

UGC has prescribed following guidelines at Annexure-10 of the UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 for redressing grievance of the students pursuing online programs

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

I. Scope of Grievance Redress System for Learner

The Higher Educational Institutions, offering programmes through the Open and Distance Learning mode and/or Online mode shall have a Grievance Redress System and Procedure which shall be published on the portal of Higher Educational Institution and it shall be the responsibility of the concerned Higher Educational Institution to update the same as and when required. Each of the Higher Educational Institutions shall provide an online facility for submitting grievances and track their status. The Higher Educational Institution shall also be responsible for monitoring, assessing and reviewing the effectiveness of its Grievance Redressal Procedures.

II. Guidelines and Standards for the Grievance Redress System

The Higher Educational Institution shall have a policy on Grievance Redress System based on following guidelines and standards, namely:

- (i) the policy shall be unbiased and understandable;
- (ii) there shall be time line for each stage of the process;
- (iii) the policy shall be published on Higher Educational Institutions portal so that the learners may read and refer to;
- (iv) the policy shall be made available to learners with disability in appropriate format and the provision shall be made accordingly in the policy document;
- (v) the authority or authorities involved in the grievance redressal process shall treat and investigate the facts impartially;
- (vi) the Higher Educational Institutions shall address the grievances in a timely manner so as to lessen interruption in learning process of the learner;
- (vii) the Higher Educational Institution shall have a proper communication and escalation mechanism which shall be operated and maintained through the online software application;
- (viii) the Higher Educational Institution shall maintain the confidentiality of the complainant as far as possible;
- (ix) the Higher Educational Institution shall ensure that officer(s) deputed for the learner support at the Higher Educational Institution, the Regional Centres and Learner Support Centre(s) (for Open and Distance Learning programmes) are able to provide guidance on submitting grievances in the portal;
- (x) there shall be a provision to withdraw a complaint without prejudice at any time during the procedure; and

- (xi) the learner shall be kept informed of the status in relation to his or her queries or grievance on priority.

III. Rights and responsibilities of learner

The rights and responsibilities of a learner shall be as under:

- (i) The learner has right to complain regarding any aspect related to his or her learning path including programme quality, learning resources, learner support and guidance, teaching, learning and assessment.
- (ii) The learner is entitled to approach the respective Learner Support Centres (for ODL programmes) for submitting his or her complaint. The learners of online mode may submit their complaint directly to the Higher Educational Institution. The complaint can be submitted individually or collectively by a group of learners.
- (iii) The learner shall submit a formal complaint in a manner prescribed by the Higher Educational Institution regarding expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided or the lack of a service or the quality of a service. Such expression shall be correlated with what the learners were entitled to receive.

IV. Responsibilities of the Higher Educational Institution

The responsibilities of the Higher Educational Institution shall be as under:

- (i) A HA Higher Educational Institution shall work with the principles of openness and collaboration.
- (ii) A Higher Educational Institution shall continuously improve the services it offers. As and when a grievance is received, the Higher Educational Institution shall investigate it thoroughly and make the necessary improvement(s) in its services.
- (iii) A Higher Educational Institution shall encourage Learner Support Centres (for Open and Distance Learning programmes) to make initial attempts to address and resolve complaints as close as possible to the point of origin, and with the minimum of formality.
- (iv) A Higher Educational Institution shall also monitor the Grievance Redressal process through its Learner Support Centres (for Open and Distance Learning programmes).
- (v) A Higher Educational Institution is responsible for privacy and confidentiality unless disclosure is necessary to proceed in the matter.
- (vi) The grievance shall be accompanied with the reasons for dissatisfaction and expected remedy. The learner shall also give the reference of Online Grievance Registration Number generated at the time of submitting the complaint at the Learner Support Centre.
- (vii) The Head of concerned School/Department/Centre of the Higher Educational Institution shall investigate the complaint(s) or refer the matter(s) to a more appropriate person, body or committee or departments, as appropriate.
- (viii) It shall be the responsibility of the Head of School/Department/Centre of the Higher Educational Institution to monitor the progress and to timely resolve the matter.

- (ix) The Head of concerned School/Department/Centre of the Higher Educational Institution shall respond in writing (letters or email etc.) through offline or online mode giving reasons for a decision and action taken there to.

V. Complaint Handling Mechanism

The Online —Complaint Handling Mechanism|| facilitates learners to submit online complaints through the interactive web portal and track their resolution status. The Higher Educational Institutions shall take action as under:

- (i) The Higher Educational Institutions recognised to offer programmes through the Open and Distance Learning mode and/or Online mode shall follow guidelines related to the Complaint Handling Mechanism notified by the Commission.
- (ii) The Higher Educational Institutions shall upload all information issued by the Commission regarding the Complaint Handling Mechanism on their website.
- (iii) The Higher Educational Institutions shall inform learners enrolled in Open and Distance Learning programmes and/or Online programmes about the Complaint Handling Mechanism.
- (iv) The Higher Educational Institutions shall provide a link with title ‘Complaint Handling Mechanism’ on homepage of Higher Educational Institution website for creating awareness amongst the stakeholders.
- (v) The Higher Educational Institutions shall comply with all instructions as issued by the Commission regarding timely and judicious resolution of all complaints raised by the learners.