



**University of Technology, Jamaica**

<b>GOVERNANCE - POLICY — GENERAL</b>		
<b>NAME: POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE HANDLING OF STUDENTS COMPLAINTS</b>		<b>Revised: December 1, 2016</b>
<b>Issue Date: March 23, 2006</b>		<b>Confidentiality Limitation:</b>  None
<b>Implementation Date:</b> <b>February 1, 2017</b>	<b>Review period:</b> <b>December 2018:</b>	<b>Page No. 1 of 12</b>

**Policy and Procedures for Handling Student Complaints**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The University of Technology, Jamaica is committed to the continued improvement of the experience gained by students. The concerns of students are therefore welcomed as the University aims to achieve this. The Policy makes provisions therefore for the handling of all complaints brought to the attention of the University

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## **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

UTech endeavours to handle complaints in a way that:

- i. encourages informal conciliation;
- ii. is fair and efficient;
- iii. treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, empathy and confidentiality;
- iv. facilitates early resolution;

## **3.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY ON HANDLING STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

This policy applies to all aspects of a student's educational experience at UTech, Ja Students may make a complaint about any of the following:

- i. Other students of the University
- ii. Academic, administrative staff and support staff (including continuing, contract, sub-contract or casual, visiting appointments, guest lecturers)
- iii. Visitors to the University
- v. People external to UTech, Ja. that students interact with as part of an approved external programme of study such as work experience, industrial or clinical placements, continuing education or exchanges.
- vi. Physical and academic Environment

## **4.0 WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?**

A complaint is a statement expressing dissatisfaction with a request for action or response.

For the purposes of the Policy, the following will not be treated as a complaint:

- i. An initial request for information
- ii. Matters related to academic judgment
- iii. Matters related to admissions

## **5.0 WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?**

A complaint can be made by any student (or someone acting on their behalf) affected by the services provided by the University.

## **6.0 CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS**

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- a. Where a complaint is made an investigation shall be carried out to determine whether it has merit. The aim of the investigation is to provide a speedy response / resolution as is necessary.
- b. The subject of the complaint is to be informed of the complaint raised against him/her, this except where the complaint is made under an anonymous cover or where the subject is not identified.
- c. Where a complaint is made under anonymous cover the University will consider it only where there is sufficient information to ground an investigation.
- d. Complaints which are received regarding the services provided by an external organization with which the University has no involvement are not covered under the provisions of this Policy.

## **7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBERS**

### **a. All Staff**

All members of staff, who are actively engaged in the duties of their desk, shall avail themselves to the receipt of a complaint submitted by a student.

### **b. Head of Units/Schools/Faculties/Colleges/Departments**

It shall be the responsibility of the Head of Unit/School/Department/Faculty/College to ensure that guidance is given to staff members regarding complaints which are presented for their consideration. Such an individual shall also ensure that an appropriate record is kept of all complaints received and their status through the establishment of a Students' Complaint log in the format represented in Appendix 2.

### **c. Customer Service Advocate**

The Customer Service Advocate is responsible for considering all complaints which cannot be resolved within a Unit/Department/School/Faculty/College.

The Customer Service Advocate:

- i. shall keep a record of all complaints referred to the Office with the attendant outcome.
- ii. will provide a quarterly report to the Academic Board regarding the complaints that have been made to the respective Units/ Colleges/ Schools/ Departments and their respective status.

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## **8.0 PROCEDURES FOR THE HANDLING OF STUDENTS COMPLAINTS**

### **A. Stage 1**

- i. The complainant shall complete the form as reflected in Appendix 1 and submit same to the College/Faculty/Department/School/Unit against whom the complaint is being laid.
- ii. The complainant shall, upon submitting his/her complaint, record the submission in the log book provided. Log same in the complaints book provided within each School/Department/Faculty/Unit.
- iii. Where a serious complaint is made against a senior member of staff all efforts should be made to ensure that it is treated with a high level of sensitivity. The complaint should be dealt with by an independent member of the University's Executive Management team. Where it is a matter related to a member of the Executive Management Committee it should be referred to the University's President.

### **B. Stage 2**

All complaints logged shall be referred to the appropriate Officer within the respective School/Unit/Department/Faculty for action. (Appendix 2) All matters are to be referred within 24 hours of being logged:

- i. In a Faculty, the appropriate officer is the Programme Director, Head of Department, Head of School, College/Faculty Administrator or Dean.
- ii. If the complaint relates to an administrative unit, the appropriate officer is the Head of the Unit/Department:
- iii. The appropriate Officer shall analyze the complaint and seek to either address it personally or refer it to a competent staff member within the Unit/Department/School/Faculty for resolution
- iv. The appropriate officer will ensure that he /she has no conflict of interest or bias in relation to any party to the complaint, and that there is no perception by the parties that s/he has a conflict of interest or bias.
- v. If the person in authority does not believe he/she can handle the complaint in an impartial way, they shall exclude themselves from the process, and refer the matter to their supervisor.

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- vi. Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the complaint, and matters pertaining to the complaint will not be discussed beyond the parties to the complaint and staff involved in resolving the complaint.
- vii. Where the appropriate Officer deems the complaint as one which cannot be addressed by their Department/Unit/School/Faculty they shall refer same to the Office of the Customer Service Advocate.

**C. Stage 3**

- i. Where the matter requires an investigation, same shall be initiated no later than three (3) working days following assignment to a member of staff by the appropriate Officer.
- ii. Where there is no need for an investigation, steps are to be initiated to provide a response in writing to the complainant no later than three (3) working days following the assignment to the member of staff by the appropriate Officer.
- iii. No response is to be provided to a complainant without the signature of an appropriate officer.

