE TO SCU COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR MAIN CAMPUS, EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS AND COLLABORATIONS

### Contents

[Guide Status and Details](#)

[Purpose of Guide](#)

[SCU Complaints Policy, Webpage and Flowchart](#)

[Sources of Advice](#)

[Procedures](#)

[Feedback and Enquiries](#)

[Informal Complaint Process](#)

[\*Informal Complaint Option 1 - Raising an informal complaint and resolving locally\*](#)

[\*Informal Complaint Option 2 - Submitting or Referring an informal complaint to SCU\*](#)

[Formal complaint Process \\* MUST BE REFERRED TO SCU](#)

[How SCU's CAO Manages Formal Complaints](#)

[Anonymous Complaints](#)

[Withdrawal of a Complaint](#)

[Protections against Risk of Reprisal, Victimization or Retaliation](#)

[Complaints Reporting](#)

[Support Services - Students and Staff](#)

[Appendix A: The SCU Feedback and Complaints Flowchart](#)

[Appendix B: Template email for Informal Complaint Option 1 - managed locally](#)

[Appendix C: Template email for Informal Complaint Option 1 - Resolution locally](#)

[Appendix D: Template email for Informal Complaint Option 2 - referral to SCU](#)

[Appendix E: Template email for Referral of Formal Complaint to SCU.](#)

## 1. Guide Status and Details

Effective Date: 03.09.24. Updated 1.5.26

Approval Authority: Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality)

Head of Work Unit: Professor Thomas Roche

Enquiries: Southern Cross University Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

## 2. Purpose of Guide

Southern Cross University (SCU) has under its [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#) an established framework which provides for students and members of the public to make enquiries, provide feedback, or a complaint about the University, its partners or agents or any services offered by the University or its staff, at no cost.

The framework adopts a [trauma-informed approach](#) to complaint handling and offers restorative engagement processes where appropriate.

This guide sets out that framework, and the process for making enquiries, providing feedback, and for the timely and fair resolution of complaints in accordance with that framework.

SCU is required, under our regulator TEQSA, to have one approach to complaints, and be able to report on all complaints as such. **It is therefore imperative that the SCU complaint framework and process for any student, whether at main campus or at partner/collaborations is adhered to.**

## 3. SCU Complaints Policy, Webpage and Flowchart

The SCU Complaints Policy can be viewed and downloaded at [Complaints Policy - Students and Members of the Public / Document / Policy Library \(scu.edu.au\)](#)

The SCU Complaints Framework webpage can be viewed at <https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/services-and-support/feedback-and-complaints/>

[Feedback and Complaints Flowchart](#) (Attachment A). This flowchart shows the different pathways for feedback, informal and formal complaints, HR complaints, student misconduct, and Gender-Based Violence.

## 4. Sources of Advice

SCU's Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) is the University's primary source of advice available for all parties, and advice can be sought by emailing [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

Additionally, [Student Advocacy](#) and [Equity and Inclusion](#) are available to assist all students including international students and those with a disability in regard to a complaint.

## 5. Procedures

### a. Feedback and Enquiries

Feedback and enquiries are welcomed and should be seen as an opportunity for improvement. These can be managed locally or referred to SCU if appropriate to do so.

### b. Informal Complaint Process

An informal complaint involves discussion between relevant parties towards an outcome focused resolution.

Cultural considerations may mean a student wishes to first talk with their local contact. Students have the option to raise an informal complaint at the local level, **OR** to submit their informal complaint direct to SCU. The process for both options are detailed further below.

**i. Informal Complaint Option 1 - Raising an informal complaint and resolving locally**

The process for option 1 is:

1.	receive 'informal' complaint from student.
2.	Email student acknowledging receipt of 'informal' complaint within 5 business days, using email Template <a href="#">Appendix B</a> .
3.	attempt to resolve informal complaint (within 20 business days of receipt).
4.	Following resolution (or not), email student a summary of informal complaint and resolution (incl. rights to lodge a formal complaint with SCU if dissatisfied with outcome of informal complaint) using email template <a href="#">Appendix C</a> .
5.	keep a record of the informal complaint and outcome in a secure register

**ii. Informal Complaint Option 2 - Submitting or Referring an informal complaint to SCU**

The process for option 2 is:

1.	receive 'informal' complaint from student - who requests it be referred to SCU or, you may provide the student with the link to SCU's online form <a href="#">Lodge an Informal Complaint</a> )
2.	where you have received an informal complaint, email student acknowledging receipt and referral of 'informal' complaint within 5 business days, using email Template <a href="#">Appendix D</a> .
3.	SCU's CAO attempts to resolve informal complaint, in consultation with relevant staff (within 20 business days of receipt).
4.	Following resolution (or not), SCU's CAO emails student a summary of informal complaint and resolution (incl. rights to lodge a formal complaint if dissatisfied with outcome of informal complaint)

**c. Formal complaint Process \* MUST BE REFERRED TO SCU**

A formal complaint is a written expression of dissatisfaction about the University; services offered by the University, its staff or educational partners; or the handling of an informal complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Formal complaints **MUST** be referred to SCU, and the process for this is detailed below.

