

School of Nursing & Midwifery
University College Cork

Grievance Policy
For Students on Practice Placements

Version 2.7 – March 2022



This Grievance Policy is designed to be followed closely by those involved in grievances raised by supernumerary undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery students in relation to their **clinical practice placements**.
It has been jointly agreed by the School of Nursing & Midwifery UCC and the participating Health Service Providers.

Document Location

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/nursingmidwifery/students/bscnursemid/>

Revision History

Date of this revision: 04/03/22		Date of next review: as required
Version Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1.0		Earlier drafts worked on by former Director of UG Ed. (DUE)
1.0	Aug 2013	Legal advice sought
2.0	03/02/15	Draft received from Programme Administrator & Prof Hegarty
2.1	05/02/15	Updated to reflect changes and advice (AF)
2.2	02/06/15	Editorial changes to include all HSPs
2.3	12/07/16	Clarifications from OCLA
2.4	12/05/17	Updated by DUE and Head of School
2.5	04/09/18	Updated by DUE with recommendations received following usage of policy in 2017.
2.6	30/10/18	Final updates with comments received from Steering Group
2.7	22/10/21	Final updates with comments received from Steering Group

Consultation History

Revision Number	Consultation Date	Names of Parties in Consultation	Summary of Changes
1.0	Feb 2012	Alice Crowley of Ronan Daly Jermyn Solicitors	Suggestions made re representatives, Recommended removal of stage 3 & 4. Procedure simplified.
1.0		OCLA, UCC	

Approval

This document requires the following approvals:

Title	Date
Head of School	12 th October 2018
Steering Group	12 th October 2018
Steering Group & Head of School	4 th March 2022

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GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

All students seeking registration with the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), must complete their required placement hours and achieve relevant clinical learning outcomes and competencies during their placements with various Health Service Providers (HSPs) in the course of their degree programme. The purpose of this document is to set out the process by which nursing and midwifery students (“students”) may raise grievances when undertaking such practice placements, in a supernumerary capacity. This grievance process is intended to ensure that placement grievances are resolved quickly and thoroughly by encouraging open communication between students, the School of Nursing and Midwifery (“School”/SoNM) and the relevant Health Service Provider so that questions and problems, arising during the course of practice placements, are aired at the earliest opportunity and, wherever possible, resolved at the lowest level possible, without the need for progression to a formal procedure.

Grievances will be dealt with on an individual basis, at the earliest possible opportunity and in the strictest confidence by all concerned. Students will be entitled to representation at both informal and formal meetings.

2. Application

The grievance must relate to the student’s terms and conditions of practice placement, working environment or working relationship including, but not limited to:

1. allocation of work
 2. assignment of duties
 3. granting of all forms of leave
 4. health and safety issues
 5. relationships with work colleagues
- This policy covers **both** individual and collective grievances, i.e. complaints raised by or on behalf of a group of students.
 - This policy is **not** intended to deal with disciplinary, performance or bullying and/or harassment issues all of which are dealt with in separate policies.
 - The grievance procedure does not cover matters relating to improvements in pay.
 - This policy does not apply to grievances raised by students undertaking internship. During this time the relevant policy within the HSP should be applied.
 - This policy does not apply to grievances between supernumerary students. In this case **UCC’s Student Complaints Policy** should apply.

3. Responsibility

All students are required to adhere to this policy. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy should be discussed with the Director of Undergraduate Practice Clinical Education (prior to any action being taken) who will assist, if necessary, in determining which policy is the appropriate one.

4. Obligation to raise Grievances within a Reasonable Time

Grievances must be raised within a reasonable timeframe of the instances complained of occurring. Students are therefore required to raise the complaint/issue within 30 working days of it arising with their link lecturer (UCC)/Clinical Placement Co-ordinator (CPC)/Practice Module Leader.

SoNM personnel are similarly required to address student complaint/grievance within 30 working days of receiving the complaint/grievance and provide a written response to student.

UCC cannot address complaints unless they are made aware of them. UCC also recognises that where a complaint concerns another person, both the complainant and the person complained of have rights and therefore students are obliged to raise grievances promptly and as they occur and in any event during the course of a student's placement with the relevant Health Service Provider. Raising a complaint outside of the 30 day timeframe referred to above may prevent UCC from being in a position to investigate such a complaint.

5. Procedure

At all stages in the grievance procedure UCC may give consideration to Mediation/Facilitation, where it is deemed appropriate to a situation (informal process), in an effort to resolve the matter.

5.1 Informal Process

All complaints should be raised firstly on an informal basis before invoking the formal grievance procedure. There may, however, be some circumstances where the informal process is not appropriate

Students should first raise their complaint informally with the relevant Link Lecturer (UCC)/CPC (HSP). The Link Lecturer/CPC will make every effort to resolve the matter informally by discussing the matter with the student and facilitating an acceptable outcome and may need to involve the line manager (CNM/CMM/ADON/ADOM/PDC) from the relevant Health Service Provider ("HSP") in the process depending on the nature of the grievance.

