

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

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Purpose of Guide

SCU has an established Feedback and Complaints Framework which provides for submission of feedback and the timely and fair resolution of complaints.

This guide sets out the Southern Cross University (SCU) Complaints Framework, and the process for receiving and managing 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.**

SCU's Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) coordinates, records and reports on ALL complaints (regardless of location).

Advice can be sought from SCU's Complaints Assistance Officer by emailing complaints@scu.edu.au

Guide Status and Details

Effective Date: 03.09.24

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

SCU Complaints Policy, Framework and Webpage

- 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 shows you the different pathways for feedback, informal and formal complaints, HR complaints and student misconduct.

Informal complaints - Advice and Process

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.

Before proceeding, please note the following extract from the SCU [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public, Part A – Informal Complaints](#)

- *Any student or member of the public may make an informal complaint at any time.*
- *Many problems can be resolved informally and complainants are encouraged to try to resolve the issue directly with the person concerned. Alternatively, an informal complaint can be made through the appropriate member of University staff at the local level such as a Supervisor, Executive Dean or College Dean. Advice can also be sought from the Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) on the most appropriate contact.*
- *The University expects any staff member contacted about a complaint to provide the complainant with information about how to pursue the complaint, including referral to an appropriate contact or information on the University's web page about pursuing their complaint.*
- *Staff members who receive an informal complaint are encouraged to resolve these as quickly and informally as possible, normally within 20 working days of the complaint being raised.*

Where the informal complaint cannot be resolved in this timeframe, the CAO must be informed and the complaint may be referred to the formal process.

- *If a student or member of the public is dissatisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint, they may lodge a formal complaint.*

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

The process for this option is:

- receive 'informal' complaint from student.
- Email student acknowledging receipt of 'informal' complaint within 5 business days, cc to SCU's CAO (see email Template at Appendix B).
- attempt to resolve informal complaint (within 20 business days of receipt).
- Following resolution (or not), email student a summary of informal complaint and resolution (incl. rights to lodge a formal complaint if dissatisfied with outcome of informal complaint) cc to SCU's CAO (see email template at Appendix C).

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

The process for this option is:

- receive 'informal' complaint from student who wishes to submit to SCU (or you might direct student to SCU's online informal complaint form [Lodge an Informal Complaint](#))
- email student acknowledging receipt and referral of 'informal' complaint within 5 business days, cc to SCU's CAO (see email Template at Appendix D).
- SCU's CAO attempts to resolve informal complaint, in consultation with relevant staff (within 20 business days of receipt).
- 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) cc to relevant staff.

Formal complaints - Advice and Process * must be referred to SCU

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

Before proceeding, please note the following extract from the SCU [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public, Part B – Formal Complaints](#)

- *A formal complaint is a written complaint lodged with SCU's CAO, which is dealt with through a formal process of the University as described at Part F.*
- *Any student or member of the public can make a formal complaint at any time including if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of any informal complaint already made after receiving notification of the outcome of an informal complaint.*
- *If you receive a 'formal complaint' you must refer it to the CAO.*

The Process of submitting a formal complaint to SCU is:

- receive 'formal' complaint from student, or you might direct student to SCU's online formal complaint form [Lodge a Formal Complaint](#)
- email student acknowledging receipt of 'formal' complaint (and referral to SCU) within 5 business days cc to SCU's CAO (see email Template at Appendix E).

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

How SCU's CAO Manages Formal Complaints

- a) SCU CAO receives 'formal' complaint and initiates formal complaint process, adding to central register, and discussion/request for information with relevant persons as necessary.
- b) SCU CAO refers the complaint to the delegated SCU University Officer who commences an assessment of the complaint within 10 working days.
- c) SCU CAO keeps student informed about progress of formal complaint, cc relevant persons.
- d) SCU CAO emails student outcome of formal complaint (incl. rights to lodge external appeal with NSW Ombudsman if dissatisfied with outcome of formal complaint) cc to relevant persons.

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 Complaints Register.

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 deem 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 for advice.

Reporting

SCU's Complaints Assistance Officer (CAO) is responsible for recording ALL complaints in a central register, and reporting on those complaints monthly to SCU University Executive (and additionally in accordance with any TEQSA requirements). All educational collaborations, partners or Faculties may request from the CAO to receive an extract from the monthly report (specific to their location/Faculty).

