Employee Grievance Handling

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1. Objective

VGU is committed to fostering a positive, safe, and productive work environment. This policy aims to ensure that faculty and staff concerns are addressed with fairness, transparency and efficiency.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees of VGU, including:

- Teaching Staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Administrative staff
- Support personnel

3. Guiding Principles

- **Fairness & Transparency**: All grievances shall be addressed impartially, with adequate documentation and clear communication of decisions.
- **Resolution-Oriented**: The process emphasizes timely and effective resolution to maintain a conducive work environment.
- **Confidentiality**: Grievances, particularly those involving sensitive matters, will be handled with strict confidentiality.
- **Right to Appeal**: Employees have the right to appeal if dissatisfied with the initial decision, and appeal it to the next higher authority.

4. Key Definitions

- **Grievance**: Any concern or dissatisfaction raised by an employee regarding the work environment, institutional policies or interpersonal conflicts.
- **Resolution**: Closure of the grievance with the agreement of the complainant or through a decision made by the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC).
- **Complainant**: An employee submitting a grievance via the ERP system or in writing to the Nodal Officer.
- **Nodal Officer**: The designated authority responsible for grievance oversight. At VGU, the Registrar serves this role.

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- **Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC)**: A high-level body comprising the President, Pro President and CEO of the University, constituted to resolve escalated grievances.

5. Types of Grievances

Grievances are classified into two broad categories:

a) Policy-Related Grievances

These refer to dissatisfaction arising from the formulation, communication, or implementation of university policies affecting employee roles, rights, responsibilities, or entitlements (e.g., leave, performance appraisal, promotion, career progression).

b) Non-Policy / Work-Related Grievances

These include concerns related to day-to-day operations and work conditions, such as:

- **Service-related**: Salary, transfers, disciplinary actions
- **Academic-related**: Teaching, research, evaluation, academic conduct
- **Administrative-related**: Infrastructure, facilities, procedural matters
- **Financial-related**: Payments, reimbursements, financial support

6. Grievance Submission Channels

Grievances can be submitted through the following modes:

- **ERP System**: Employees with access to the ERP may log their grievance online.
- **Grievance Form**: Employees without ERP access may submit a written grievance using the prescribed format, routed through their Reporting Officer to HR.

7. Grievance Redressal Process

A. Classification and Routing

Upon receipt, HR will classify the grievance as either Policy-Related or Work-Related and forward it to the appropriate authority.

B. Redressal Process for Policy-Related Grievances

1. **Initial Review**:
   - HR Head reviews the grievance, consults the Nodal Officer and communicates a decision to the employee within **7 working days**.
2. **First Appeal**:
   - If dissatisfied, the employee may appeal to the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC).
3. **GRC Resolution**:

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- The GRC reviews the case, may consult relevant stakeholders and the employee and delivers a decision within **15 working days** of receiving the grievance.
- The final decision is communicated to the employee and recorded for closure.

C. Redressal Process for Work-Related Grievances

1. **Initial Resolution**:
   - HR forwards the grievance to the Reporting Officer.
   - The Reporting Officer investigates, consults as needed and communicates a decision within **5 working days**.
2. **Second-Level Appeal**:
   - If unsatisfied, the employee may escalate the grievance to the next supervisory authority, who must resolve it within **5 working days**.
3. **Third-Level Appeal**:
   - If still unresolved, the grievance may be escalated to the Nodal Officer, who will resolve it within **7 working days**.
4. **Final Appeal**:
   - If unresolved, the employee may appeal to the GRC.
   - The GRC must complete the final review and communicate the decision within **7 working days**.

8. Communication of Decision

- All grievance resolutions shall be formally communicated in writing to the concerned employee within **2 working days** of the decision.
- The communication shall include the outcome and the rationale for the decision.
- HR will maintain complete documentation of all grievance cases and their closures.

9. Escalation Matrix and Timelines

A. Resolution Timeframe

Level	Responsible Authority	Resolution Timeline
1	Reporting Officer	5 Working Days
2	Next Supervisory Authority	5 Working Days
3	Nodal Officer	7 Working Days
4	Grievance Redressal Committee	7 Working Days

10. Reporting Hierarchy by Employee Category

Category	Reporting Officer	Next Supervisory Authority
Up to Associate Professor/ Admin Equivalent	HoD	Dean/Equivalent Admin Role
Professor/Admin Equivalent	Dean / Equivalent	Pro President/Director Ops

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Dean /Admin Equivalent	Pro President	President
Non-Supervisory Staff	Immediate Reporting Officer	Department Head

10. Monitoring, MIS, and Documentation

A. Quarterly Reporting

The Nodal Officer shall prepare a **quarterly report** for submission to the GRC, including:

- Total number of grievances received
- Number of grievances resolved
- Pending cases with reasons
- Percentage of employee satisfaction

B. Annual Report

At the end of each academic year, the Nodal Officer shall submit a comprehensive **annual report** to the GRC, covering:

- Total grievances received by type
- Mode and time taken for resolution
- Recurring patterns or systemic issues
- Recommendations for improving the grievance mechanism

11. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

12. Effective Date

This policy is effective from [Insert Date] and supersedes all previous policies related to employee grievance handling.

