STARDOM UNIVERSITY

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

1. Purpose

Through this policy, Stardom University aims to provide a fair, transparent, and effective institutional system for receiving, reviewing, and resolving student complaints and grievances. The policy seeks to protect students' rights, promote fairness, integrity, and accountability, and improve the quality of academic, administrative, and student services, while observing university standards of conduct and ethics.

The University affirms that submitting a complaint or grievance is a fundamental student right. It must not result in retaliation, discrimination, or academic or administrative harm to the student. Where a complaint contains defamation, insult, or similar misconduct, the University and any affected person reserve their legal rights to pursue remedies against the violation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Stardom University students in undergraduate, graduate, and other University programs. It covers complaints and grievances relating to academic, administrative, financial, student-service, and conduct matters, and concerning any University unit, college, department, employee, or faculty member.

3. Definitions

Complaint: A formal expression of a student's dissatisfaction with a University decision, action, service, or practice that the student believes has caused harm or is inconsistent with applicable regulations or approved policies.

Grievance: A formal request to reconsider an academic, administrative, or disciplinary decision made concerning a student, based on reasons or evidence the student considers sufficient to justify reconsideration.

Appeal: A request for review of a decision made on a complaint or grievance by a higher authority or designated committee, in accordance with the escalation levels established by this policy.

Formal complaint: A complaint submitted through the University's approved channels and procedures and recorded in the official complaints system.

Retaliation: Any adverse action, threat, or discriminatory treatment directed at a student because the student submitted a complaint or grievance in good faith or participated in an investigation.

4. Governing Principles

• Fairness and impartiality: Each complaint is considered objectively and without bias.

• Right to complain: A student may not be prevented from submitting a complaint or grievance that meets the applicable requirements.

• Non-retaliation: Retaliation against a student for submitting a good-faith complaint is prohibited.

• Confidentiality: Complaint information and the identities of the parties are protected to the extent permitted by the nature of the investigation and applicable rules.

• Transparency: Subject to applicable requirements, students may be informed of the stages of handling, the responsible office, and the outcome.

• Timely handling: Complaints are addressed within defined and reasonable target timeframes.

• Right to respond: Relevant parties are given a fair opportunity to present their views and respond to allegations.

• Right to grievance and appeal: Students may challenge decisions in accordance with the specified levels and procedures.

• Preservation of evidence: The University preserves documents and data relevant to a complaint.

• Continuous improvement: Information derived from complaints is used to improve University policies and services.

5. Types of Complaints and Grievances

The following categories are illustrative and not exhaustive:

5.1 Academic complaints

• Teaching or quality of the educational process.

• Assessment, examinations, and grades.

• Courses and timetables.

- Academic supervision.
- Registration, course withdrawal, and add/drop matters.
- Academic services.
- Decisions concerning academic progress.

5.2 Administrative complaints

- Admissions and registration procedures.
- Student services.
- Issuance of documents and certificates.
- University transactions.
- Unjustified delays in providing services.

5.3 Financial complaints

- Tuition and fees.
- Payments and refunds.
- Scholarships or discounts.
- Errors in financial accounts.

5.4 Conduct-related complaints

- Mistreatment.
- Verbal or behavioral abuse.
- Discrimination.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Abuse of authority.
- Conduct contrary to University regulations and values.

5.5 Facilities and service complaints

- Classrooms and laboratories.
- Library.

- Online learning systems.
- Technical services.
- The University environment.

5.6 Grievances against decisions

Students may seek review of academic, administrative, or disciplinary decisions affecting their rights, in accordance with the time limits and procedures in this policy and related regulations.

6. Complaint Submission Channels

The University provides multiple channels for submitting complaints, including:

- The official electronic complaints and grievances system.
- The designated complaints email address.
- The Student Affairs Office.
- The college dean's office or department head, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- An official complaints box, where needed.
- Any other channel formally approved by the University.

Complaint channels must be publicized to students and easy to access, with instructions for their use.

7. Basic Complaint Information

Where possible, a complaint should include:

- Student's name and student number.
- College, program, and department.
- Contact information.
- Subject of the complaint.
- A clear description of the incident or decision.
- Date of the incident.
- Relevant person or unit.

• Supporting documents or evidence, if available.

• The action or resolution requested by the student.

A complaint that lacks some information may still be accepted if the information available is sufficient to begin a review.

8. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be received, particularly where they concern safety, integrity, or serious misconduct, provided they are supported by evidence or a legally relevant indication.

The University is not required to notify the complainant of the outcome if the complainant's identity or contact details cannot be established. However, the University may verify the substance of the complaint and take any action it considers appropriate.

9. Complaint-Handling Stages

Stage 1: Receipt and registration

The responsible office records the complaint, assigns a reference number, and sends an acknowledgment to the student when contact details are available.

Target timeframe: within two business days.

Stage 2: Screening and classification

The responsible office identifies the nature of the complaint and the office responsible for handling it, and determines whether it is an ordinary complaint, academic complaint, decision grievance, financial complaint, conduct-related complaint, or a matter requiring urgent investigation.

Stage 3: Review and investigation

Relevant information and documents are collected, and the parties concerned are allowed to provide their statements and evidence.

Stage 4: Decision

The responsible office issues a reasoned decision that, where practicable, states the facts established, the basis for the decision, and the action taken.

Stage 5: Notification to the student

The student is notified of the complaint outcome in writing through an official communication channel.

