



Human Resources Policy		
Reference:	Version: 1	Number of Pages: 5
TITLE: <b>Grievance Procedure</b>		
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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 In line with the principles in the *Cochrane Charter of Good Management Practice*, Cochrane aims to create and foster a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation amongst colleagues and partners. The organisation maintains a commitment to openness and transparency in relationships, communications and actions to minimize discord in the working environment. To that end, we will ensure that any grievance raised by an employee about treatment they have received or any aspect of their work is resolved in a constructive way, through honest and open discussion and consultation.

## **2.0 Scope and general principles**

2.1 This procedure applies to all employees (either as the person making the complaint or the person the complaint is made about) within the Cochrane Central Executive and those of its subsidiaries (Cochrane Innovations and IKMD Denmark Aps). It does not apply to consultants (who are self-employed), secondees or agency workers. Complaints about individuals not covered by this procedure should be made using the Complaints policy.

2.2 Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including the allocation of work, your working environment or conditions, the opportunities that you have been given for career development or the way in which you have been managed.

2.3 Complaints that you may have about any disciplinary action taken against you should be dealt with as an appeal under the disciplinary procedure. Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings will usually be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed. Insofar as a grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

2.4 Cochrane will in all cases attempt to resolve grievances informally where possible, with line management support.

## **3.0 Accessibility**

3.1 If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this issue with the Human Resources Department, who will make appropriate arrangements.

## **4.0 Informal Resolution**

4.1 If you are unhappy about the treatment that you have received or about any aspect of your work, you should discuss this with your line manager, or where your grievance relates to your line manager, raise with their line manager. If you feel unable to approach your line manager directly, you should approach an HR manager, who will discuss ways of dealing with the matter with you.



4.2 The line manager will aim to resolve the problem informally between the parties. If, following attempts at informal resolution an acceptable solution cannot be found, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

## **5.0 Formal Grievance Procedure**

A formal grievance should be concerned with the way in which you believe you have been treated by the organisation or managers acting on its behalf, or about any aspect of your work. Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Where attempts at informal resolution have not succeeded, the following procedure will apply:

### **5.1 Making the complaint**

5.1.1 The first stage of the formal procedure is for you to put your complaint in writing. This written statement will form the basis of the subsequent hearing and any investigations, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome that you are seeking. If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place.

5.1.2 Your complaint should be made using the Grievance Form (Appendix 1) and sent to your line manager with a copy to HR. To preserve the integrity of any future investigations your complaint should not be shared or copied more widely. If your complaint relates to the way in which you believe your line manager is treating you, the complaint may be sent directly to their immediate manager. If the grievance is about the CEO, then it should be submitted to a Co-Chair of the Cochrane Governing Board.

5.1.3 Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, depending on the nature of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may insist on the matter proceeding to a full grievance hearing.

5.1.4 It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of your grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised by your grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

5.1.5 Before proceeding to a full grievance hearing, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made by you, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected, wherever possible. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, you will be given a copy long enough in advance of the hearing for you to consider your response. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to you.

### **5.2 The grievance hearing**

5.2.1 The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and, subject to any need to carry out prior investigations, ideally within ten working days of the receipt of your written

complaint. It will be chaired by the line manager (or their line manager if the immediate manager is the subject of the grievance), or another manager if designated more appropriate, with an HR Manager in attendance. At the hearing, you will be asked to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

5.2.2 The time and place of the meeting will be agreed between the participants to ensure that all are able to attend. You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager or Human Resources Manager as soon as possible. After one attempt to reschedule the hearing, if you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.

5.2.3 While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to matters that are directly relevant to your complaint. Focusing on irrelevant issues or incidents that took place long before the matters in hand is not helpful and can hinder the effective handling of your complaint. The manager conducting the hearing will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. The manager may also intervene to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of your complaint.

5.2.4 Following the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome, ideally within five working days and told of any action that the organisation proposes to take as a result of your complaint. You may discuss this outcome informally with either your manager or designated HR manager. The outcome letter will also explain your right of appeal and give directions on how to do so.

### **5.3 *The Right to be Accompanied***

5.3.1 You have the right to be accompanied at any grievance meeting or subsequent appeal by a work colleague or representative of a trade union of which you are a member. The trade union official need not be an employee of the organisation, but if s/he is not a colleague or an employee of his/her union, the organisation may insist on him/her being certified by the union as being experienced or trained in accompanying employees at grievance hearings. You may share any information provided to you that is relevant to the hearing with your chosen companion.

5.3.2 Work colleagues are not obliged to agree to accompany you, but will be allowed appropriate paid time off to allow them to accompany colleagues at a grievance or appeal hearing.

5.3.3 At any hearing or appeal hearing, your chosen companion will be allowed to address the meeting, respond on your behalf to any view expressed in the hearing, and sum up the case on your behalf. However, both the hearing and appeal hearing are essentially meetings between the organisation and you, so any questions put directly to you must be answered by you and not your companion.

5.3.4 Where your chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal, the meeting will be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date (holidays or other scheduled absence permitting).

### **5.4 *Appeal***



5.4.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your grievance hearing, you may make a formal appeal.

5.4.2 Your appeal should be made in writing, clearly stating the grounds of your appeal, i.e., the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. Your appeal should be sent to the Human Resources Manager. This should be done within five working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of the grievance. An appeal meeting will be arranged to take place within ten working days of the submission of your formal appeal, wherever possible.

5.4.3 The time and place of the meeting will be agreed between the participants to ensure that all are able to attend. You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the Human Resources Manager of this as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the appeal may be heard in your absence.

5.4.4 The appeal hearing will be conducted either by the CEO or by a more senior manager than the chair of the grievance hearing. They will consider the grounds that you have put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate.

5.4.5 Following the appeal meeting, you and Cochrane's CEO will be informed of the outcome within five working days, wherever possible. The outcome of this hearing will be final.

**Employee Grievance Form**

This form is intended for use by any Cochrane Central Executive Team employee, or an employee of the subsidiaries Cochrane Innovations or IKMD Denmark Aps who wants to make a formal complaint about the behaviour of a colleague, his/her manager or a third party, or any other workplace issue.

Before using this form employees should read the organisation's Grievance Procedure in full.

Where the employee requests that the complaint be dealt with formally, this form should be completed and the organisation's formal grievance procedure will be invoked.

In certain circumstances, employees can request that their complaint be kept anonymous. Where possible, the organisation will respect an employee's request for anonymity, but cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so.

In all circumstances, this form should be completed and delivered to their line manager in an envelope marked "confidential" or sent as an email attachment with "confidential" in the subject line. A copy should be provided to HR.

**Formal grievance**
**Employee's name:**
**Employee's job title:**
**Employee's department:**
**Date:**
**Does your grievance relate to your line manager?**

Yes/No

**Summary of complaint:**

Please set out the details of your complaint (providing as much detail as possible, particularly dates, times, locations and the identities of those involved). You may attach additional sheets if required.

**Individuals involved in the alleged incident/complaint:**

Please provide the names and contact details of any people involved in your complaint, including witnesses.

**Outcome requested:**

Please set out how you would like to see your complaint dealt with, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.

**Declaration:**

I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that making any false, malicious or untrue allegations may result in disciplinary action being taken against me by the organisation. (In the most serious cases, making false, malicious or untrue allegations can be treated as gross misconduct.)

<b>Form completed by:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>For completion by the organisation:</b>	
<b>Date form received by the organisation:</b>	
<b>Name of recipient and job role:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	