National Negotiating Committees

National Grievance Policy for Lecturing Staff

1 August 2026

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Scope 3
3. Key Principles 3
   - 3.1 Reasonable Adjustments 4
   - 3.2 Collective grievance 4
   - 3.3 Grievance from an ex-employee 5
   - 3.4 False or misleading grievance 5
   - 3.5 What happens when you formally raise a grievance 5
4. Roles and Responsibilities 5
   - 4.1 You should: 5
   - 4.2 Managers should: 5
   - 4.3 People Services Representatives should: 6
   - 4.4 Trade Union Representative/Companion should: 6
5 Links to Other Policies/Documents 6
6 Further Sources of Information 6

1. Introduction

This policy recognises that on occasions, you may wish to raise concerns relating to your employment or working relationships on an individual or collective basis and is designed to ensure that you feel supported in this, working in a positive and supportive working environment that encourages open and honest communication.

This policy aims to ensure equitable and fair treatment for all staff in colleges by providing a framework to ensure that grievances can be resolved in a fair and reasonable way, minimise potential damage to professional relationships within colleges, and promote constructive employment relations.

The policy will be applied consistently and fairly to you, based on the circumstances of your case. This should allow you to feel confident to have open and frank conversations with your line manager if you have a concern.

You should read this policy in conjunction with the model Grievance Procedure, to fully understand the whole grievance process that provides a framework and minimum standards for the colleges to follow.

This policy was developed in partnership and agreement with the College Employers Scotland representatives and recognised trade unions. The policy and model procedure will be reviewed one year from launch date and thereafter, every three years, or earlier if required under legislative changes.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all lecturing staff.

This policy provides a framework and transparent approach to enable employees to raise issues and a process for colleges to deal with and respond to these concerns as speedily as possible.

Consideration should be given as to which policy would be most relevant to the circumstances of the case and the outcome sought. It is for the person raising the complaint to decide which policy to use regarding the application of the Grievance policy, Bullying and Harassment policy, Whistleblowing policy or equivalent local policy.

3. Key Principles

The following key principles will be applied in each situation and will be reflected in college procedures and practices:

a) The college will ensure managers have the appropriate training to undertake the roles described in this policy and confirm this when inviting you to any formal grievance meeting(s).

b) When selecting a trained manager to undertake the role, the college must consider the potential for any conflict of interest (as detailed in the Grievance Procedure) and ensure their suitability and availability.

c) A recognition that differences and disagreements do arise in the workplace from time to time. Therefore, grievance cases must be dealt with promptly without unreasonable delay, sensitively and respect the privacy of those involved.

d) At all stages of the grievance, those involved must be aware of the need for confidentiality to preserve the integrity of the process. This does not prevent you from discussing the matter with a companion (definition set out in i below), representative or with Occupational Health.

e) Many potential grievances can be resolved informally with appropriate, suitable discussion or mediation to resolve issues. Managers are encouraged to try to resolve issues at the earliest stage possible, but it is for the person raising the complaint to agree if that resolution is suitable

f) Where an issue cannot be resolved informally, or it is not appropriate to do so, the grievance process must be followed. A formal process is sometimes required to enable all parties to work together to find a mutually acceptable resolution.

g) If you raised an informal grievance verbally and subsequently decided to move this forward as a formal grievance, your grievance must be raised (remembering to include details of the early resolution stage), as set out in the Grievance Procedure.

h) On occasion, the early resolution stage may still require an investigation. No decisions on the outcome of your formal grievance will be made before the matter has been fully investigated.

i) At all stages you have the right to be accompanied by: (1) an accredited local representative of a trade union; (2) a work colleague; or (3) an official of a trade union. All the above will be referred to in the policy and accompanying procedure as the 'companion'.

j) If you are dissatisfied with the outcome or remedy proposed, you will have a right of appeal.

k) You may choose, at any stage, to withdraw from the grievance process by giving formal written notice.

l) Information relating to grievances will be destroyed in line with colleges data retention schedule, subject to related legal requirements.

m) If you raised a grievance during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary process may be suspended to allow the grievance to be heard. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. This should be in consultation, with a view to reach agreement with all parties. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

3.1 Reasonable Adjustments

Colleges will ensure throughout the grievance that they do not discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic. For example, adapting procedures to accommodate if required, or making reasonable adjustments to procedures to ensure that they do not put anyone with a protected characteristic at a substantial disadvantage. This might mean someone else attending the disciplinary process meetings in addition to the companion. For example, a British Sign Language signer, a translator, a support worker or someone with knowledge of the employee's specific needs.

