

Making a complaint

Related articles:

- [Appeal or complaint?](#)

A complaint is a way to raise an issue with the faculty or the University over matters such as **discrimination, harassment and bullying, or against the quality of teaching or assessment.**

Making a complaint is not the appropriate process to change your mark.

It is your right to [make a complaint](#) to the faculty or to the University via the Student Affairs Unit (SAU). Complaints could also be made about:

- timetable scheduling
- learning and teaching concerns
- the conduct of another student
- unprofessional staff behaviour.

Different types of complaints are dealt with by different areas of the University, and some complaints may be taken to authorities outside of the University.

Academic appeals versus complaints

The University has two separate processes through which students can raise concerns: academic appeals and complaints.

An **academic appeal** allows you to raise concerns over a specific academic decision or a breach in due process in making an academic decision. [Read the University's information on academic appeals.](#)

A **complaint** is a formal process to address issues with your faculty or the University. You can lodge a complaint against any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, or an issue with the quality of teaching or assessment. [Read the University's information on complaints.](#)

[Read more about appeals versus complaints.](#)

How to make a complaint

Students are encouraged to try to resolve issues informally. You may contact your unit coordinator or the Associate Dean of Education in your faculty as a starting point. If this is not appropriate in your situation, or if the response from your faculty is not satisfactory, you can lodge a complaint with the SAU.

You can make a complaint verbally or in writing.

- If you make a **verbal complaint** and an investigation is required, you will be asked to submit a written complaint. In most cases complaints can't be anonymous, but the University assures strict confidentiality.
- You can make a **written complaint** by writing a detailed summary of the incident(s). Where possible, provide dates, times, and locations. If you have any witnesses who can verify your account of what happened, ask them to provide their names and contact details, or make a note in your complaint that there were witnesses.

The University is committed to resolving complaints in a fair and timely manner. **If you make a complaint to the SAU, they should notify you of the next relevant steps within 5 working days.**

At the preliminary stage, the SAU may decide that the complaint is not able to be handled by the University and will notify you with reasons. If the SAU decides that the complaint can be handled by the University, you will be assigned a case manager who will start a preliminary assessment to determine appropriate action.

A complaint that could constitute an act of [misconduct](#), or could involve criminal behaviour, will be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar).

When to lodge a complaint

In most cases, you have 12 months from the time of the incident to make a complaint to the SAU. You can submit a complaint later than this date, but the SAU may decide not to act if no further incidents have occurred in the past 12 months.

[Read more about complaints on the University website.](#)

Types of complaints

Group work complaints

If you are doing a group work assessment and experience conflict with your group members, **try to discuss your issues directly with your unit coordinator**, or [contact us for advice](#).

- Try to resolve group work issues as they come up and document your efforts.
- **Keep emails or messages sent between your group members or with your unit coordinator and record a clear timeline of incidents.**
- Always keep a copy of relevant documentation.

If you receive a low mark for a group work assessment, group work complaints are different from making an academic appeal. [Contact us](#) if you need assistance.

Sexual misconduct

If you have been sexually assaulted or harassed, remember that it is not your fault. There are options available to file a report or lodge a complaint. [SUPRA caseworkers can give you confidential advice and support](#). What you decide to do is always your choice.

Related article:

- [Sexual assault and domestic violence](#).

Discrimination, harassment and bullying

Complaints regarding discrimination, harassment and bullying can be lodged with the University, or with the [NSW Ombudsman](#), [NSW Anti-Discrimination Board](#), or the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

Read the following articles for information about how to make these types of complaints:

- [Harassment, discrimination and bullying](#)
- [Disability rights and support](#).

Intellectual property

The University will consider complaints to do with intellectual property. [Get advice on intellectual property from our legal service](#).

Related article:

- [Intellectual property](#).

Appealing a complaint outcome

After the investigation into your complaint is complete, you will receive a written report on the outcome of the investigation. The SAU will advise you if you have the right to appeal the decision. If eligible for an appeal, you will need to contact the SAU within 10 days of being notified of the outcome. [Contact us](#) for advice.

Other ways to make a complaint

Depending on the nature of the complaint, you may also choose to contact external bodies such as:

- [NSW Ombudsman](#)
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Board
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

[Contact us for advice on these options](#).

If a complaint is made about you

If you receive notice that a complaint has been made about you, we strongly recommend that you [contact us for advice](#). We can help you understand the complaint and what your options are.

Support

University helplines

The University has [free helplines](#) to assist students with any questions or concerns:

- [For general questions](#) call the Student Centre on 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864). This is the first point of contact for all student needs.
- If you feel unsafe on campus, or are concerned about someone else's safety, you can [contact campus security](#). Phone 1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457), 24 hours a day.

Student Counselling Service

Navigating complaint processes can be challenging. It is reasonable to feel stressed, overwhelmed, or anxious. If you need someone to talk to, the [University's Student Counselling Service](#) provide free, confidential services.

Safer Communities Office

If your complaint is about any type of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault or harassment, you can get immediate, confidential support from an experienced, specialist staff member at the [Safer Communities Office](#).

SUPRA

You can always [contact us for support and guidance](#).

Policies

All policies are available on the University [Policy Register](#):

- [Resolution of Complaints Policy 2015](#)
- [Student Complaints Procedures 2015](#)
- [Student Sexual Misconduct Policy 2023](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#) (for staff and affiliates)
- [Student Charter 2020](#).

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