



GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy and procedure sets out Oxford Science Studies' (OXSS) approach to resolving concerns which inevitably arise, from time to time, in the workplace.

OXSS is committed to promoting and maintaining a working environment where concerns can be discussed openly and respectfully between colleagues and encourages staff to raise concerns as soon as they arise.

This policy and procedure applies to all staff and to their concerns arising out of their engagement.

2 PRINCIPLES

- OXSS promotes an environment where all colleagues are able to perform at their best and feel supported to do so.
- OXSS recognizes that differences and disagreements do arise in the workplace from time to time.
- The ability to discuss issues openly and respectfully is essential to the well-being of our people and the success of the company.
- Wherever possible the informal resolution of differences is preferable but a formal approach is sometimes required to enable all parties to work together to find a mutually acceptable resolution. The formal policy and procedure therefore exists to support colleagues in both raising and responding to grievances.
- A formal grievance can be difficult for all those involved and OXSS is committed to supporting all participants. All those involved in grievances are expected to do so objectively, calmly and respectfully.
- The aim of the process, whether informal or formal, is to enable staff to raise concerns without fear of reprisal, to have them respectfully listened to and seriously considered and to seek agreement on the best way forward to resolve the concern being raised.
- If a staff member has particular requirements at any stage of the procedures because of a disability, or wishes to inform the company of any relevant medical condition, the staff member should contact the Operations and Course Director.
- We will provide support and guidance to managers on the application of the policy and procedure.

3 CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that issues at work can be discussed in an open and safe environment. All matters should, as far as possible, be kept confidential by all parties and agreement should be sought wherever possible before discussing the matter with others. During any investigation the number of witnesses should be kept to a minimum. Witnesses should only be given such information that is required to enable them to respond to questions and the need for confidentiality should be impressed upon them. In some cases, the investigation may identify related issues which need to be considered but do not relate directly to the staff member who raised the grievance.

4 WITHDRAWAL OF A GRIEVANCE

A formal grievance may be withdrawn at any stage of the process. However, OXSS may decide to continue to investigate and deal with any issues raised, for example if matters of potential misconduct have been identified.

5 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 5.1 All OXSS staff should attempt to resolve differences informally where possible. If the concern relates to a matter involving another colleague, you should ideally raise this with them directly with a view to resolving it. Similarly, if the concern relates to your role or work, you should typically first discuss this with your line manager. If the matter relates to your line manager, you may raise it with a more senior manager. If a member of staff is not sure who to speak to, they should contact the Operations and Course Director or the Managing Director.
- 5.2 Any member of staff who thinks they may be experiencing bullying, or harassment can also speak in absolute confidence to any employed staff member at OXSS.
- 5.3 A line manager who has had informal issues raised with them should consider the points and actively explore with the member of staff how the matter may be resolved. They should also seek advice from the HR Department or a more senior manager. Every effort should be made to reach agreement and any actions agreed should be recorded and the manager should follow up with the staff member raising the concern to provide any necessary support. Where the concern involves someone in another area of the company the line manager may need to approach an appropriate senior manager to explore the issues and how best to resolve the concern.

6 FORMAL RESOLUTION – STAGE I

- 6.1 **Initiating the grievance**
 - 6.1.1 If an informal approach is not successful or if the matter is too serious to be dealt with informally, a member of staff may raise a formal grievance. This should be done in writing as soon as possible but in any case within 1 month of the matter to which the matter relates.
 - 6.1.2 Grievances should be addressed to the Managing Director. The letter should set out clearly the issue or behaving causing the concern and the resolution sought.

- 6.1.3 The MD should contact the HR Department and acknowledge receipt, detailing the support available to the member of staff. If, having discussed the matter with HR, the manager believes that a prompt, informal resolution is possible, they may contact the staff member and try to do so. This should not be allowed to unnecessarily delay the process or deny the staff member's option to use the formal procedure if they are not satisfied.
- 6.1.4 The HR department should identify an appropriate independent manager to consider the grievance (the Grievance Manager). The MD should also inform the person identified as responsible for the concern (the Respondent) that a grievance has been received and inform them of the support available to them and that the Grievance Manager will contact them. An HR representative will be identified to support and guide the Grievance Manager through the process.

