



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
Department of Human Resources

ESCALATION POLICY

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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly the route that should be followed by staff, students, researchers, service providers and contractors in escalating issues, concerns and complaints to Senior Management and the Executive of the University of Pretoria.

This policy should be read in conjunction with any additional or separate policies, regulations and guidelines which are aimed at or otherwise provide for the addressing of reportable events or circumstances and, where applicable, the escalation or reporting of such events or circumstances to the appropriate level of University management or a competent regulatory authority. In so far as any such additional or separate policies, regulations or guidelines contradict this policy, the determinations of the former shall prevail.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all staff, students, researchers, service providers and contractors at the University of Pretoria, and all persons whom they may engage to take up issues with the University on their behalf.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 It is our policy that staff members must be responsive to queries and managers must be responsive to complaints.
- 3.2 The University has a hierarchical structure, which in general establishes a line management framework. This is aimed at ensuring efficient and accurate communication, orderly and organised business operations and proper allocation of time and resources.
- 3.3 Past experience has demonstrated that disgruntled staff, students, researchers, service providers and contractors on occasion bypass line management and lines of responsibility and attempt to take issues up directly with members of the Executive or the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University, before they have engaged with the appropriate organisational functionary for managing such issues as a first line of action. This is especially true in circumstance where staff members, students, researchers, service providers and contractors are dissatisfied with what they perceive to be a lack of responsiveness or failure to attend to queries, complaints and issues timeously.
- 3.4 This practice is undesirable. Persons must raise their issues with the appropriate and responsible person at Faculty or Departmental/Centre/Institute level as they are best placed to resolve the matter immediately or escalate it should it be required. This is based on the fact that they possess or are able to obtain the information required to form an informed view on

the issue raised. Failure to follow this route will result in the matter being referred back to that person and a delay arising in reaching resolution.

- 3.5 Staff members responding to issues are required to keep a written record of such issues, any interventions undertaken and the outcome thereof. Where a decision is made, a detailed written record of the reasons for the decision must be generated and kept until the matter has been finally resolved. The records will be made available if the matter is escalated in accordance with the policy. These records also may be required if the issue is escalated to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Public Protector (PP), the High Court of South Africa and/or any other relevant external forum.
- 3.6 Escalation is a normal practice when there is no response, when there is an undue delay in response, when there is a lack of substantive engagement on the issues that have been raised, the person with whom the issue has been raised lacks the authority to make a decision or by mutual agreement between the parties. Escalation, even by mutual agreement between two or more parties, can occur if agreement cannot be reached (deadlock) or if the decision or action required can only be taken by a person at a higher level. Such a situation may arise if a matter cannot be addressed definitively within the existing organisational framework (such as policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines) or the requisite authority does not lie with the person dealing with a matter.
- 3.7 A staff member who wishes to escalate a matter must follow the steps set out in Rt 169/24. A student who wishes to escalate a matter must follow the steps set out in Rt 170/24.
- 3.8 Any person who has raised an issue which has not been resolved to his or her satisfaction, must advise the functionary with whom the initial complaint was lodged or to whom the matter was previously escalated, that the matter should be escalated or further escalated to the next level of authority.
- 3.9 All line managers across the University are required to determine provisional timelines for dealing with issues in their respective areas, and to communicate these timelines to the complainant and staff members where relevant. All issues must be dealt with in a professional manner and all correspondence must reflect such professionalism. All matters must be dealt with as strictly confidential.
- 3.10 This policy does not apply in emergencies and/or to matters involving threats to life or property, which should be reported to the Department of Security Services immediately. All complaints pertaining to gender-based harm, racial discrimination, homophobia or xenophobia and other forms of discrimination should be directed to the Transformation Office and will be dealt with in terms of the University's Anti-discrimination Policy and Manual.
- 3.11 If a staff member, student, researcher, service provider or contractor is unsure as to who the relevant functionary is to whom a matter should be reported as a first line of action, he or she

should engage with his or her line manager or the responsible functionary (in the case of service providers and contractors).

- 3.12 The guiding principle of this policy is that matters should be dealt with at the relevant level of authority in order to ensure that they are resolved as soon as possible. Non-compliance will result in time and resources being wasted.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Guidelines for staff members for the escalation of matters (Rt 169/24)

Guidelines for students for the escalation of matters (Rt 170/24)

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Director Human Resources will be responsible for the execution of the decision.

6. POLICY LIFE CYCLE

This policy should be reviewed every five (5) years.

7. DOCUMENT METADATA

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