



STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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At EduVisa Graduate School of Management, we hope and expect that you will be satisfied with your experiences here as a student. We are always pleased to hear about particularly good aspects of your experiences, but we also recognise that there may be circumstances when you may not be satisfied. If you do have any issues or concerns about particular aspects of academic life you are expected to raise them with an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. Concerns about academic provision should be raised informally with your Academic Tutor or Adviser, Programme Director, or Academic Co-ordinator. Concerns about the provision of a facility or service should be raised informally with a member of the relevant team. If you are not sure about who to approach do speak to the Student Service Centre and Support Centre staff which is reachable online or via the Student Call Centre. They are here to help you and assist with whatever questions you may have or challenges you may experience. If you remain unsatisfied or fail to resolve matters informally you may wish to submit a formal complaint.

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Introduction

The following procedures are intended to explain how you can submit a complaint about EduVisa Graduate School of Management's provision of services, and how you can expect your complaint to be investigated. The purpose of these procedures is to facilitate fair consideration of your complaint, and it is hoped that in most cases complaints will be resolved satisfactorily. These procedures have been developed to ensure that complaints made, either individually or collectively, by students are treated seriously, investigated carefully and, if found to be justified, are acted upon.

What is a complaint?

A complaint can arise if a student has a specific concern about an action or lack of action by EduVisa Graduate School of Management, the standard of a service provided by or on behalf of EduVisa Graduate School of Management or about matters that affect the quality of the learning opportunities. Examples may include:

- a) failure to meet obligations, including those outlined in handbooks or indicated online
- b) misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or other promotional material
- c) concerns about the delivery of a programme (administration or teaching), including those delivered by a partner institution, placement providers or years in industry
- d) provision of poor quality facilities

The complaints process cannot be used to overturn an academic decision, for example, decisions about progression, marks, or termination of registration.

Who can make a complaint?

If you are enrolled on an academic programme delivered by EduVisa Graduate School of Management you can submit a complaint, regardless of whether you are registered for the current academic year. Complaints made more than 1 month after the action or incident will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Registrar. Exceptional circumstances may include evidence of a medical condition preventing the submission of the complaint, proportionate to the length of the delay. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, if there is a compelling case supported by evidence that warrants an investigation we may proceed, but you should be aware that raising concerns anonymously often impedes the investigation and the communication of the outcome.

The complaints process

There are 3 stages to the complaints process:

- a) **Early resolution** – this is an opportunity to resolve concerns swiftly and locally, for example at departmental or faculty level. This might include face to face discussion or asking an appropriate member of staff, via an online or live video link. If you remain unsatisfied and wish to proceed with a formal complaint, we will require written evidence that you have attempted to resolve the matter informally. The complaint process will be activated with a written complaint via the online student message system or by email.
- b) **Formal** – for the investigation and determination of complaints where you are dissatisfied with the outcome of early resolution or where early resolution is not suitable due to the complexity or nature of the concerns. In this instance complaints will be referred for mediation or conciliation resulting in a written outcome.
- c) **Review** – an appeal to EduVisa Graduate School of Management for a review of the process of the formal complaint to ensure that appropriate procedures were followed, and that the decision was reasonable. You will be provided with a written outcome.

Timescales

We aim to respond to all complaints as swiftly as possible and to complete a formal complaint and review within 90 calendar days after receipt, including the time required for students to submit material. There may occasionally be circumstances when, for good reason, we will need to extend the timeframe. Where this is the case, we will notify you and keep you regularly informed of the progress. Where a complaint is identified as requiring swift action, for example, where there is a threat of serious harm, we will prioritise that complaint. It is common for students to raise issues which contain matters that should be considered under another procedure. Where this happens, we will tell you which specific issues will be considered under which specific procedure and will direct you to the alternative appropriate procedure, for example, the academic appeals procedure, for the remaining issues. We may suspend the consideration of a complaint until a matter considered under another procedure has been investigated.

Support

We recognise that it is often not an easy decision to submit a complaint, and that you may have concerns about the impact on your relationship with our staff or on your academic studies. We will ensure that you are not disadvantaged because you submitted a complaint. This includes handling your complaint with an appropriate level of confidentiality. You are encouraged to use the EduVisa Graduate School of Management student support services who can provide helpful independent advice and support to those who wish to submit a complaint. If you have particular circumstances or individual needs, and with your agreement, we may adapt these procedures. Reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis and with the advice of the Student Support and Advisory Services as well as Student Counsellor Service. In the case where the student/lecturer relationship may be compromised, and the student may fear that he/she may be disadvantaged as a result an intervention strategy will be applied resulting the re-allocation of the student to an applicable assessor.

Early resolution

There are systems in all departments and services to allow you to raise concerns or suggest improvements to our provision of services and support. The online student counselling service and/or academic tutorial service are intended to provide a general means of communicating and resolving difficulties. Many problems/challenges will be resolved by these mechanisms. Normally, it is appropriate to raise concerns about academic provision such as failure to meet obligations outlined in handbooks/online with your Academic Tutor who will escalate it to a Subject Moderator or Programme Director. Concerns about the provision of a facility or service, e.g. security services or library facility should be raised with a staff member or online via the online message system. If you are not sure about whom to approach speak to the Student Call Centre or your Academic Tutor.

Formal complaint

Completed complaint forms should be submitted electronically to studentsupport@EDUVISA-education.co.za. You should set out your concerns clearly and succinctly, providing evidence to support your concerns where possible. Evidence may include:

- a) Emails
- b) Timelines of events, for example dates of meetings.

