



# Grievance Policy

**Policy Owner:** Dawn Percival  
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## CONTENTS

- 1.0 [Purpose](#)
- 2.0 [Policy Overview](#)
- 3.0 [Informal Procedure](#)
- 4.0 [Formal Procedure – Raising A Grievance](#)
- 5.0 [The Grievance Meeting](#)
- 6.0 [Investigation](#)
- 7.0 [The Grievance Hearing](#)
- 8.0 [Appeals](#)
- 9.0 [Principles](#)
- 10.0 [Allegations of Bullying & Harassment](#)
- 11.0 [Timelines](#)

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that grievances are handled fairly and wherever possible resolved quickly. Before raising a grievance formally, employees are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve their complaint informally. The formal stage of the policy should only be used when the informal stage has failed to resolve the issue or could not be used.
- 1.2 Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints raised by an employee that relate to their employment. Issues that may cause a grievance include but are not restricted to the following:
- Terms and conditions of employment
  - Health and safety concerns
  - Work relations
  - Bullying and harassment (please also refer to the [Dignity at Work Policy](#))
  - New working practices
  - Working environment
  - Organisational change
  - Discrimination

## 2. Policy Overview

- 2.1 This policy applies to all GRL employees; this includes the Sanger Institute, Connecting Science and Wellcome Campus employees.
- 2.2 The policy does not cover visiting workers and contractors; if visiting workers or contractors have queries or concerns regarding working practices in GRL they are encouraged to speak to their contact at GRL in the first instance, if they have concerns about their own working practices they should follow the procedures provided by their employer or home organisation.
- 2.3 PhD students should follow the specific guidance for students within their Student Guidelines.

## 3. Stage 1 - Informal procedure

- 3.1 If you have a grievance you should discuss this in the first instance with your line manager who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. If you feel unable to approach your line manager directly, e.g. if they are the subject of your grievance; you should approach your HR Partner or Junior Partner who will talk to you about possible solutions.
- 3.2 An informal resolution may involve a discussion about amending terms and conditions or a process, or mediation between 2 or more parties (refer to the GRL's 'Mediation Guidelines').
- 3.3 If mediation is considered an appropriate solution, GRL has an internal team of trained impartial mediators who can be used to facilitate. Where mediation is used formal proceedings may be paused but can be returned to if mediation does not successfully resolve matters.
- 3.4 If the line manager or the employee feel that an informal approach is not appropriate they should speak to their HR Partner or Junior Partner who will decide whether the formal grievance process should be used.
- 3.5 The line manager considering the informal complaint should respond within 5 working days, either with a resolution to the issue or with a timescale within which the issue will be addressed.
- 3.6 If you don't feel your grievance has been sufficiently resolved via an informal approach you may raise your grievance formally.

#### **4. Stage 2 - Formal procedure – Raising a grievance**

4.1 To raise a formal grievance you should write to your line manager. Where you are not comfortable raising this matter directly with your line manager, you may either raise it with your line manager's manager or with a HR Partner or Junior Partner.

4.2 Your written grievance will form the basis of any investigation and/or hearing, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome you want. If your grievance is unclear you may be asked to clarify what you mean before any meeting takes place.

Your written grievance should provide as much detail as possible and should include:

- Specific confirmation that this is a "Formal Grievance"
- The nature of the matter (others involved, dates of relevant events etc.); and
- The outcome you are seeking (i.e. what would you like to happen?)

4.3 Any line manager that receives a formal grievance should talk to a HR Partner or Junior Partner as soon as possible.

#### **5.0 The Grievance Meeting**

5.1 The line manager will meet with the employee to discuss their concerns. This meeting will usually take place within 10 working days of the grievance being received. Following the meeting the line manager will send a written response to the employee.

5.2 A HR Partner will accompany the line manager hearing the grievance, providing advice and ensuring due process is followed. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, or a representative of the Employee Partnership, or a Trade Union Representative.

5.3 Where the grievance relates to another person, the line manager might decide to arrange a meeting with both parties to facilitating a discussion and try to reach a solution.

5.4 Should the grievance be in connection with the complainant's line manager, the grievance meeting will be conducted by another manager who will be selected by HR.

#### **6.0 Investigation**

6.1 Depending on the nature of the grievance, it might be necessary to hold an investigation before or after the grievance meeting is held. Where an investigation is necessary, a HR Partner will appoint an Investigating Manager (someone who has not previously been involved with the matter raised in the grievance and able to undertake an investigation). The Investigating Manager will contact you to explain the scope of the investigation and expected time-frames.

6.2 Investigations may vary in length of time depending on the complexity and scope of the grievance. The Investigating Manager will aim to complete the investigation as quickly as possible in order to avoid any undue stress whilst balancing the need for a thorough and fair investigation. Investigations can normally take anything between a few days and 6 weeks.

6.3 Once the investigation is completed, the Investigating Manager should write a report for the hearing chairperson to consider.

