

Making a complaint

Have you experienced something that you'd like to make a complaint about, or that you need help to resolve? Depending on the type of complaint, there are different options for reporting.

What is your complaint about?

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. Work out what to do with your complaint from the information below.

Sexual assault

If you have been sexually assaulted, remember that it is not your fault. You should consider [your options for making a complaint and know your options for seeking support](#). We can give you [confidential advice](#). What you decide to do is up to you.

Discrimination, harassment or bullying

For complaints about discrimination you may lodge a complaint with the University or with the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board or the Australian Human Rights Commission. Read our articles for more information on these types of complaints:

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

Academic complaints

For a complaint about an academic decision you will need to make an [academic appeal](#). [Academic decisions include:](#)

- the mark you received for an assessment
- the grade you received for a unit of study
- receiving a finding of plagiarism or academic dishonesty

Complaints to do with [intellectual property](#) are also considered academic complaints and you can [contact us](#) for advice from [our Legal Service](#).

Group work complaints

If you are doing a group work assessment and experience conflict with members in your group, try to discuss your issues directly with your unit coordinator, or [contact us](#) for advice. You should try to resolve group work issues as they arise and document your efforts: keep emails, texts or messages sent between yourself and group members, and your unit coordinator; record a clear timeline of incidents, and always keep a copy of all relevant documentation. You may want to make an [academic appeal](#) if you receive a low mark for your group work assessment. Or if you are concerned about [plagiarism or academic dishonesty](#) within your group, [contact us](#) for advice.

Non-academic complaints

Complaints that do not fall under one of the above four headings are known as 'non-academic complaints'. These could include complaints about:

- timetable schedule
- learning and teaching concerns
- a complaint about another student
- a member of staff's unprofessional behaviour

Students are encouraged to try to resolve issues informally. This may mean **contacting your unit coordinator** or even **the associate dean in your faculty**. If this would not be appropriate in your situation, or if the response from your faculty is not satisfactory, you can lodge a complaint with the Student Affairs Unit.

Making a non-academic complaint

You can [make a complaint](#) with the Student Affairs Unit (SAU). You may make a complaint verbally or in writing. If you make a complaint verbally and an investigation is required, you will be asked to submit a written complaint. In most cases complaints can't be anonymous, but the SAU assures confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

The University is committed to resolving complaints in a fair and timely manner. Your complaint should be acknowledged, and within five working days the SAU should notify you of the next relevant steps. At the preliminary stage the SAU may determine 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 undertake a preliminary assessment to determine appropriate action.

A complaint that, if proven, could be an act of misconduct or possibly involve criminal behaviour, will be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) for handling.

[More information about complaints, procedures for lodging a complaint, investigations, and timeframes.](#)

Written complaint

You can lodge a written complaint by writing a detailed summary of the incident(s). Where possible, provide dates, times and locations. If you have any witnesses that can verify your account of what happened, ask them to provide their names and contact details, or at least make a note in your complaint that there were witnesses. Your written complaint, along with all evidence and documentation to support your claims, can be emailed to the SAU: studentaffairs@sydney.edu.au

Or you can [make a complaint online](#).

Phone advice

If you have a concern and are not sure about the procedure for making a complaint, you are welcome to contact the SAU.

Phone 1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)

When to lodge a complaint

Depending on the nature of the complaint you may decide to lodge a complaint with the SAU after you receive your results, or even after you have graduated. In most cases, you have twelve (12) months from the time of the incident to make a complaint to the SAU.

Appeals against complaint outcomes

When you receive your written report on the outcome of your assessment or investigation, the SAU will advise you if you have any right to appeal the decision. If eligible for appeal, you will need to **contact the SAU within ten (10) days** of being notified of the outcome of your complaint.

Depending on the nature of the complaint you may also decide to contact external bodies such as the [NSW Ombudsman](#), [NSW Anti-Discrimination Board](#) or the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

If a complaint is made about you

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

Support

The University's counselling service (CAPS)

Taking the first step to lodge a complaint can be hard. It is reasonable to feel stressed, overwhelmed or anxious. If you need someone to talk to, [CAPS](#) may be helpful.

Phone **(02) 8627 8433** or **(02) 8627 8437**

caps.admin@sydney.edu.au or cumberland.cs@sydney.edu.au

University help lines

The University has two free helplines to assist students with any questions or concerns.

For any **questions** phone **1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864)**, this is the first point of contact for all student needs.

If you have **concerns** phone **1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)** **select option 2, then option 1.**

NSW Ombudsman

ombo.nsw.gov.au

Contact us

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

Both the University and SUPRA can also refer you to other appropriate support services.

Policy

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

- Resolution of Complaints Policy 2015
- Student Complaints Procedures 2015
- Student Sexual Misconduct Policy 2018
- [Code of Conduct](#) (for staff and affiliates)
- [Student Charter 2020](#)

Last updated Feb 2020