- c) Independent medical evidence
- d) Reports by professionals
- e) Financial information
- f) Witness statements

All complaints will be managed sensitively, but you should be aware that staff involved in any action, service or facility referred to in your complaint may be asked to respond to your complaint statement and / or evidence. If you have provided any statements or evidence which you wish to remain confidential you should clearly indicate this on your form. The case officer will confirm what elements of your complaint can be kept confidential, and with your agreement, the investigation will proceed. Examples of circumstances which may require elements of a complaint to be kept confidential include complaints about a member of staff where a witness wishes their name to be removed from their statement when it is shown to that member of staff or personal medical reports. On receipt of a formal complaint we will confirm receipt and briefly evaluate your submission to check that it is submitted under the right procedures, is within the 3 month deadline and provides sufficient evidence. If there are any queries we will contact you to ask and may require further information. Your complaint will then be allocated to a case officer. The case officer may:

- a) Refer you to another procedure (which may require the suspension of the complaints procedure until the other procedure is completed).
- b) Reject your complaint, for example, if it is outside the 1-month limit without a sufficient explanation. Your complaint will be closed and you will be provided with a Completion of Procedures letter.
- c) Refer you to conciliation or mediation, with your agreement.
- d) Refer your complaint to an appropriate member of staff for early resolution, if there is no evidence that this has already been attempted.
- e) Proceed to formal investigation.

The case officer will establish the matters to be investigated with you before asking parties involved to submit written statements and supporting evidence in response to your complaint statements. This will normally include a response from the Head of the Academic Department or Professional Service or Facility. The case officer will collate any additional relevant information. This may include:

- a) academic transcripts
- b) relevant student handbooks, regulations and policies
- c) notes and minutes of meetings
- d) correspondence

The case officer will write a report summarising all the submissions and evidence. This report, alongside your complaint submission and evidence, will be forwarded to a panel comprising a senior academic member of staff with a wide experience of School administration and a student union representative. After considering the evidence and submissions, the panel will decide whether your complaint should be upheld, not upheld, or partly upheld. They may make any recommendations or remedy which they deem appropriate in the light of your desired outcomes and the investigation. You will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision. You will also be provided with a copy of any written statements, evidence and reports, and details of your right to take the complaint to the review stage. During the investigation the case officer will ensure you are kept informed about the progress of the investigation. If there are any delays you will be notified and provided with a revised timescale.

Opportunity to Respond

It is hoped that your complaint will be resolved following the investigation. However, if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can request a review by writing to **studentsupport@EDUVISA-education.co.za**. A review will not normally consider your complaint afresh or involve a further investigation but will consider whether procedures were followed and that the decision was reasonable. Your response should not repeat your original submission, but should instead clearly outline any comments you have about the investigation or outcome, for example:

- a) that your complaint has been misunderstood
- b) that the procedures have not been followed, contrary to the principles of natural justice
- c) that the outcome was not reasonable given all the evidence.

Please note that further evidence will not normally be considered unless you can demonstrate why you could not have provided it before. If you are providing evidence from third parties, including witness statements or medical certificates, you must have requested them in good time before submitting your formal complaint. If you do not request a review within the time limit we will notify you in

in writing that your complaint has been closed.

Review

On receipt of a request for a review we will confirm receipt and allocate your request to a new case officer, who will communicate with you (or your representative) and will keep you informed of progress with your complaint. The Principal (or nominee) shall consider the details of the case and all relevant documentation provided during the investigation. They will review the case and may, if necessary, take further advice. The Principal (or nominee) may:

- a) Amend the outcome
- b) Amend or apply any recommendations or remedy
- c) Refer the complaint, or an element of it, for further investigation
- d) Uphold the original outcome in full

Monitoring and Records

The EduVisa Graduate School of Management will receive regular reports (not less than one each academic year) concerning the operation of the complaint's procedure. Such reports will not identify individuals or contain any confidential information relating to individual cases. Reports may also be provided to other committees and senior managers. Records of formal complaints will be maintained by the Secretariat, and will be kept securely.

Expectations of staff and students involved in complaints handling

EduVisa Graduate School of Management will:

- a) Keep students informed throughout the process
- b) Deal with all complaints seriously and fairly and with an appropriate level of confidentiality, i.e. information will be released only to those who need it for the purposes of fairly investigating or responding to the complaint.
- c) Judge all complaints on their individual merits and treat all complainants equally, and will ensure no student is disadvantaged or victimised for submitting a complaint.
- d) Follow the principles of natural justice in a manner which is appropriate to the individual circumstances of the complaint. Case officers, panel members and Vice Principals will not act in any matter in which they have a material interest, or an actual or potential conflict of interest
- e) Advise students to access support when submitting complaints, including advising students that they may be accompanied to meetings to discuss complaints.
- f) Advise students if complaints about other students or members of staff have been upheld, but may not share specific details affecting individual students or staff members.

EduVisa Graduate School of Management expects the student to:

- a) Respond to requests for information from the case officer in a timely manner, and to keep them informed of any circumstances relevant to your complaint
- b) Provide appropriate evidence to support your complaint at the appropriate time
- c) Behave reasonably towards the case officer and others involved in considering your complaint. Frivolous or vexatious complaints may be closed, for example, where there is evidence of obsessive, repetitive or unreasonable pattern of behaviour, or abuse or harassment of staff.