



ST FRANCIS DE SALES COLLEGE

Permanently Affiliated to Bangalore University || AICTE Approved | Electronic City, Bengaluru - 100

Reaccredited by NAAC with 'B++' Grade || Recognised under section 2(f) & 12(b) of the UGC Act || An ISO 9001: 2015 Certified Institution

A FRANSALIAN INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

1. INTRODUCTION

This Student Grievance Procedure provides a mechanism for students to solve grievances internally without recourse to legal procedures. It should be recognised that the majority of grievances should be resolved as near to their source as possible. It is for this reason that the Procedure provides for a number of stages, both informal and formal in the handling of a grievance. The purpose of the Procedure is to ensure that grievances are resolved amicably in so far as possible and to the mutual satisfaction of both complainant and respondent. It is expected that the majority of grievances will be resolved at the informal stage.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Procedure is open to all registered students of the College. The Procedure is also open to any person who was a registered student and the subject matter of the grievance relates to acts or omissions that occurred whilst the person is a registered student.

2.2 The Procedure can be invoked on an individual or collective basis. However, it can only be invoked by the aggrieved Person (s). It cannot be invoked on someone's behalf, nor can it normally be invoked anonymously. However, in exceptional circumstances, the College may deem that it is necessary and appropriate to consider an anonymous grievance.

2.3 The Procedure does not apply to grievances raised by students enrolled at another educational organisation for a Programme leading to an award by the College where the subject matter of the complaint is outside the control and/or responsibility of the College.

2.4 The Procedure does not replace or take precedence over other College procedures. Where a grievance is made which falls within the ambit of another College's procedure, the complainant will be advised of this and will be requested to avail of the appropriate procedure. Notwithstanding the examples detailed below, it is ultimately a matter for the College to decide if a particular grievance falls within the scope of this Procedure or not.

PRINCIPAL
St. Francis de Sales College
Electronics City Post, Bangalore - 560 100.

Electronics City P. O., Bengaluru - 560 100

Tel: 080-27836065 / 27834611, Fax: 080-27832299 Email: principal@sfscollege.in
www.sfscollege.in

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2.5 The following will generally fall outside the scope of this Procedure and

should be pursued using the channels indicated alongside below:

Appeals in relation to academic assessment and decisions of examination boards pertaining to student progression, assessment and awards. Such matters are dealt with under the University's Examination Regulations.

Matters relating to student discipline and complaints about students. Such

matters are dealt with under the College's Student Discipline Committee. Student grievances against members of staff which relate to matters that falls outside the scope of the professional relationship between staff and students. Due to their unique circumstances, the procedure to be followed for grievances of this nature shall be determined by the College on a case by case basis.

2.6 The following are examples of matters that may fall within the scope of this

Procedure: • Student grievances against members of staff of the College in relation to

bullying and harassment. Student grievances in relation to discrimination by the College or members of staff

Student grievances in relation to the delivery of academic programs and courses of study by the College or members of staff

• Student grievances relating to the professional conduct of members of staff.. Student grievances relating to student services, academic or non-academic. Student grievances relating to College facilities.

2.7 The College may progress a matter that has been dealt with under this Procedure further through other procedures. For example, where a student grievance against a member of staff is upheld, the College may determine that it should be progressed further under the College's Disciplinary Procedure for staff.

3. GENERAL

3.1 The College will endeavour to ensure that grievances are treated seriously and constructively at all stages of the Procedure. It will also seek to ensure that grievances are dealt with fairly and consistently and in accordance with the principles of natural justice

3.2 All staff and students of the College are required to fully and promptly cooperate with this Procedure.

3.3 If a grievance is upheld, appropriate remedial action will be implemented. If grievance is not upheld, the reason(s) for the decision will be communicated

to the complainant and respondent.


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3.4 The College will seek to ensure that student grievances are addressed promptly within specified timescales outlined in this procedure. If a timescale for addressing a grievance is not achievable at any stage in the procedure, then the complainant and respondent shall be notified in writing and provided with an explanation for any delay.

3.5 Privacy and confidentiality will be respected both for complainants and respondents. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the grievance and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.

3.6 No student who brings a grievance in good faith under this Procedure, whether it is upheld or not, shall be treated less favourably by the College or any member of staff than as if the grievance had been upheld. Where a student feels that he/she has been victimised for availing of this Procedure, a further grievance may be made under this Procedure in relation to that matter.

4. VEXATIOUS, MALICIOUS OR MISCHIEVOUS COMPLAINTS

4.1 While students are encouraged to avail of this Procedure and will be provided with all necessary support, it should only be invoked in the case of legitimate grievances.

4.2 Making a complaint concerning a grievance which is found to be vexatious, malicious or mischievous may be considered a breach of this Procedure which may be subject to further action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. For the avoidance of doubt, a complaint that is not upheld is not necessarily vexatious, malicious or mischievous. It is generally only in exceptional cases where there is evidence that the student(s) knowingly or recklessly made a complaint relating to illegitimate grievances that such further action will be considered by the College.

4.3 The College shall endeavour to ensure that the reputations and professional integrity of members of staff are protected in so far as possible from unsubstantiated complaints.

5. STEP 1: INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

5.1 The College is committed to ensuring that student grievances are resolved in a cooperative, rather than adversarial, manner.

