



How to bring a formal report about the conduct of a staff member at UCL

Misconduct by staff may be dealt with under the grievance policy and procedure or disciplinary policy and procedure.

A formal complaint may be made by a staff member or student, by contacting the relevant HR business partner.

Things to consider:

- Is initiating a formal process the best way to deal with the problem? Formal processes can often become adversarial. For ongoing relationships, informal processes or resolution may be more mutually beneficial, but only if appropriate and with less serious issues.
- If a formal complaint is the right option, you need to consider what events took place, and how this might look to a third party. Ask yourself:
 - Has anyone else experienced the same behaviour or are there people who have witnessed the behaviour against you?;
 - Do you have any way to timestamp the behaviour (contemporaneous evidence) – i.e. emails to yourself after an event, text messages to friends that support a complaint, or written correspondence?
- The nature of the incident and evidence available will often determine whether a formal or informal approach is best. In cases where there is insufficient evidence to substantiate a claim, then informal resolution may be advised.
- It can be good practice to take notes for yourself to document incidents, including time, date and impact.
- It is important to access the right support for you during this process. There are internal and external support providers listed on the [Report + Support pages](#).

Guidance on preparing a statement

- Try to be clear and concise when making an initial complaint, referring to specific allegations or examples, and the impact of these.
- Avoid making generalised statements without supporting these with specific examples.

- Try to group examples under types of behaviour or in chronological order, so that the complaint presents as clearly as possible. This is likely to speed up the time taken to determine appropriate actions/next steps.
- Bear in mind that, in a formal process, the person about whom you are making an allegation of misconduct must have an opportunity to respond to the allegations. They will also have an opportunity to provide evidence. It is not in your interest to leave out or ignore relevant matters that are likely to be used by the other party in defending themselves.
- If there are a large number of examples or evidence, then key examples should be used in the statement with the remainder referred to in an appendix.
- Remember, you can do this with the support of a UCL staff member such as a Dignity Advisor, or external support provider. For more information, visit the support pages on [Report + Support](#).

Possible sources of evidence

- Eye witness account
- Names of potential witnesses
- Diary entries, text/social media messages, or emails mentioning the events. This can often be a source of key supporting evidence.
- Video or audio recordings. Note – we do not recommend covert recording, as this can be potential misconduct in and of itself.

Summary of process and what could cause delays

- Once a complaint is received, it will be reviewed to make initial determinations of the most appropriate next steps. This could mean that it could progress formally or informally from the outset;
- If a process goes formal, then an investigation will usually be undertaken. It will take a number of weeks to develop a Terms of Reference and appoint an investigating manager. The complainant will be asked for further information as part of an investigation.
- An investigation report will make recommendations on whether allegations have been upheld. Reasons for not upholding allegations may be insufficient evidence, frivolous or vexatious complaints
- If allegations are upheld and conduct contains misconduct, then it will progress to a disciplinary hearing.
- Complainants will normally be asked to attend disciplinary hearings as witnesses, where special arrangements may be made.
- For reasons of data protection it is likely that UCL will not be able to share the detail of the outcome with you. We will however be able to confirm whether the allegations have been upheld or not upheld.
- The reported UCL employee has a right of appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary hearing. The appeal stage usually involves a review of the decision, but does not normally require the involvement of the staff member making the original report, unless serious flaws were identified in the original process.
- The time taken from a formal process commencing to an outcome is likely to be in the region of months, not weeks, so complainants should be aware of this when going into a formal process. Complainants will however receive periodic updates throughout the process.

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