**D. Stage 4**

- i. The complainant is to be provided with the outcome of his/her complaint no later than two (2) weeks following the lodging of the complaint.
- ii. Where the complaint is of a complex nature and requires in-depth investigation the student shall be informed. A response to such complaints should take no more than four (4) weeks.

**E. Stage 5**

**i. Petition to the Visitor Through the Council**

If the student is not satisfied with the response by the appropriate officer, or committee / tribunal s/he may submit the complaint to the Registrar for referral to the Visitor through the Council. The Visitor's decision is final.

The procedure for making a complaint is summarised in Appendix 3: Procedures for making a Complaint: A Summary for Students.

**ii. Technology Based Complaints**

The University will provide a mechanism to facilitate student complaints being submitted electronically.

**iii. Notification of Outcome**

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Students will receive written advice of the outcome of their complaint. The outcome will be in keeping with the seriousness of the incident, which was the basis of the complaint, and outcomes will be applied consistently across the University.

**iv. Documentation**

All documentation relating to complaints will be kept strictly confidential and will not be accessible to anyone who is not directly involved in handling the complaint. Any material about the outcome of the complaint will be placed on the appropriate student's file.

**v. Relationship to Other UTech Policies**

This policy does not over-ride the established administrative or appeal procedures which would normally be followed in relation to academic matters; e.g., appeals against assessment grades.



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How would you like your complaint to be resolved?

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Student's Signature: .....

Date:

**APPENDIX 2**

**UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, JAMAICA**

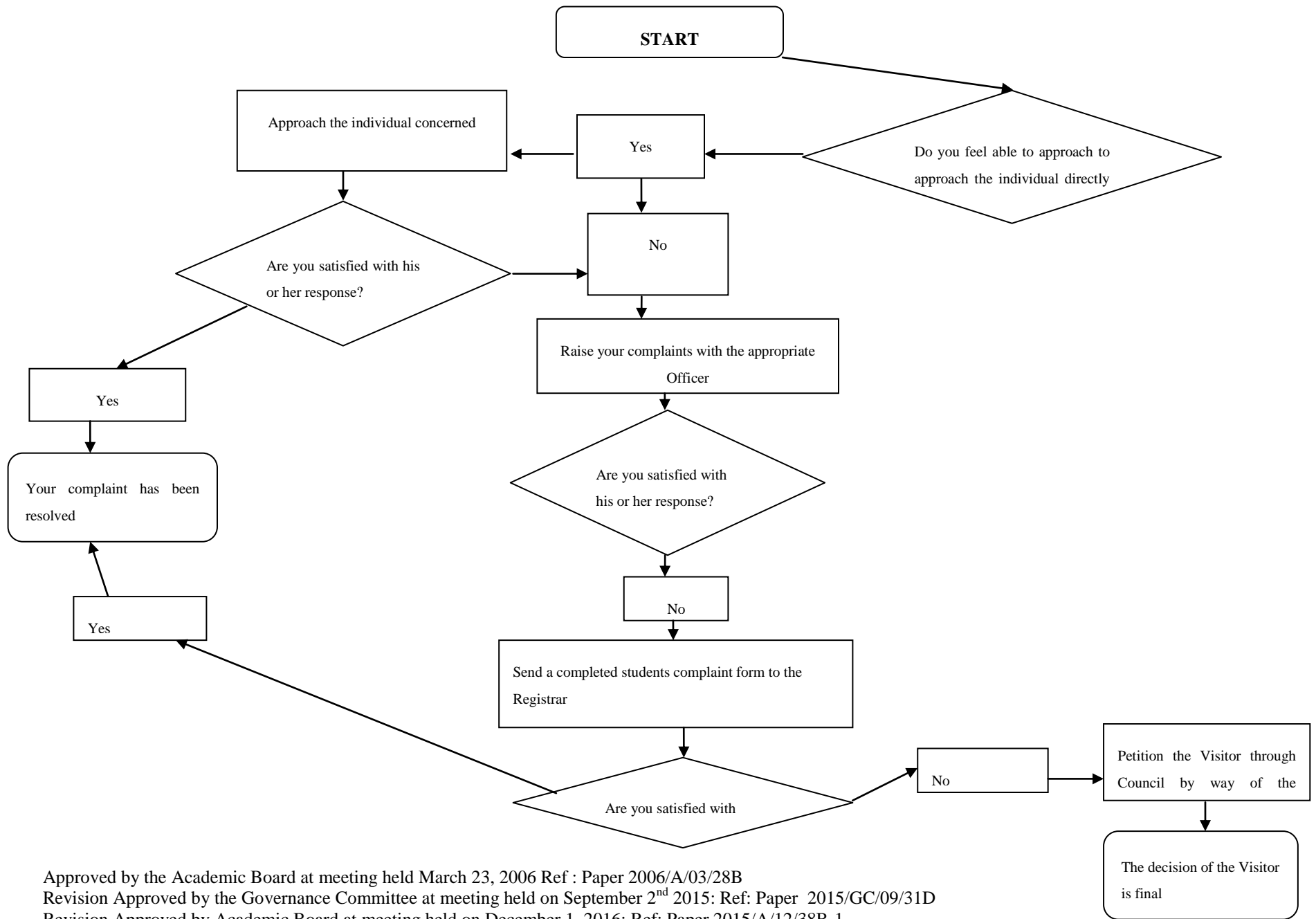
**STUDENTS' COMPLAINT LOG**

<b>Entry Number</b>	<b>Nature of Complaint</b>	<b>Name and signature of complainant</b>	<b>Name and signature of staff member logging complaint</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Status of complaint</b>	<b>Date noted by the Academic Board</b>

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