6.2 Initial Grievance Meeting

- 6.2.1 The Grievance Manager will write to the staff member inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss their grievance. This should be within 10 working days of the formal grievance being submitted. The staff member may be accompanied by trade union representative or a work colleague. Their role is to support the member of staff, to help them prepare for the meeting and to assist in explaining the concern and the resolution being sought. The Grievance Manager will be supported by an HR representative and a note-taker may also be present.
- 6.2.2 The meeting allows the staff member to explain the background to their grievance and the resolution they are seeking. It gives the Grievance Manager the opportunity to ensure they understand the issues and to explore potential options for resolution. The Grievance Manager should also look to understand who else they may need to speak to prior to making a recommendation.
- 6.2.3 A summary note, recording the key points, will be taken and shared with the staff member. The member of staff may comment on the notes to ensure they are accurate; they may add additional information but these should be clearly noted as an insert.
- 6.2.4 If the member of staff or their companion is unable to attend the initial grievance meeting, steps will be taken to rearrange this as soon as possible. If the staff member is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Grievance Manager may investigate and reach a conclusion based on the information available. A decision to proceed in this way must be communicated to the staff member.

6.3 Investigating the Grievance

- 6.3.1 The Grievance Manager will then conduct any further investigation required. This may involve reviewing relevant policies or documents provided by the staff member. It is likely they will also need to speak with other colleagues including any named Respondent(s). A Respondent and any witnesses should be invited to formal investigation meetings.
- 6.3.2 All those involved in the matter should feel supported and able to engage in the process. The Respondent(s) should be informed as soon as possible that a grievance has been raised and the reasons for it. Any letter inviting them to an investigation must set out the grounds for the grievance, the issues to be discussed and, where possible, the resolution being sought by the staff member. The staff member may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work

colleague.

- 6.3.3 The Grievance Manager may decide it is necessary to meet the staff member raising the grievance again prior to making a decision. This could be to seek additional information or to give the staff member an opportunity to respond if contrary information has been provided by a Respondent or witness.
- 6.3.4 This investigation stage should be concluded as soon as possible and normally within 10 working days of the initial meeting with the staff member. If longer is necessary, this must be communicated to the staff member.

6.4 Communicating the outcome

- 6.4.1 Once they have reached a conclusion the Grievance Manager should prepare a formal response in writing to the staff member. This will set out the issues under considerations, the steps taken to investigate and assess them, their conclusions and the resolution they are recommending. It may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to arrange a follow-up meeting with the staff member who raised the grievance to discuss the outcome.
- 6.4.2 The Respondent(s) should also be informed of the outcome, and it may be appropriate for the Grievance Manager to meet with the Respondent(s) and/or their line manager to support the implementation of any recommendations.

7 FORMAL RESOLUTION – STAGE 2 - APPEAL

7.1 Lodging an appeal

- 7.1.1 If the staff member is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 grievance, they may raise an appeal. This should be done in writing, clearly setting out the grounds for the appeal and be sent to the HR Department. The appeal should be lodged within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome of the Stage 1 grievance.
- 7.1.2 The appeal is not a rehearing and therefore the grounds for appeal should fall within one of the following:
- Procedural error
 - The outcome and recommendations are unreasonable and significantly out of line with the issues considered
 - New information is available that could not have reasonably been provided when the original outcome was decided on
- 7.1.3 The appeal will be heard by an independent and normally more senior manager (the Appeal Manager) will be appointed.
- 7.1.4 The Respondent(s) will also be informed that an appeal has been received.

7.2 Grievance Appeal Meeting

- 7.2.1 The staff member will be invited to attend a meeting to present their appeal normally within 10 days of submitting their appeal. They may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.
- 7.2.2 The appeal meeting allows the staff member to explain why they think the outcome from the initial grievance was incorrect or failed to resolve the grievance. The Appeal Manager will ask questions to ensure they understand the grounds for the appeal and any new information being presented along with the resolution sought. A summary note, recording key points, will be taken of the meeting and shared with the staff member, who will have the chance to comment on the notes and confirm their accuracy.
- 7.2.3 The Appeal Manager will adjourn the meeting to consider the information and conduct any additional investigation necessary. This likely to involve meeting with the original Grievance Manager and potentially the Respondent(s).
- 7.2.4 If the staff member or their companion is unable to attend the appeal hearing, steps will be taken to rearrange as soon as possible. If the staff member is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Appeal Manager may review the material and reach a decision on the information available to them. A decision to proceed in this way will be communicated to the staff member.

7.3 Communicating the Appeal outcome

- 7.3.1 Once the Appeal Manager has considered all the points raised they will provide a response to the staff member. This will normally be within 5 working days of the appeal meeting. The staff member will be invited to a further meeting to hear the outcome. The outcome and any recommendations will be confirmed in writing to the staff member.
- 7.3.2 The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there is no further stage of appeal.