

Formal Complaint Resolution:

To commence formal complaint resolution the Complainant will need to complete a confidential EO Complaint Form (available online) and lodge it with either the EEO Advisor, Manager Equity Access and Diversity or one of the University's Grievance Officers. The EEO Advisor or the Manager Equity Access and Diversity (as appropriate) will arrange for the claim to be investigated in an impartial manner. The goal of this investigation is to produce clear and enforceable outcomes. The person investigating may need to take statements from the parties involved and interview witnesses in order to ensure that the principles of natural justice are adhered to.

Vice Chancellor's Equal Opportunity Review Panel:

At the conclusion of the Formal Complaint Resolution process, any party involved can lodge a written appeal with the Vice Chancellor's Office. An appeal can only be made on the grounds that those involved in managing the grievance followed either substantially incorrect procedures or made decisions on substantially incorrect information. The panel will make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor who will decide on a course of action. The Vice Chancellor's decision is the last internal resolution process available.

External Complaint Resolution:

It is hoped that these internal procedures will resolve all EO complaints. However, at any stage, those involved retain their right to seek external resolution with bodies such as the Equal Opportunity Commission (WA) or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Federal). The EEO Advisor or Manager Equity Access and Diversity can assist with this if required.

The procedure enclosed is for use by Murdoch University Staff and Students.

For more information on anything enclosed, including a complete list of the Information and Grievance Officers available to assist, please visit the Equal Opportunity link at:

www.hr.murdoch.edu.au

Alternative contacts about EO matters are:

For Staff: EEO Advisor (HR) on 9360 2430.

For Students: Manager Equity Access and Diversity on 9360 6146.

External support and professional counselling is available to staff members and their immediate families through the University's **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. For more information, please follow the EO and EAP links at the above website.



This procedure was developed by the Office of Human Resources, Murdoch University and is current as at 01.04.2006

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murdoch university equal opportunity complaints handling procedure

Murdoch University is committed to upholding the principles of the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act (1984).

In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the following grounds;

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Impairment
- Pregnancy
- Sexual Orientation
- Racial and/or Sexual Harassment
- Political and/or Religious Conviction
- Family Responsibility and/or Status
- Marital Status
- Gender History
- Spent Convictions

The enclosed procedure may be of assistance if you believe that you have been discriminated against or harassed on any of these grounds.

www.murdoch.edu.au



Despite the obvious benefits of a work and study environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, there may be unfortunate instances where allegations of this nature occur.

In order to manage these instances as empathetically, as promptly and as confidentially as possible, Murdoch has established the following Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaints Handling Procedure. For the expanded procedure and a list of the staff that are available to assist, please follow the staff or student EO links on the Murdoch University website.

The following procedure is a guide only and is designed to assist in managing grievances that potentially involve instances of discrimination and/or harassment on EO grounds. If your grievance is about OS&H, bullying or any other issue then you should contact your immediate Supervisor, Manager, Human Resources, Lecturer, Course Coordinator or Head of School (as appropriate) for assistance.

Definitions (please see the website for expanded definitions):

Complainant: Person/people lodging an EO complaint or allegation.

Respondent: Person/people against whom the complaint is made.

Grievance/Complaint/Dispute: An EO related concern about an act, behaviour, decision, situation, omission or problem that someone perceives to be unfair, discriminatory, unjustified and/or harassing.

Conciliation/Mediation: The mutual resolution of a dispute with the aid of an impartial third party.

When managing EO grievances, the focus is on the perceptions and experiences of the Complainant, rather than the alleged Respondent's intentions. It is the negative impact of the Respondent's behaviour that is of concern.

All parties involved in complaint resolution must observe strict confidentiality as breaches can result in defamation, aggravation of the problem and/or disciplinary action.

First Contact:

Initial contact regarding EO issues (complaints, queries or otherwise) should be with one of the University's Information Officers. These Officers will explain who and what may be involved when managing a grievance, the self-management, informal, formal and external resolution options available and the importance of confidentiality throughout. They may also assist in completing any necessary paperwork. Their role is primarily to provide information and support rather than to act as an advocate for the Complainant.

Self Managed Complaint Resolution:

Complainants choosing to manage their grievance themselves will avoid the direct involvement of any third party. This can be the most flexible means of resolution because it doesn't follow any prescribed steps and can often help to ensure that any professional relationships with the Respondent are maintained. It is recommended that the Complainant contact one of the available Information and/or Grievance Officers for behind-the-scenes guidance and support prior to contacting the Respondent.

Informal Complaint Resolution:

To progress an EO complaint informally, the Complainant will need to involve one of the University's Grievance Officers. After informing the Respondent that a complaint has been made, and providing them with its details, the Grievance Officer will act as an impartial third party and endeavour to ensure that all parties concerns are addressed. This may involve chairing a mediatory or conciliatory meeting between the parties involved and taking notes as required.

Informal resolution does not specifically require that the grievance be investigated, substantiated or documented; although this may be necessary in certain cases or requested by either party. It is essentially an informal process designed to assist the parties to resolve the complaint themselves.

The Complainant retains a degree of control over the management of their grievance during informal grievance resolution, and may withdraw it at any stage without prejudice. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, or is sufficiently serious in nature, the Complainant may wish to commence formal complaint resolution.