#### **7.0 The Grievance Hearing**

7.1 The grievance hearing will normally be held within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, this may be delayed where there is a need to carry out an investigation. Where an investigation is required, a hearing will be convened within 10 working days of the report being completed.

- 7.2 The hearing will be chaired by your line manager (or another manager of equivalent or higher level if the grievance involves your line manager) and a HR representative who will be present to take notes and ensure the matter is dealt with fairly and in line with policy. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a representative of the Employee Partnership.
- 7.3 Where an investigation has been conducted, the investigating manager may be asked to attend the hearing to present findings and recommendations (whether this is necessary or not will be determined by the chairperson in advance of the hearing).
- 7.4 If any new facts arise at the hearing or if the chairperson feels further investigation is required, they may adjourn the meeting so that information can be gathered.
- 7.5 The chairperson may advise you of the outcome on the same day or at a later date if they need to consider the details further or seek more information. You will also receive written confirmation of the outcome within 5 working days of the decision.

## **8.0 Formal Procedure – Appeals**

- 8.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you have the right to appeal it. You should do so in writing to the chairperson (copying in the appropriate HR Partner) clearly stating your grounds for appeal. This should be done no later than 5 working days after receiving the outcome letter.
- 8.2 An appeal hearing will be arranged within 10 working days of the appeal letter being received and will be held by a manager of the same grade level or higher than the original chairperson.
- 8.3 An appeal hearing is not designed to re-hear the case but to examine the grounds of appeal. You must be specific about the grounds of the appeal and these will effectively form the agenda for the appeal hearing. Appeals will be raised on one of the following grounds:
- The procedure- a failure to follow procedure had a material effect on the outcome
  - The decision - the evidence did not support the conclusion reached
  - Any proposed action - was inappropriate given the circumstances of the case
  - New evidence- which has genuinely come to light since the first hearing.
- 8.4 The appeal hearing chairperson should advise you of the outcome on the same day as the hearing (in some rare circumstances the appeal chairperson may feel they require further information and may adjourn the meeting on this basis, where this is the case). You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the appeal no later than 5 working days after the decision is made.
- 8.5 The outcome of the appeal is final.

## **9. Principles**

- 9.1 All formal stages of the grievance procedure will be documented and the employee is entitled to a copy of the notes of the grievance hearing.
- 9.2 At every formal stage of the procedure the employee raising the grievance will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, representative of the Employee Partnership or Trades Union Representative during formal grievance meetings.
- 9.3 There may be times when mediation between two or more parties involved in a grievance could be constructive in resolving the issues. Guidance on when this might be appropriate and what is involved can be sought from the HR Partnering team.

- 9.4 All parties involved in this process are entitled to be treated fairly and with respect. The organisation will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone involved in grievance procedures and may consider such behaviour as misconduct under the disciplinary policy.
- 9.5 All attempts will be made to deal with grievance matters promptly and to adhere to the timescales given in this policy. However additional time may be taken to investigate, consult and seek solutions, the individual should be updated regularly regarding anticipated time-frames.

**10.0 Allegations of bullying and/or harassment**

- 10.1 Where an allegation of bullying and/or harassment is made within a grievance, this will be investigated in line with section 5 and 6 above.
- 10.2 The organisation takes all allegations of bullying and/or harassment very seriously and has a duty of care to all employees to ensure a safe working environment where they are treated professionally and respectfully. Further information regarding the organisation’s stance on bullying and harassment including examples of unacceptable behaviour can be found in the Dignity at Work Policy.
- 10.3 Where such an allegation is made, the investigating manager in conjunction with the HR Partner should determine whether it is acceptable for the involved individuals to continue working together whilst the matter is investigated.
- 10.4 In these circumstances the chairperson will consider whether or not the Disciplinary Policy should be invoked. If it is determined that there is a disciplinary case to answer then the grievance investigation report may be used as evidence so as to avoid duplication.

**11.0 Timelines**

- 11.1 The time limits expressed throughout the policy should be regarded as a guide. If a grievance is identified as requiring a longer time limit due to exceptional circumstances, the time may be extended by mutual agreement between the employee/their representative and the manager responsible for hearing the grievance.

Informal Grievance	Hearing manager to respond within <b>5 working days</b> with a resolution or timescale within which the issue will be addressed.
Formal Grievance Meeting	Initial meeting to take place within <b>10 working days</b> of receipt of the complaint.
Investigation required?	Hearing will be convened within <b>10 working days</b> of the report being completed.
Formal Grievance Hearing	Will normally be heard within <b>10 working days</b> of receiving the complaint.
Outcome of Grievance Hearing	You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the Grievance hearing within <b>5 working days</b> of the decision.
Formal - Appeal	Right to appeal in writing no later than <b>5 working days</b> after receiving the outcome letter.
Formal – Appeal	Appeal hearing to be arranged within <b>10 working days</b> of the appeal letter being received.
Formal - Appeal	Written confirmation of the appeal outcome no later than <b>5 working days</b> after the decision is made.