



IQRA University Grievance Policy

1. **Grievance Definition:** A student grievance pertains to any expressed concern, issue, or dissatisfaction raised by the student(s) regarding their studies, university environment, and their expectations from the university and its management. The University is obligated to ensure a safe, conducive teaching / learning environment and uphold respect, among other responsibilities.
2. **Purpose:** The main purpose of the IU Grievance Policy is to provide a formal procedure for students to address complaints or grievances related to academic, administrative, or interpersonal issues within the university community. These policies typically outline the steps that individuals should take when they have a concern or complaint, including 'who to contact', 'how to file a grievance', and the process for resolution. The aim is to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in addressing grievances and maintaining a positive and supportive learning and working environment within the university.
3. **Scope:** This policy is designed to be comprehensive, addressing a wide range of issues that may impact the well-being and success of students within the university environment. It pertains solely to grievances related to actions directly affecting the grievant by the respondent, or conduct specifically targeted at the grievant by the respondent. It is not intended to contest University-wide policies and procedures. The scope of this policy includes:

Academic matters: Grievances related to grades, academic integrity, course content, and academic policies and procedures.

Administrative issues: Grievances related to administrative decisions, such as financial aid, disciplinary actions, etc.

Discrimination: Grievances related to discrimination or retaliation based on protected characteristics such as race, age, gender, disability, genetic information, creed, religion, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or other protected status.

Interpersonal conflicts: Grievances related to conflicts or disputes between individuals within the university fraternity.

Other concerns: Grievance policies may also cover other types of concerns or complaints not specifically listed above, as long as they are relevant to the university community and its mission.

Note: The policy shall not be applicable on issues that have been collectively agreed upon with the University's senior management and council members. Grievances related to sexual harassment are not covered under this policy. Such complaints will be investigated following the guidelines outlined in the HEC Policy on Sexual Harassment and processed under the University's Sexual Harassment Policy issued vide Notification No. Reg. Off/Notification/2024/27 dated March 25, 2024

4. **Key Functions:**

- a) To conduct comprehensive investigations into all written complaints received by the IU Grievance Committee.
- b) To guarantee fair investigations and prompt resolution of complaints.
- c) To offer recommendations to the Competent Authority.
- d) The policy encompasses the following categories of grievances:

Academic:

Academic matters, such as academic decisions, content or structure of courses, teaching quality, research supervision, intellectual property, plagiarism and cheating.

- Administrative matters, such as policies, procedures, decisions and access to required resources.
- Intimidation by other students or staff members.
- Collective complaints by a few students with a similar issue.

Non-Academic:

Non-academic grievances may include:

- Administrative matters, such as policies, procedures, decisions and access to required resources.
- Intimidation by other students or staff members.
- Collective complaints by a number of students with a similar issue

- e) This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- i) The grievance procedure does not replace regular dialogue with the concerned individuals. You should try to settle most concerns by speaking with your concerned university officials.

- ii) All students, part of the process will be treated appropriately and with decency and respect. Everyone has the right to be heard and to express their opinions.
- iii) The goal is to settle issues as swiftly as possible while preserving congenial relationships, instead of blaming and penalizing people in the first place. Throughout the process, one would be urged to find a solution without escalation to the official phases.
- iv) The process will be maintained as private and confidential as possible, and information regarding a case will be shared only with individuals who are directly engaged or impacted. This implies that one must not discuss the processes with anybody else at the University except those assigned to handle one's grievance and one's designated companion or confidante.
- v) The individuals appointed to investigate or evaluate grievances will have the necessary background or training to adequately assess issues, particularly where interpersonal conflicts or possible discrimination or harassment are involved.
- vi) If the complaint pertains to another University policy, one must pursue the entire procedure prescribed in that particular policy, including the appeal. This implies that one will not be able to file a complaint if there is an appeal mechanism available, for instance, grade appeal policy.

5. Protection Against Adverse Reaction

The University is obligated to ensure that a complainant will not suffer any negative consequences or be victimized in any other way because they provided information or aid during an investigation in accordance with the policy.

6. Grievance Resolution Process

A. Informal Resolution: The aim of informal resolutions is to address conflicts between individual members of the university community without the need for a formal grievance process. Members of the University community are encouraged to make sincere and reasonable attempts to resolve disputes directly, promptly, and informally.