3.2 Collective grievance

If you are part of a group of employees who want to raise a grievance about the same issue, the group should submit one grievance letter containing the names and signatures of each employee raising the grievance. If some, or all of the employees are trade union members, they may choose to be accompanied by a trade union representative. A spokesperson may be nominated to represent the group.

The grievance will then be managed as detailed in the Grievance Procedure, and the group will be invited to attend a grievance meeting and be informed of the outcome.

If a recognised trade union raises a collective grievance on behalf of their members, it will follow the Dispute process (link to this here). Collective grievances may be settled with trade unions as a Local Agreement where appropriate.

If a manager receives a collective grievance, they must contact People Services (PS), for advice.

3.3 Grievance from an ex-employee

If you raise a grievance after leaving the college, it will still be investigated fully, but there won't always be a grievance meeting. The Grievance Procedure has more information about how this will be managed. All parties will be informed of the outcome.

3.4 False or misleading grievance

If you raise a complaint or grievance and it is found to be deliberately false or vexatious, it will be considered as misconduct. This may result in disciplinary action against you and managed by the Disciplinary Policy.

3.5 What happens when you formally raise a grievance

Where there is no Local Agreement covering the subject of the grievance, and until all stages of the grievance have been exhausted, the previous existing state of affairs to your terms and conditions of employment and working practices, before the subject of the grievance, will be maintained. This is referred to as the 'status quo ante'.

This means that the terms and conditions and working practices that existed before the subject of your grievance should be maintained until the grievance process is completed, unless the grievance relates to a health and safety issue or working relationships (e.g. in relation to material impact to health or wellbeing, potential bullying, harassment or conflicts of interest), where it is not practicable to continue.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 You should:

- Consider seeking advice and support from your companion at any point of the grievance process.

- Treat any information shared with you as part of a grievance process as confidential, except for discussing matters with your companion.

4.2 Managers should:

- Ensure that they and their staff are fully conversant with the grievance policy and procedure in place.

- Make full use of the early resolution stage, when possible, to prevent minor issues from escalating unnecessarily.

- Always act promptly to deal with any issues raised by employees. If employees remain dissatisfied after a formal hearing, the right to appeal information will be included in the outcome letter.

- Ensure that they undertake appropriate training relevant to their role in the grievance process.

- Seek advice from PS if they are unclear on a potential grievance issue.

4.3 PS Representatives should:

- Provide advice and support to managers and employees on the application of this Policy and on all stages of the Grievance Procedure.

- Monitor formal grievance activity across the college.

- Inform the College Leadership/Management Team if there are areas of concern in relation to the application of this Policy and Procedure.

4.4 Trade Union Representative/Companion should:

Provide their members with advice and support throughout the grievance process.

5 Links to Other Policies/Documents

Policy & Procedural Documents | Borders College

6 Further Sources of Information

6.1 You can access counselling if needed via Occupational Health (01896 825982)

6.2 You can find further relevant information here:

- Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures | Acas
- Dealing with problems at work | TUC

National Negotiating Committees

Model Grievance Procedure For Lecturing Staff

1 August 2026

Contents

1. **Introduction** 9
2. **Timescales** 9
3. **Early Resolution** 9
4. **Formal Grievance** 10
   - **4.1 Support** 10
   - **4.2 Conflict of Interest** 10
   - **4.3 Informing Other Members of Staff** 10
5. **Grievance Hearing** 11
   - **5.1 Conduct of the Hearing** 11
   - **5.2 Rearranging the Grievance Hearing** 12
6. **Grievance Investigation** 12
   - **6.1 Establishing Information** 12
7. **Grievance Outcomes** 12
8. **Retaining a Record** 13
9. **Appeals** 13

1. Introduction

The aim of this Grievance Procedure is to provide procedural guidelines for colleges in support of the National Grievance Policy.

Standard letters that colleges may want to use to communicate throughout the Procedure are here.

Grievances may generate records and documentation, and these will be managed in line with related legal requirements.

2. Timescales

A formal Grievance process may have an impact on the health and wellbeing of you and any other member of staff directly involved in the matter. Therefore, it is important to progress the process within a reasonable timescale.

Timescales should be specified, agreed and adhered to unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example, the availability of key individuals and/or operational (business) reasons.