1.	receive 'formal' complaint from student or you may provide the student with the link to SCU's online form <a href="#">Lodge a Formal Complaint</a>
2.	where you have received a formal complaint, email student acknowledging receipt and referral to SCU within 5 business days using email Template <a href="#">Appendix E</a> .

**END OF PROCESS FOR MAIN CAMPUS, EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION OR PARTNER REGARDING 'FORMAL' COMPLAINT – SCU's CAO TAKES OVER AT THIS POINT - SEE 6 BELOW.**

## 6. How SCU's CAO Manages Formal Complaints

The SCU CAO:

1.	receives 'formal' complaint, and initiates formal complaint process, including seeking relevant preliminary information with relevant persons as necessary.
2.	refers the formal complaint to the SCU delegated University Officer for management under Part F of the Policy
3.	keeps student informed about progress of formal complaint.
4.	Issues Formal Complaint outcome to student (incl. rights to external review if dissatisfied with outcome of formal complaint).
5.	keeps a record of the complaint and outcome in a secure Complaints register

## 7. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints and feedback can be submitted through the Complaints form on the [website](#) by selecting the 'I wish to remain anonymous' option. Anonymous complaints will be accepted, reviewed and investigated to the extent possible, but only where sufficient information has been provided. The anonymous complaint and outcome will be recorded in the University's secure Complaints Register.

## 8. Withdrawal of a Complaint

Any student or member of the public may withdraw their complaint at any stage of the informal or formal process. If the formal process is underway, any withdrawal must be in writing. In most instances, the University will then consider the complaint resolved. However, in certain circumstances the University may deem the complaint serious enough for an internal investigation to continue or for referral to an external agency. Please contact SCU's Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) at [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au) for advice.

## 9. Protections against Risk of Reprisal, Victimisation or Retaliation

University employees, its partners or agents, and University Students must not engage in the reprisal, victimisation, or retaliation, or threaten to commit an act of reprisal, victimisation or retaliation against any person who has made a complaint or makes enquiries about making a complaint. Disciplinary action may be taken by the University in such circumstances, as set out in the [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#).

## 10. Record keeping of Informal Complaints - Local

For informal complaints which are not referred to the CAO, the University employee, or educational partner employee responsible for managing the informal complaint must keep confidential, accurate and complete records in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy](#).

## 11. Record keeping and Reporting of Complaints Received by SCU

The CAO is responsible for the recording of all complaints received by the University's complaints office (regardless of location) in secure University complaints register, and reporting on those to University Executive, Committees, Boards and Council, and TEQSA as requested.

It is acknowledged that many of you may be responsible for reporting on complaints to other committees. Please contact the CAO via [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au) in regard to any requests regarding your reporting requirements.

## 12. Support Services - Students and Staff

### SCU Student Support Services

The University acknowledges that the complaint process may be challenging for students and they may wish to seek out support services. The University offers free and confidential support services, including wellbeing support, counselling, disability, and mental health support, which can be accessed at [Services and Support](#). In addition, a free, confidential and independent student advocacy service is available to all enrolled students, with further information on the website [Student Advocacy Service](#).

Locally at the educational partner, students may access support via [<include local support information here>](#).

### External Student Support Services

In the case of an **emergency**, call 000 (triple zero). Students can also access the **24/7 Mental Health Support Line**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1300 782 676 or Text 0488 884 143 for free and confidential mental health support. Or the following external counselling/crisis support services:

<a href="#">Lifeline</a> 13 11 14	<a href="#">Beyond Blue</a> 1300 224 636	<a href="#">ReachOut</a> *online
<a href="#">Suicide Call Back Service</a> 1300 659 467	<a href="#">ATSI Crisis Support</a> 13 92 76 (13YARN)	<a href="#">QLife LGBTIQ+</a> 1800 184 527
<a href="#">Multicultural Mental Health</a> 02 6285 3100	<a href="#">headspace</a> *online	<a href="#">Kids Helpline</a> 1800 551 800
<a href="#">MensLine Australia</a> 1300 789 978	<a href="#">Head to Health</a> 1800 595 212	<a href="#">Askizzy</a> Search crisis service close to you
<a href="#">Mindframe</a> *online	<a href="#">1800RESPECT</a> 1800 737 732	<a href="#">SANE</a> *online
General Practitioner/GP (doctor)	Hospital Emergency Department	<b>000</b> in the case of an emergency

### University Employee Support Services

All University employees and their family members can access confidential counselling, coaching, and support services through the University's [Employee Assistance Program](#), delivered by Assure Programs. This service provides access to qualified health professionals who can assist with work, personal, or family-related concerns. Support is available in person, via phone (1800 808 374), text (0439 449 876), or online.