13. Contact

For queries or clarifications regarding this policy, employees may contact the HR Department at [Insert Contact Information.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What if my grievance concerns both policy and a work condition—how will it be classified and addressed?**
   Mixed grievances will be jointly reviewed by HR and the Nodal Officer to determine whether policy or operational resolution takes precedence, and may involve parallel or sequential routing.
2. **If my grievance involves my Reporting Officer, how do I escalate it fairly without bias?**
   In such cases, you may directly escalate the grievance to the Next Supervisory Authority or the Nodal Officer, bypassing the immediate Reporting Officer to avoid conflict of interest.
3. **What happens if the grievance is not resolved within the timeline mentioned at each level?**
   Delays must be justified and documented. The employee retains the right to escalate to the next level if the response time is not honoured without valid reason.
4. **If I submit a grievance anonymously or through a representative, will it still be processed?**
   Only formally submitted grievances—through ERP or the grievance form—will be entertained. Anonymous or verbal complaints are not processed unless converted into official format.
5. **What qualifies as a 'policy-related' grievance versus a 'work-related' one in borderline cases?**
   If the issue involves institutional rules or entitlements, it's policy-related; if it concerns your daily tasks or supervision, it's work-related. HR helps in classifying such cases.
6. **Can I raise a grievance on behalf of a fellow colleague who feels intimidated to file it?**
   Only the concerned employee should file a grievance. However, you can assist them or escalate safety-related issues through HR or the POSH mechanism if applicable.
7. **Is there a limit to how many times I can appeal a grievance decision?**
   Appeals are limited to the levels defined in the escalation matrix. Once the GRC has delivered a decision, it is considered final unless new evidence surfaces.
8. **What support can I expect while preparing a grievance if I lack digital access or writing fluency?**
   HR or your Reporting Officer must assist you in preparing and submitting the grievance through the appropriate channel.
9. **Can I be penalized for filing frequent grievances, even if they are genuine?**
   No penalties apply to genuine grievances. However, habitual, frivolous, or malicious grievances may lead to disciplinary review.
10. **How is confidentiality maintained during the grievance process?**
    All documents, discussions, and decisions are restricted to the involved parties and responsible authorities. Breach of confidentiality will be treated as misconduct.
11. **If I resign while my grievance is under review, will it still be resolved?**
    Yes, the university will proceed with grievance redressal to ensure closure and documentation, especially if it affects final settlement or references.
12. **How do I know if my grievance qualifies for escalation to the Grievance Redressal Committee?**
    If your grievance remains unresolved after exhausting all previous levels, or involves significant policy deviation, it qualifies for GRC review.
13. **Can a grievance regarding infrastructure (e.g., inadequate workspace) be filed under this policy?**

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Yes, it falls under administrative work-related grievances and must be routed via your Reporting Officer or HR.

14. **What if I disagree with how HR classified my grievance—can I challenge it?** You can request a re-evaluation through the Nodal Officer, who holds authority to reclassify the grievance type.
15. **Will the grievance record impact my performance appraisal or promotion prospects?** No, filing a grievance will not negatively impact your career progression unless it's proven malicious or defamatory.
16. **What is considered a valid reason for appealing a grievance decision?** Disagreement with facts, insufficient redressal, or procedural lapses qualify as valid grounds for appeal.
17. **How will I know the rationale for a decision taken on my grievance?** The formal communication from the concerned authority will include both the outcome and the reasoning behind the decision.
18. **Can I request to be present during deliberations on my grievance?** While direct presence isn't standard, you may request a hearing or interaction, especially during higher-level appeals.
19. **If the grievance is about salary discrepancies, who is the right authority for redressal?** Initially, your Reporting Officer, followed by HR. If unresolved, escalate to Finance via HR and then to the Nodal Officer or GRC if needed.
20. **What if my grievance relates to unethical conduct by a senior official?** You may bypass lower levels and directly report to the Nodal Officer or GRC, ensuring protection against retaliation.
21. **Can grievance submissions be made outside working hours or during leave?** Yes, ERP submissions can be made anytime. For physical forms, submission can be done upon return or via authorized representative.
22. **What happens if multiple employees raise the same grievance collectively?** HR will consider it a collective grievance and route it accordingly. However, each employee's submission should be individually acknowledged.
23. **What if I receive no communication on my grievance even after escalation?** You may send a written reminder to the Nodal Officer. Prolonged silence or inaction can itself be escalated as a procedural grievance.
24. **What kind of MIS data is collected on grievances, and is it shared publicly?** Quarterly and annual anonymized reports are submitted to the GRC for institutional review. Individual identities or details are not disclosed publicly.

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