It is essential that any delays to timescales are communicated to you and other involved parties as soon as possible. Further information can be found here Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures | Acas.

3. Early Resolution

When you have a problem or concern at work, the first step is usually an informal conversation to try to resolve the issue. This gives the college a chance to address problems or concerns before they escalate.

If you raise a problem or concern informally with your line manager, you should be clear that this is an informal matter. Your line manager should meet with you in private and listen to you. They may need to carry out a fact-finding exercise into the matter – making sure the matter is kept confidential. If you feel that your problem or concern at work cannot be resolved using any of these options, or if you have tried them and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you have the right to proceed to a formal grievance.

Managers will note what they discuss with you and after the meeting they should send you a note to confirm what was agreed. If the matter is resolved at this stage, then managers should not keep these notes any longer.

If you do not feel it is appropriate to speak to your line manager, you should try to speak to a more senior manager.

Other examples of ways to informally resolve a problem or concern at work can include joint mediation, facilitated conversations, advice or talking to a trusted colleague or your trade union official. PS may also provide advice and support to managers and employees.

Mediation is a confidential form of alternative resolution and is entirely optional to you and all involved parties. It can be used at any time during or after the Grievance process. Mediation is only useful if all parties agree to attend mediation.

Mediation can only be facilitated by a trained and/or accredited mediator, independent from the matter to be discussed.

If you do not feel your problem or concern at work can be resolved using any of these options

or you have tried and things still can't be resolved, you can consider raising a formal grievance.

4. Formal Grievance

The formal grievance procedure begins when you notify your line manager or a more senior manager about your concern at work. This could be verbal or via a grievance letter. If it is a letter, you should detail the nature of your concern, such as:

a) Who it involves.
b) When any incident(s) occurred.
c) Any relevant evidence
d) Details of steps taken informally (if any).

It is always helpful to notify the college as soon as possible after the event and/or incident(s) otherwise it is harder to properly investigate the matter and for people to remember all the details of what happened.

Your notification should also include your suggestion for a resolution wherever this is practicably possible.

A manager who is impartial, trained and has the authority to make decisions will be appointed to ensure the formal grievance procedure is managed and if necessary, investigated.

They are referred to in this procedure as the 'appointed manager' and will have no other involvement in the matter (for example they are not a witness to any events) and have no interest in the outcome of any meeting.

4.1 Support

Raising a grievance can be an emotive and difficult thing for you to do. If it is about a workplace problem or concern involving a colleague or colleagues, this may be a difficult time for them too.

However, the grievance can also be a positive process that supports finding resolutions in the workplace, to improve working conditions moving forward.

We would encourage everyone involved in the grievance process to seek support throughout. Trade Unions have expertly trained representatives who have experience of supporting workers through processes such as the grievance and would be an excellent source of support for any trade union member.

There is always support available through the college's Occupational Health Service, PS, Trade Union Representative and through your GP.

Time given for companions to support those raising a grievance in early resolution and formal grievances will be agreed locally.

4.2 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest can be defined as a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgement or actions regarding one interest will be unduly influenced by another interest. If you have concerns about a conflict of interest about anyone involved in the formal Grievance process, you should raise this with the People Services representative dealing with the case to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

4.3 Informing Other Members of Staff

If your grievance directly relates to another member or members of staff, it may be necessary

for the college to inform them about your grievance to assist with any subsequent investigations. If there are significant concerns about the health and safety of anyone directly involved in the grievance process, this will be carefully considered at this point.

4.4 Grievance from an Ex-Employee

If you raise a grievance within six months of leaving the college you must put this in writing. Your grievance will follow the same process outlined in these procedures. There may be exceptional circumstances where the six-month period is extended.

5. Grievance Hearing

The manager receiving your formal grievance must advise the People Services team that they have received your formal grievance. Your grievance will be acknowledged in writing within two working days of receipt.

The appointed manager then needs to invite you to a grievance hearing, giving you at least five working days' notice. The college want to sort things out as quickly as possible, so will try to hold the hearing within seven calendar days of receiving the grievance. If there are going to be a delay, you will be advised of the reason for the delay.

You can be accompanied to the hearing by a companion. You need to arrange this and let the manager know before the hearing.

You do have the option to request that the hearing takes place without your attendance and that you are happy to be notified of the outcome either verbally or in writing within the timescales outlined in section 7.

You should come to the grievance hearing ready to talk about your concerns as fully as possible, with a view to finding a resolution.

