

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES
U3A REDLANDS DISTRICT INC.

Policy

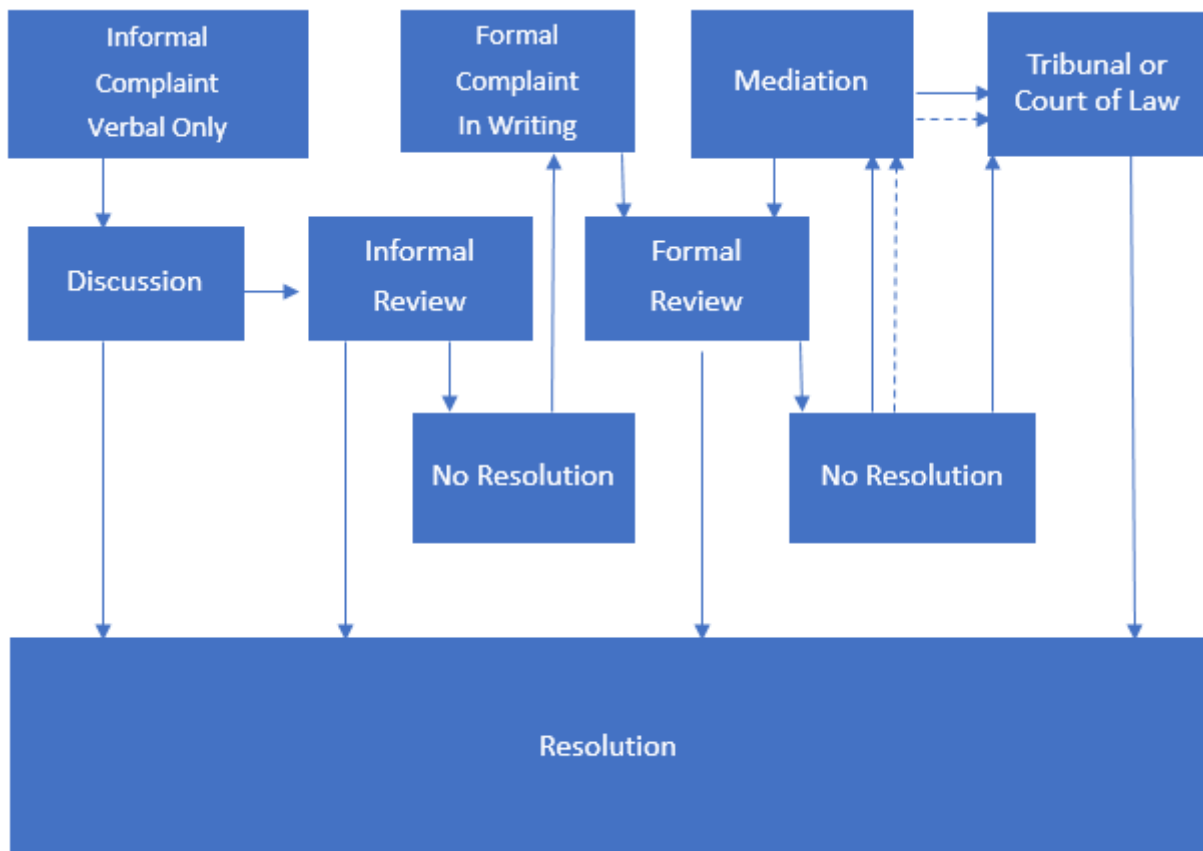
The Management Committee of U3A Redlands District Inc. and its members aim to provide a simple, confidential, impartial and trustworthy procedure for resolving complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness.

Our obligation is to ensure that our complaints procedure has integrity and is free of unfair repercussions or victimisation against any party involved in the complaints process. Complaints should be dealt with quickly where possible.

Procedures

The U3A Complaints Handling Procedure is compliant with requirements of the Incorporated Associations Queensland Act. Complaints may be resolved informally or formally. The following Flow Chart can be used as a guide.