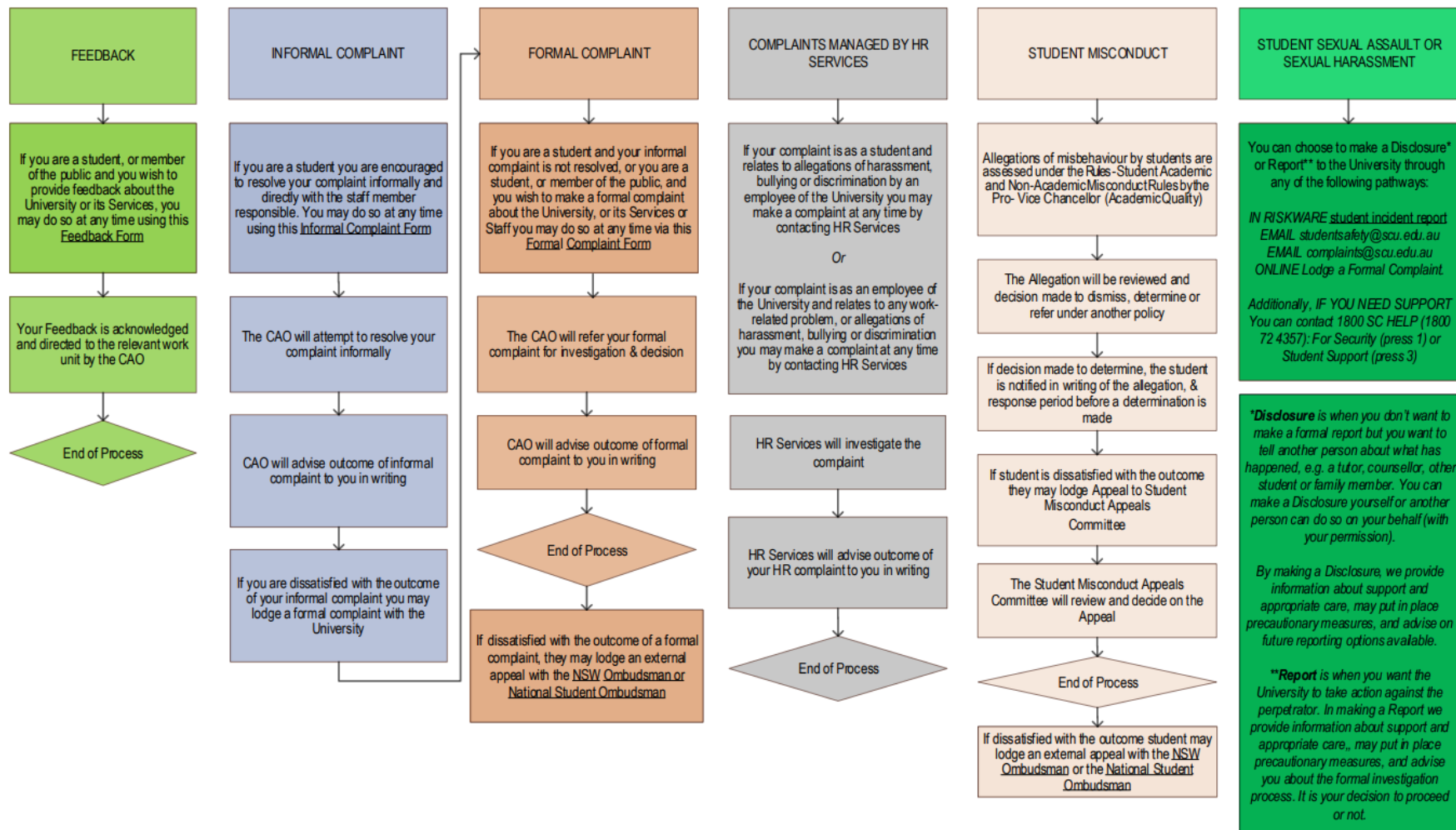
## Appendix A: The SCU Feedback and Complaints Flowchart

The flowchart shown below can also be viewed and downloaded at [Feedback and Complaints Flowchart](#)

**SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS FRAMEWORK – PATHWAY AND PROCESS**

The University recognises the important role of feedback from students, staff and members of the public to promote a healthy, safe and productive environment which engages with our community. Our Feedback and Complaints Framework provides for submission of feedback, and the timely and fair resolution of both informal and formal complaints. There are different pathways for feedback, informal and formal complaints, sexual assault or sexual harassment, and those complaints managed by HR Services. **This flowchart outlines the pathway and process for each type.**

For advice, please contact the Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) via e-mail: [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au). International students in need of assistance may also contact the [International Student Support](#) team for advice.