5.2 Accordingly, it is expected that the majority of grievances can be resolved at this stage through the complainant first raising their grievance with the respondent. This can be done by: Telephoning the respondent to discuss the grievance:


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- Making an appointment to see the respondent to discuss the grievance, • Writing to the respondent to outline the grievance.

5.3 The grievance should be raised as soon as possible, normally within five working days of the incident that prompted the grievance

5.4 In outlining their grievance, the complainant should state the time, date and briefly describe the incident that prompted the grievance. It is also necessary for the complainant to clearly outline/explain the outcome that is expected.

5.5 Every effort should be made by the parties at this stage to arrive at a solution by consensus.

5.6 When the student meets with the respondent with a view to resolving the matter the meeting should be under mutually agreed conditions, with or without friends/colleagues or witnesses present, as agreed.

5.7 If both sides are agreeable, the parties may opt for the grievance cell in charge to act as a mediator to any discussions at the informal stage of the Procedure. As stated above, the in charge does not have any decision making role in this context. His/her role is confined to facilitating the parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution if this is possible.

5.8 It is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstance in which the complainant considers they cannot approach the respondent directly. In this case the complainant may go to a senior member of staff within the department, school, faculty, college or service concerned to informally discuss the grievance. Such senior member of staff may attempt to handle the grievance through correspondence or meetings with the relevant parties. He/she may also seek advice from the in charge in relation to the steps that may be taken by him/her to informally resolve the grievance.

5.9 It is also open to a student to initiate his/her complaint directly at Step 2 below if he/she feels it will not be possible to resolve the matter informally through Step 1.

6. STEP 2: FORMAL. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

6.1 If the complainant is unable to resolve the issue at the informal stage they should submit a Student Grievance Form to the Head of Faculty/College responsible for the area that is the source of the grievance. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix 1.


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6.2 On the Student Grievance Form, the student is required to briefly outline the grievance and to include dates, times, the nature of the incident and any individual(s) involved. The student must also state the outcome he/she is hoping to achieve and mention any attempts made to informally resolve the grievance. A copy of the submitted Student Grievance Form will be provided to the respondent.

6.3 The Student Grievance Form should nominally be submitted within 10 working days of the occurrence of the incident which prompted the grievance. It must be signed and dated by the student. It is acknowledged that the timing of the submission of the Student Grievance Form may be affected by any attempts at informal resolution of the grievance under Step 1.

6.4 The appropriate Head of Faculty/College shall acknowledge receipt of the Student Grievance Form within 5 working days of receipt of the Student Grievance Form and shall investigate the matter which will normally include a meeting with the respondent. As part of the investigation, the student will normally also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance in greater detail. The Head of Faculty/College may also request a meeting at which both parties will be present.

6.5 The person raising the grievance may request withdrawal of the grievance at any stage. Approval to withdraw will be at the discretion of the relevant Head of Faculty/College.

6.6 Following the conclusion of an investigation, the Head of Faculty/College shall make a decision as to whether or not the complaint should be upheld and whether any action is necessary. The precise nature of any action to be taken will depend on the circumstances of each case. Such action may include:

- Recommending that the College take certain specified steps to resolve the grievance. Directing that the respondent apologise to the complainant.

Directing that the respondent amend his/her behaviour or practices as appropriate. Directing that the complaint be withdrawn.

Directing that the complainant apologise to the respondent for making a vexatious, malicious or mischievous complaint.

Warning parties as to future conduct and detailing possible action for further infringements.

- Recommending that the matter should be progressed further through other College procedures as appropriate.


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6.7 The Head of Faculty shall endeavour to conclude the investigation under this Step 2, make his/her decision and communicate same in writing to the relevant parties within 15 working days of having acknowledged receipt of the Student Grievance Form.

6.8 Where the investigation is unable to be concluded within this timescale, the complainant and respondent shall be informed in writing of the revised timescale for receiving a response and the reasons for the delay.

6.9 The decision and any action taken by the Head of Faculty College at this stage of the process shall be recorded on the Student Grievance Form.

6.10 A copy of the Student Grievance Form shall be appended to the written response sent to all parties, with the Faculty Service retaining the original for information and for the recording of grievances. Records will not be kept any longer than necessary and should not normally exceed the period of the individual student's attendance in the College

7. STEP 3: GRIEVANCE REVIEW PROCEDURE

7.1 If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the decision and/or action taken under Step 2, an appeal can be made.

7.2 The appeal should be submitted to the grievance cell in writing detailing the reasons for wishing to take the grievance to this stage. This should normally be done within ten working days of receipt of the response from Step 2. The Cell will acknowledge receipt of the request and convene a meeting of the Panel normally within 15 working days of receipt of the request. The other party to the original grievance will also be given a copy of the written appeal.

7.3 As part of its review, the Panel will have access to all prior records and documents relating to the initial grievance. The Panel will normally request to meet with all parties involved in the grievance, individually or collectively.

7.4 The Panel should endeavour to have completed its review within 30 working days of receipt of the response from Step 2. Having completed its review, the Panel will make a determination as to whether the original decision should be upheld, overturned or modified. The Panel has the authority to take the same action as a Head of Faculty/College under Step 2.

7.5 The parties, including the relevant Head of Faculty College, will normally receive written confirmation of the Panel's determinations within 7 working days of the hearing. A written summary of the hearing will be kept with any other relevant paper in the Office of the Grievance Cell. Records will not be kept any longer than necessary and should not normally exceed the period of the individual student's attendance in the College


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