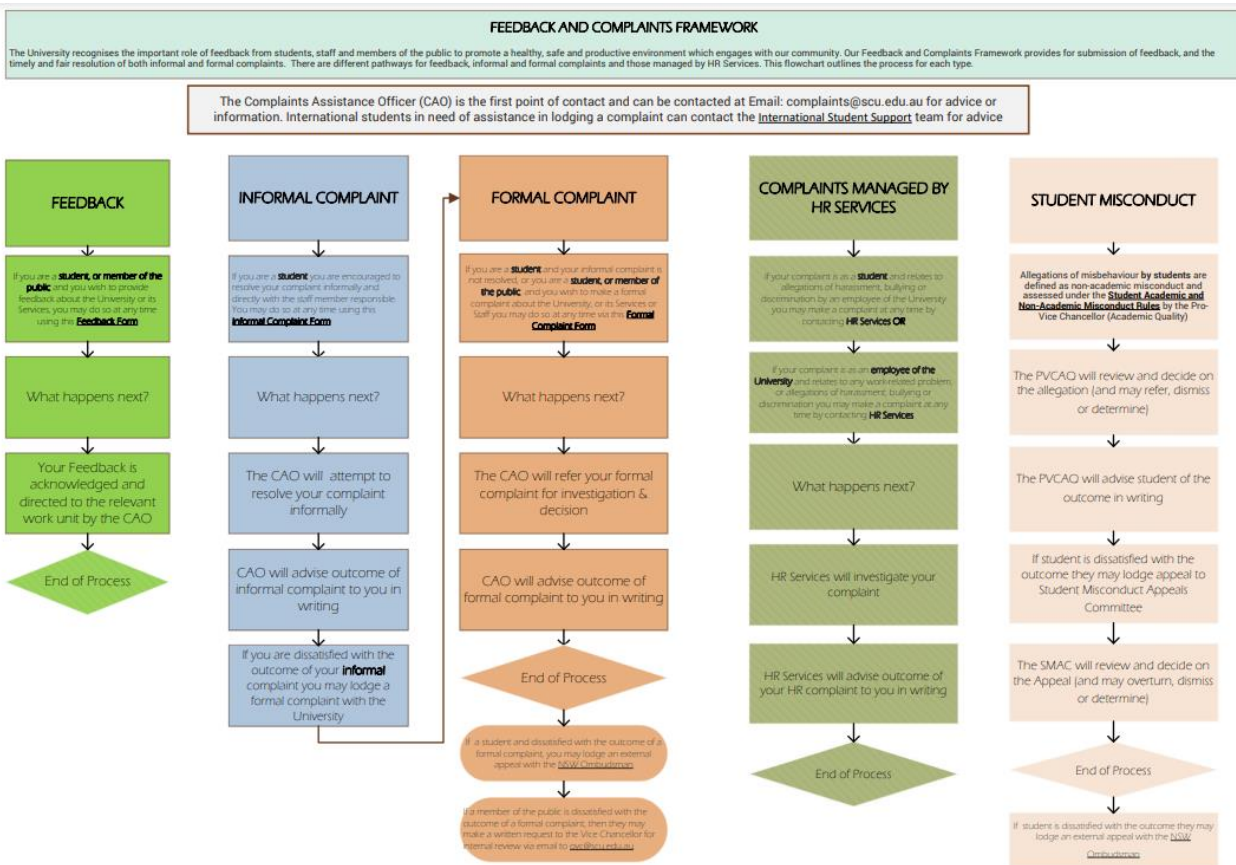
It is acknowledged that many of you may be responsible for reporting on complaints to other committees. You are encouraged to liaise with the CAO via complaints@scu.edu.au in regard to your reporting requirements.

List of Appendices

- Appendix A: The SCU Feedback and Complaints Flowchart
What goes where (feedback, informal, formal, HR complaints, Student Misconduct)
- Appendix B: Template email for **Informal Complaint Option 1 – managed locally**
acknowledges receipt of 'informal' complaint which will be managed locally
- Appendix C: Template email for **Informal Complaint Option 1 Resolution locally**
provides student with outcome of 'informal' complaint managed locally
- Appendix D: Template email for **Informal Complaint Option 2 – referral to SCU.**
acknowledges receipt of 'informal' complaint, and referral to SCU
- Appendix E: Template email for **Referral of Formal Complaint to SCU.**
acknowledges receipt of 'formal' complaint and refers to SCU

Appendix A: The SCU Feedback and Complaints Flowchart

The SCU flowchart shown below can also be viewed and downloaded by clicking on [Feedback and Complaints Flowchart](#)



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

Dear **[student name]**,

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

In accordance with the [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.

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

Dear **[student]**,

A review of your informal complaint has been undertaken by **title and name of staff member** in accordance with the [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/>.

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

Dear **[student]**,

Thank you for contacting our office.

We acknowledge receipt of your informal complaint and request that this 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.

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

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.

Kind regards,

Signature