## Appendix B: Template email for **Informal Complaint Option 1 – Managed locally**

acknowledges receipt of 'informal' complaint which will be managed locally

To: student email address

Email Subject line: Confidential - Acknowledgement of informal complaint: student name & SCU Student ID

cc. [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

Dear [student name],

Thank you for contacting our office. We acknowledge receipt of your informal complaint.

In accordance with the Southern Cross University (SCU) [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#) we will attempt to find a positive resolution as quickly as possible, normally within 20 working days, and keep you updated until an outcome can be provided.

### **Support Services**

We acknowledge that the complaint process may be challenging and you may wish to seek out support services. SCU offers free and confidential support services, including wellbeing support, counselling, disability, and mental health support, which can be accessed at [Services and Support](#). In addition, a free, confidential and independent student advocacy service is available to all enrolled students, with further information on the website [Student Advocacy Service](#).

Locally, you can access support via [\[include local support information here\]](#).

Kind regards,

**Signature**

## Appendix C: Template email for **Informal Complaint Option 1 - Resolved locally**

*provides student with outcome of 'informal' complaint managed locally*

To: student email address

Email Subject line: Confidential – Outcome of informal complaint: student name & SCU Student ID

cc. [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

Dear [student],

A review of your informal complaint has been undertaken by **title and name of staff member** in accordance with the Southern Cross University (SCU) [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#).

In terms of a resolution, please be advised that:

**Provide information regarding what actions were taken and the outcome.**

We thank you for raising your informal complaint with us, and hope that the outcome is to your satisfaction.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may **Lodge a Formal Complaint**. This form, and more information about complaints, is available at <https://www.scu.edu.au/current-students/services-and-support/feedback-and-complaints/>.

### **Support Services**

We acknowledge that the complaint process may be challenging and you may wish to seek out support services. SCU offers free and confidential support services, including wellbeing support, counselling, disability, and mental health support, which can be accessed at [Services and Support](#). In addition, a free, confidential and independent student advocacy service is available to all enrolled students, with further information on the website [Student Advocacy Service](#).

Locally, you can access support via **[include local support information here]**.

Kind regards,

**Signature**

## Appendix D: Template email for Informal Complaint Option 2 – Referral to SCU

acknowledges receipt of 'informal' complaint which student wants referred to SCU CAO

To: student email address

Email Subject line: Confidential - Acknowledgement and referral of informal complaint: student name & SCU Student ID

cc. [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

Dear [student],

Thank you for contacting our office.

We acknowledge receipt of your informal complaint and request for it to be referred to the Complaints Assistance Officer at Southern Cross University (SCU) to be managed informally under the [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#).

SCU will attempt to find a positive resolution as quickly as possible, normally within 20 working days, and keep you updated until an outcome can be provided.

### Support Services

We acknowledge that the complaint process may be challenging and you may wish to seek out support services. SCU offers free and confidential support services, including wellbeing support, counselling, disability, and mental health support, which can be accessed at [Services and Support](#). In addition, a free, confidential and independent student advocacy service is available to all enrolled students, with further information on the website [Student Advocacy Service](#).

Locally, you can access support via [\[include local support information here\]](#).

Kind regards,

Signature

## Appendix E: Template email for Referral of Formal Complaint to SCU

acknowledges receipt of 'formal' complaint and refers to SCU

To: **student email address**

**Email Subject line:** Confidential - Acknowledgement and referral of formal complaint: **student name & SCU Student ID**

cc. [complaints@scu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@scu.edu.au)

Dear **[student]**,

Thank you for contacting our office. We acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint.

Your complaint is hereby referred to the Complaints Assistance Officer at Southern Cross University (SCU) to be managed formally under the [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#).

SCU will investigate this matter and attempt to find a positive resolution, normally within 20 working days, and keep you updated until an outcome can be provided.

### **Support Services**

We acknowledge that the complaint process may be challenging and you may wish to seek out support services. SCU offers free and confidential support services, including wellbeing support, counselling, disability, and mental health support, which can be accessed at [Services and Support](#). In addition, a free, confidential and independent student advocacy service is available to all enrolled students, with further information on the website [Student Advocacy Service](#).

Locally, you can access support via **[include local support information here]**.

Kind regards,

**Signature**