Students may follow the informal procedure:

- i) Discuss the matter with a senior faculty member.
- ii) If a resolution is not achieved, the grievant may discuss the grievance with the faculty HoD / Director Student Affairs or

Head of Student Engagement Unit or Dean/Associate Dean by seeking an appointment for an informal discussion.

- iii) If a resolution is still not achieved, the student may submit the grievance application formally to the University Grievance Committee in writing (refer Annexure –A).

The student's grievance application must include the following information:

- Student's name and registration number
- Student's phone number
- Semester in which the grievance event occurred
- The course number and schedule
- The instructor's name
- Detailed statement explaining the grievance
- Any other information needed to explain the lodging of the grievance.

Students may submit their applications via e-mail at complain.students@iqra.edu.pk - using a format (refer Annexure A). Alternatively, a written application may be submitted to the Head of Student Engagement Unit (SEU)/Director Student Affairs.

B. Formal Grievance Process

The preferred approach for resolving conflicts is through informal means. However, there are instances where informal resolution is not feasible. Should informal resolution fail to achieve a satisfactory outcome, the grievant may proceed to initiate the formal grievance process through a written application through Campus director/Dean of the concerned faculty. The Registrar's Office shall be responsible to handle all such grievance applications for presentation to IU Grievance Committee.

a) Iqra University Grievance Committee (IUGC)

To assist in the formal resolution of grievances, the University shall constitute a Grievance Committee comprising of the following members under the approval of the President/ Vice Chancellor:

For cases related with undergraduate programs:

Head of the Department	Chair
On senior faculty members	Member
Student representatives*	Members
Director QEC /Nominee	Member/Secretary

For cases related with graduate programs:

Campus Director	Chair
Director Academics, Advance Studies, & Research	Member
One senior faculty member	Member
Student representatives*	Members
Registrar /Nominee	Member/Secretary

For cases related with post-graduate programs:

Dean /Nominee	Chair
Director (AASR) /Nominee	Member
Director QEC	Member
One senior faculty member	Member
Student representatives*	Members
Registrar /Nominee	Member/Secretary

* Two-third representation from student body shall be included.

Committee Procedures

- i) **Statement of Allegations:** The formal grievance process is instigated when the grievant presents a statement of allegations to the Chair of the Committee.
This statement shall (1) specify the individual(s) implicated in the grievance (referred to as the "respondent(s)"); (2) provide a comprehensive account of the factual grounds for the grievance; (3) detail the sincere and reasonable attempts made by the grievant to resolve the issue informally; and (4) outline the remedy or redress sought by the grievant. The grievant's signature is required on the statement of allegations.
- ii) **Answer:** The Chair will expeditiously furnish the respondent with a copy of the grievant's statement of allegations. The respondent must submit a response to the Chair within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the statement of allegations. The Chair may grant an extension for submitting a response, not exceeding an additional fourteen (14) calendar days, unless agreed upon by the grievant or in exceptional circumstances. Upon receipt

of the respondent's answer, the Chair will promptly supply the grievant with a copy of the response.

- iii) **Hearing Determination:** The Committee will convene a 'Hearing' expeditiously (typically within fourteen (14) calendar days) after receiving a response to decide whether a Hearing is necessary.

Hearing is unnecessary if the Committee finds: (1) the grievance falls outside the scope of this policy; or (2) there has been a lack of sincere and reasonable attempts to resolve the matter informally.

If the Committee concludes that no Hearing is required, it will promptly (usually within seven (7) calendar days of the decision) notify the grievant and the respondent, providing a brief written explanation. Otherwise, if a Hearing is deemed necessary, the Committee will promptly (typically within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the decision) arrange for one.

- iv) **Notice of Hearing:** The grievant and respondent shall be notified of the time, date, and place of the Hearing at their last known address available in the University. The notice of the Hearing date shall be given at least ten (10) calendar days before the scheduled Hearing date, unless the Committee, the grievant, and the respondent otherwise agree.

v) **Hearing Procedure:**

- **Attendance:** Attendance at the full Hearing is limited to members of the Grievance Committee, the grievant, and the respondent. Other witnesses may only be present while providing testimony. The committee member(s) will disqualify themselves if they believe they cannot act impartially. Any objections to the participation of specific Committee members must be submitted in writing to the Committee Chair before the Hearing, with the Chair's decision being final and binding. The grievant and respondent may each request one Committee member to be excused from participating in resolving the grievance. If there are multiple grievants or respondents, they may collectively designate one Committee member to be excused, provided they reach an agreement. If there is disagreement, they forfeit this right. Written notice must be provided in advance to the Chair regarding Committee members to be excused.