Formal notes will be made on this informal process.

If the matter is not dealt with satisfactorily by the Link Lecturer, then the student may progress the complaint under the formal grievance procedures as set out below.

5.2 Formal Grievance Process

The student should refer their grievance/complaint in writing to the relevant Practice Module Leader (PML). The PML will liaise with the Programme Lead and the Director of Undergraduate Clinical Practice Education for the BSc Nursing and BSc Midwifery Programmes (UCC). A meeting will be arranged by the Practice Module Leader/Programme Lead (or designated individual) to discuss the matter following receipt of the complaint.

Students will be entitled to be accompanied by a representative at this meeting. The Programme Lead may need to involve the PDC/respective HSP line manager in the process depending on the nature of the grievance. The student will be advised in advance if this is necessary.

The purpose of this meeting, which should be conducted in accordance with Appendix One to this procedure, is to establish the facts of the complaint and the specific issues complained of. It may be necessary to adjourn the meeting in order to consider the appropriate way of dealing with the grievance. The Practice Module Leader/Programme Lead (or designated individual) will advise the student of the next course of action to address the grievance.

6.0 Appeal

If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached at that stage, they may appeal to the Head of School (Nursing and Midwifery) UCC (“Head of School”) within seven days of receipt of the decision above. The grounds of the appeal must be set out in writing and addressed to the Head of School. Where appropriate, the appeal may be conducted by the Head of School (or a designated individual) in consideration of all documents and written grounds of appeal or, where it is necessary to do so and at the discretion of UCC. A meeting may be arranged to discuss the matter further, if further information is required, before concluding the appeal.

7.0 Mediation

At all stages in the grievance procedure either party may give consideration to Mediation/Facilitation, where it is deemed appropriate to a situation, in an effort to resolve the matter. Any agreement to enter into mediation must be entered into by the student, the School and the Health Service Provider who will each have the right to attend and be part of the mediation in a constructive manner.

8.0 Malicious/Vexatious Claims

If UCC has investigated any grievance and has found that a complaint was made in a vexatious or malicious manner, then it may regard any malicious or vexatious claims as an act of gross misconduct which may be dealt with through UCC’s Disciplinary Policy.

9.0 Review

UCC reserves the right to review, amend or replace this policy. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as required in line with business needs and legislative amendments and any changes will be advised to students.

***Guidelines on the operation of the Grievance Procedure are attached at Appendix 1**

APPENDIX ONE:

GUIDELINES ON THE OPERATION OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Preparing for grievance meeting

The person conducting the meeting should establish the precise details of the complaint in advance in order to check any policies or rules relevant to the matter. Where appropriate, the person or the HSP contact is invited to talk to the student's CPC, link lecturer, CNM/CMM and/or any other relevant personnel to ascertain all the facts pertaining to the issue. The outcome of such discussions will be retained in writing and provided to the generator of such complaint. It may also be necessary to arrange for a colleague to attend the hearing solely to take notes. Sufficient time should be set aside for the meeting and reasonable efforts made to avoid unnecessary interruptions.

The student should be notified in writing of the meeting arrangements (i.e. the date, time and venue for the meeting) and informed of his/her right to be accompanied by a representative. All parties should be informed of the precise nature of the grievance. A written copy of the complaint to the individuals named in the complaint will be provided so as to provide them with a right to reply. A written copy of the complaint will be given in confidence to the relevant HSP contact person, who will present the complaint to the relevant individual so they can prepare a response in writing.

Conducting the meeting

The person conducting the meeting should begin by introducing those present and outlining the purpose of the meeting.

The student will be invited to outline his/her complaint and how he/she would like to see the matter resolved. The student may wish his/her representative to present the complaint on his/her behalf.

Open discussion should be encouraged of the issue and where appropriate explore possible options for resolving the complaint.

The meeting should be adjourned – even for just a short period – to allow consideration of all the issues raised and undertake further enquiries, if necessary, before reaching a decision.

The timescale for reconvening the meeting must be agreed. The person conducting the meeting may need to seek advice from UCC's Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA) about how the issue might best be resolved and whether there is scope for a compromise. This will help to ensure a consistency of approach.

Where possible the meeting will be reconvened within agreed time limits to inform the student of the decision. The person conducting the meeting must fully outline the reasons for his/her decision and afford the student and his/her representative an opportunity to respond. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the student (copied to his/her representative)

within 7 days of the meeting confirming the outcome of the meeting, the reasons for the decision and what action, if any, will be taken.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the hearing, he/she are advised of his/her right to appeal the decision.

Any action agreed must be implemented without undue delay.

Written feedback will be provided to individuals named in the complaint in relation to the aspect of the complaint that relates directly to them (not the full meeting minutes for confidentiality reasons) and will provide rationale for the decision(s) made.

A detailed and accurate record of the meeting and its outcome should be retained on the student's UCC file for a period no longer than the exiting of the student from that course of study.