STEPS TO RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINT



- All persons associated with U3A Redlands District Inc. will at all times observe the Code of Conduct. (The management committee is empowered to discipline a person lodging a vexatious or malicious complaint intended to harass, victimise or bully another person)
- A person who has a complaint will attempt to resolve the matter in a low-key informal discussion and negotiation with the other party
- If, however, a complaint has been made which could not be resolved, it will be referred to a Complaints Officer (CO) appointed by the U3A Management Committee. The Respondent will at this time be notified that a complaint has been made
- The CO will be responsible for receiving complaints and managing the resolution process
- Initial complaints are preferred in writing, but this is not essential
- The CO may resolve complaints by the following Steps:
 - 1) low key informal resolution through discussion
 - 2) informal review with all parties involved
 - 3) a formal complaint made in writing which may be resolved in writing see [Attachment 1](#)
 - 4) resolution through mediation see [Attachment 2](#). (While an independent mediator may be invited to assist with a mediation process, lawyers are not permitted to participate in the mediation process.)
 - 5) Hearings by Tribunal see [Attachment 3](#)
 - A Tribunal of suitably qualified persons will be appointed as and when required to adjudicate a complaint
 - The decision of the Hearings Tribunal will be final; however, the complainant may elect to go to an Appeals Tribunal within 72 hours of the Hearings tribunals decision. An appeals fee will apply. For further explanation, see Attachment 3
 - The Hearings or Appeals tribunals may apply sanctions as determined by the members of the Tribunal
- In the case of the complaint being of a more serious nature it may be handled by an external agency eg a court of law
- Further details are available to all parties in the Complaints Handling Procedural Guidelines and associated attachments referred to elsewhere in this document.

ATTACHMENT 1 – FORMAL COMPLAINT

After a written Formal Complaint has been received and a formal discussion has been carried out between the Complainant and the Complaints Officer with no resolution at that time, the Complaint will need to be investigated and evidence gathered. An investigation will then help to determine the facts relating to the incident as well as produce findings and recommendations.

If the Complaints Officer decides that a Formal Review should be conducted, then the following steps will be taken. It is imperative that the process is fair to all parties involved.

1. A written brief detailing the content of the complaint and the response will be compiled by the Complaints Officer.
2. The Complainant will be interviewed by the Complaints Officer and the complaint documented in writing and signed by the Complaints Officer and the Complainant. (Note: In the event that the complaint is about the Complaints Officer, the Executive would appoint an impartial person to act in the role of Complaints Officer in that instance).
3. The full details of the complaint will be conveyed to the person/people complained about (Respondent(s)). The Respondent(s) will be given sufficient information to enable them to properly respond to the Complaint.
4. The Respondent(s) will be interviewed by the Complaints Officer and given the opportunity to respond. The Respondent'(s)' response to the Complaint will be documented in writing and signed by the Complaints Officer and Respondent(s).
5. All parties should be privy to all documentation submitted.
6. If there is a dispute over the facts, statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence, where possible, will be obtained to assist in a determination. These will be recorded and signed by the Complaints Officer and witnesses.
7. Formal review is held where all parties meet for discussions which will be recorded.
8. The Complaints Officer will determine whether the complaint is:
 - a. substantiated (there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint);
 - b. inconclusive (there is insufficient evidence either way);
 - c. unsubstantiated (there is sufficient evidence to show that the complaint is unfounded); and/or
 - d. mischievous, vexatious or knowingly untrue.
9. The Complaints Officer will produce for the Management Committee a report and copies of co-signed minutes taken during the formal review documenting the complaint and response, the key points, determination (point 8) and recommendation which may include Mediation.
10. The decision will be relayed in writing to the Complainant and Respondent(s).
11. The parties have the right to appeal against any decision based on the investigation. Any appeal should be in accordance with the appeals process provided in the Complaints Procedure.