During the hearing your grievance will be discussed, and you may be asked questions to make sure there is a good understanding of your problem or concern. If appropriate, you may be asked for the names of any witnesses who might be able to give further information.

The appointed manager should have someone appropriate with them to take notes.

After the hearing, everyone present will be asked to read and sign the notes to make sure they are an accurate reflection.

5.1 Conduct of the Hearing

At the hearing, the manager hearing the grievance will:
a) Make introductions and explain roles.
b) Explain the purpose and format of the hearing.
c) Outline the complaints and potential outcomes of the grievance.
d) Confirm with all that they understand the process and are satisfied with the arrangements.

The employee who has raised the grievance will outline the allegations and can call witnesses, to be questioned by you (or your companion) and/or the manager hearing the grievance, if required.

In some circumstances, the person whom the grievance relates to will also attend the hearing simultaneously, if agreed by all parties, and if not can attend separately, to respond directly to the allegation/s via questions from the employee (or their companion) and/or the manager hearing the grievance.

The manager hearing the grievance can ask questions of all parties. The employee (or their

companion) will be requested to sum up their case.

5.2 Rearranging the Grievance Hearing

If you or your companion can't make the grievance hearing you should tell the appointed manager as soon as possible letting them know dates and times they can make, and the manager will try to rearrange it for a time that works for everyone.

If you do not turn up for the hearing without telling the appointed manager in advance, the hearing will be rearranged. If you don't turn up for the rearranged hearing the matter will be considered closed, and you will be written to advise you of this decision. There may however be exceptional circumstances where the hearing will be rearranged once more. Any rescheduled meetings will usually be within a week of the original meeting time.

6. Grievance Investigation

A grievance will result in at least a fact-finding exercise for the appointed manager, usually before the grievance hearing, and may often require a fuller investigation and a written report. This may include interviewing other involved parties, but your grievance will stay confidential as far as possible.

The purpose of carrying out an investigation is to gather all relevant facts relating to the matter, in an objective, prompt and impartial manner. Conducting an objective and thorough investigation ensures that everyone involved is given an opportunity to explain the circumstances, provide any mitigating factors and ensure that all relevant facts are considered.

6.1 Establishing Information

If there is any doubt in the information, the appointed manager will try to seek corroborating information from other sources. If no information is available, the appointed manager will highlight this in their Grievance Investigation Report.

7. Grievance Outcomes

After completing the investigation and any hearing, the appointed manager will write to you to confirm the outcome. This will normally be within 10 calendar days of the grievance hearing. If this is going to take longer because there is a need to carry out further investigation, you will be advised in writing.

The outcome letter will include a copy of the notes from your grievance hearing.

The possible outcomes are:

a) **Grievance not upheld –** If the appointed manager does not find evidence to support your grievance, the outcome letter will explain why the grievance has not been upheld and address each of the issues you raised.

b) **Grievance fully upheld –** If the appointed manager finds evidence to support your grievance, the outcome letter will explain the steps that they or the college will take to resolve the issue.

c) **Grievance partially upheld –** If the appointed manager finds evidence to support some of the problems or concerns issues raised by you, the letter will address and explain their decision on each issue.

For outcomes **b)** and **c)** – the outcome will include reference to your own suggested resolution

and how this will be incorporated or if your suggested solution cannot be incorporated the response will detail why this decision has been made.

If the grievance was about the behaviour or actions of other members of staff and the grievance was not upheld, the appointed manager will let them know that the matter will not be taken any further. The appointed manager may make recommendations as an outcome which may include, facilitated conversations, training and mediation, and may trigger other formal processes, but this list is not exhaustive.

8. Retaining a Record

Where there is an allegation that arises directly from or because of a grievance that involves a vulnerable adult or child being put at risk or abused, the grievance investigation and related information will be retained in line with legislation.

9. Appeals

If you feel the grievance outcome is wrong or unjust, you have the right to appeal. You must submit an appeal in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the decision. The appeal should always be conducted by a person senior to the person whose decision or conduct the grievance relates to, up to and including the Board of Management.

You will be sent all documentation relevant to the grievance in order to assist you to prepare for the appeal.

The appeal hearing will not normally be a full re-hearing of the case unless there has been a procedural error. The outcome of the appeal hearing will confirm or amend the grievance outcome.

An Appeal Manager will be appointed and will inform you in writing of their final decision within five working days of the appeal hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Manager is final, and there is no further right of appeal.

Further information about appeals can be found here.