As the grievance process is an internal procedure, legal representation is prohibited during any part of the Hearing.

- **Recording of Proceedings:** Upon request from any party, the Hearing will be recorded. The Committee Chair will maintain through its Secretary, a written record of all Committee actions regarding a particular grievance, available to parties upon request. Individual Committee members' votes will remain confidential.
 - **Decorum:** Professional decorum is expected during the Hearing. The Chair has the authority to exclude anyone failing to maintain proper conduct.
 - **Quorum:** The quorum shall be one half of the total number of members, excluding those disqualified or excused.
 - **Evidence:** Both parties can present evidence and examine witnesses. The Committee may allow hearsay testimony but reserves the right to exclude irrelevant or repetitious evidence. Witness questioning may be limited by the Committee.
 - **Failure to Appear:** The Hearing will proceed even if one party fails to appear, although the Committee may choose to cancel if neither party attends.
 - **Order of Presentation:** The grievant presents first, followed by the respondent.
 - **Questioning:** Both parties have the opportunity to rebut evidence and cross-examine witnesses. Committee members may also question both parties and witnesses.
- vi) Committee Recommendation:** After the Hearing, the Committee will privately vote on whether to sustain the grievance based on the evidence presented. The recommendation is determined by a simple majority of present Committee members.
- vii) Remedy:** If the grievance is sustained, the Committee will discuss and recommend appropriate remedies, decided by a simple majority vote of present Committee members.
- viii) Report of Recommendations:** The Chair shall draft a written report outlining the Committee's recommendations, subject to review and approval by participating Committee members. These recommendations shall be communicated to the University Vice Chancellor through the Registrar's Office, and shared with both the grievant and respondent.
- 7. Determination of Grievance:** The Vice Chancellor shall render the ultimate decision on the grievance, which may entail acceptance or rejection of the Committee's recommendations. The Vice Chancellor's decision shall be conveyed

to both parties within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the Committee's report.

- 8. Implementation:** The intent of this policy is to facilitate the internal resolution of grievances within the University community. Participants in the process are expected to sincerely endeavour to adhere to the procedures outlined herein. Nevertheless, there may be instances where participants inadvertently deviate from these procedures. In such cases, if the error is promptly reported to the Chair of the IU Grievance Committee, the University will attempt to rectify it to the extent feasible. However, any such errors in complying with the policy's requirements shall not, under any circumstances, serve as grounds for legal action against the University or participants involved in the process.

9. Confidentiality

All such complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially by the University. The person's name shall be kept private, if at all feasible, and as long as doing so won't obstruct or jeopardize any investigations. The disclosure maker may be required to provide a statement as part of the evidence needed, either as part of the University's investigations or any subsequent external investigations (for instance, if the disclosure prompts criminal investigations). The investigation process may reveal the source of the information.

10. Wrongful Allegation

Any individual who makes an unsubstantiated allegation while acting in the public interest requires a reasonable belief that the information disclosed demonstrates one of the potential concerns described in the Policy's Scope. If this is the case, no action will be taken against the student. If someone is found to have made malicious or vexatious accusations in a particular situation, disciplinary action may be taken against them in line with the relevant Disciplinary Procedure of the University.

Students Grievance Complaint Form

Name: _____ IU ID # _____

Department: _____ Semester _____

Instructor's Name: _____ Cell No. : _____

Email: _____ Postal Address: _____

Type of Grievance (Check all that apply):

☐ Non- Academic☐ Academic☐ Discrimination

Please provide the information requested below. Limit your response to no more than 2 pages.

- Please set out the details of your complaint (providing as much fact-based detail as possible, particularly dates, times, locations and the identities of those involved).
- Identify the person(s) against whom the grievance is brought.
- Provide the names and contact details of any people involved in your complaint, including witnesses.
- Detail any attempt made to resolve your concerns informally and/or outline why you do not think informal resolution is possible or appropriate in this particular matter.
- Outline what outcome(s) you are reasonably seeking by submitting this formal grievance.

I confirm that the statements submitted by me are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received By: _____ Date: _____

(Name and Signature)