10. Target Timeframes

The University uses the following indicative target timeframes:

- Complaint registration: 2 business days.
- Initial screening: 3 business days.
- Ordinary complaint resolution: 10 business days.
- Complaint requiring an investigation: 20 business days.
- Complex complaints: up to 30 business days.
- Appeal decision: 15 business days.

If an investigation cannot be completed within the applicable timeframe, the student should be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected time needed to complete the process.

11. Urgent Complaints

Priority is given to complaints involving allegations concerning the safety of students or others, threats, violence, harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority, or any incident where delay could result in serious harm.

The University may take interim measures to protect the parties or prevent continuing harm. Such measures do not constitute a prior determination of the merits of the complaint.

12. Conflicts of Interest

No person may participate in reviewing or investigating a complaint if they have a direct or indirect interest in it or a relationship with any party that could affect their impartiality. In such cases, the complaint is referred to another suitable person or body.

13. Student's Right to Grievance

If a student is not satisfied with the complaint outcome, the student may submit a grievance within 10 business days from notification of the decision, explaining the grounds for objection and, where possible, providing new evidence or information.

A grievance will not be accepted solely because the student is dissatisfied with the outcome unless it states an objective reason for reconsideration.

14. Levels of Escalation

Escalation proceeds, depending on the nature of the matter, through the following levels:

- Level 1: The relevant department or unit.
- Level 2: The college dean or relevant administration.
- Level 3: The University Student Complaints and Grievances Committee.
- Level 4: The higher competent University authority under applicable regulations. Its decision is final within the University, without prejudice to the student's right to approach competent external authorities.

15. Student Complaints and Grievances Committee

The University establishes a standing or periodic Student Complaints and Grievances Committee by decision of the competent authority.

Depending on the University's organizational structure, the Committee may include:

- A representative of academic administration.
- A representative of Student Affairs.
- A representative of the relevant college, where needed.
- A representative of legal affairs or quality assurance, depending on the matter.
- A neutral member, where needed.
- Any other member required by the nature of the complaint.

No person with a conflict of interest in the complaint may participate in the Committee.

16. Committee Responsibilities and Powers

- Review complaints and grievances referred to it.
- Review documents and evidence.
- Hear from the parties where necessary.
- Request information from University units.

- Verify compliance with University regulations and policies.
- Recommend corrective actions.
- Monitor implementation of decisions.
- Submit periodic reports to senior management.
- Recommend amendments to policies and procedures based on recurring complaint patterns.

17. Protection from Retaliation

The University prohibits retaliation, intimidation, or discrimination against a student because the student:

- Submitted a good-faith complaint.
- Submitted a grievance.
- Participated in an investigation.
- Provided relevant information or testimony.

Allegations of retaliation are treated as a separate matter requiring review and appropriate action.

18. Malicious or Inaccurate Complaints

A complaint that is not substantiated is not automatically considered malicious. No action may be taken against a student solely because the complaint was not substantiated.

If, after review, it is established that the student deliberately provided fabricated information or made a malicious complaint to harm another person, action may be taken under University regulations, while preserving the student's right to respond.

19. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The University protects the confidentiality of complaint and grievance information. Data is made available only to individuals whose duties require access.

Complaint records are kept in a secure system. Aggregated data may be used for quality assurance and institutional improvement without unnecessarily disclosing complainants' identities.

20. No Adverse Effect on Academic Rights

Submitting a complaint or grievance in good faith must not deprive a student of an academic right or University service to which the student is entitled.

However, submitting a complaint does not automatically suspend an academic or administrative decision unless the competent authority decides otherwise.

21. Responsibilities of University Units

• University Management: Approves the policy and ensures its implementation.

• Colleges and Departments: Handle complaints within their authority and refer matters beyond their authority.

• Student Affairs: Receives complaints, guides students, and monitors the process.

• Complaints and Grievances Committee: Investigates referred matters and issues recommendations.

• Quality Assurance and Institutional Development: Analyzes complaint data and uses it to improve performance.

• Students: Provide accurate information, respect complaint procedures, and do not misuse the system for abuse or defamation.

22. Performance Indicators

The University monitors the complaints system using indicators including:

• Number of complaints each semester.

• Percentage resolved within the target timeframe.

• Average time to close a complaint.

• Percentage of recurring complaints.

• Percentage resolved fully or partly in the student's favor.

• Student satisfaction with complaint handling.

• Number and outcomes of appeals.

• Most frequently recurring complaint areas.

23. Periodic Reporting

The responsible office prepares periodic reports on complaints and grievances for senior University management.

Reports should focus on trends and institutional issues, not merely complaint counts, and should include practical recommendations to improve services, regulations, and procedures.

24. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains appropriate in light of academic, administrative, and legal developments and to benefit from implementation results and feedback from students and staff.

25. General Provisions

• This policy must not be interpreted to reduce any student right granted under applicable laws and regulations.

• This policy does not prevent a student from using any other lawful channel available to them.

• If this policy conflicts with a higher-ranking law or regulation, the higher-ranking rule applies.

• The policy is approved and amended in accordance with Stardom University's formal procedures.

• The policy takes effect on the date of approval.

Document Control

• Responsible office: Student Affairs Department.

• Approving authority: Deans' Council.

• Document number: To be assigned.

• Approval date: To be completed.

• Review date: To be completed.

• Complaints email: complaints@stardomuniversity.edu.eu

Translation note: This document is an English translation of the supplied Arabic policy. It preserves the source document's structure and stated timeframes. Before formal adoption

or publication, the University should verify the policy against applicable regulatory requirements and confirm that all listed complaint channels and procedures are operational.