To: The Honourable President of the University

Subject: Policy

Greetings and respect,

Enclosed with our letter, we forward to you a copy of the Student Grievance Policy. Kindly notify us of its approval.

With respect,

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Purpose of the Policy

This policy has been drafted to establish an effective and transparent system so that Soran University deals impartially with student grievances. It also lays the ground for creating a trustworthy environment in which students' right to raise complaints, and to have them resolved promptly and equitably, is guaranteed.

Policy Mission

To raise students' confidence in the University's administrative and academic processes by providing a clear and fair framework for responding promptly and appropriately to the questions and problems raised by students.

Policy Summary

This document sets out the legal and administrative framework for the process by which students submit formal grievances. The policy clarifies the stages of informal resolution, formal grievance (academic and non-academic) through the Student Information System (SIS), and the statutory response periods at the level of the University Presidency, the faculty, and the academic department.

Responsible Office

Document owner: Secretariat of the Vice President for Student Affairs (General Directorate of University Registration).

Directorate of Quality Assurance and Program Development.

Review: Policies and Guidelines Committee of Soran University. Approval and implementation: Soran University Council.

Implementation Supervisor

- Secretariat of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Policy History

Date of approval:

Date of revision:

Implementing Bodies

Deans of faculties, heads of academic departments, the Examinations Committee, the Higher Grievance Committee, and the Directorate of Human Resources (HR).

Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all students of Soran University who wish to register a grievance concerning a violation, problem, or decision specific to students.

- Problems and complaints relating to student conduct are dealt with under the procedures set out in the **Student Code of Conduct**.

- If a student has a complaint about the conduct of Soran University employees, the complaint must first be submitted to the Secretariat of the Vice President for Student Affairs, then forwarded to the Directorate of Human Resources (HR) and dealt with under the **Employee Code of Conduct Policy**.
- If the legal and academic relationship of the grievant or the person complained against with Soran University has ended, the procedures of this policy no longer apply to them, and any pending processes are terminated.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the formal process through which students can submit their grievances and also sets the University's response times. It affirms students' rights to a review and an appropriate resolution of their grievances. Before starting the formal grievance process, students are encouraged to attempt an informal resolution. This may take place through direct discussion between the parties concerned to reach a mutually agreed solution, or through mediation by an impartial person. If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the student may proceed to the formal grievance stage. Students have the right to register a grievance or request a review in accordance with the Student Grievance Process.

Definitions

Grievant: Any student who submits a grievance by email, through the dedicated grievance link, or in writing.

Academic Grievance: A complaint raised by a student, formally or informally, concerning unfair or improper treatment during a course of study that has caused harm to the student. This definition does not cover cases of academic misconduct and inappropriate behaviour (such as cheating and forgery).

Non-Academic Grievance: A complaint raised by a student, formally or informally, concerning arbitrary treatment that breaches established policies and procedures and causes real harm outside the academic context. Examples of non-academic grievances include: failure to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with special needs, problems of admission and access to the University, unfair treatment, certain disputes between lecturers, staff and students, and the like. This does not cover cases of harassment, because incidents of harassment are dealt with under the Anti-Harassment Policy.

Academic Judgement: Procedures relating to the award of marks and assessment, assessment methods, consideration of special circumstances (academic accommodations), and other matters relating to academic achievement that are decided on the basis of scholarly judgement. These matters do not fall within the grievance process; they must be dealt with as an appeal against an academic judgement.

Unreasonable Complainant Conduct: Any conduct by a grievant that, because of its nature or frequency, creates a problem for the health, safety, resources (administrative,

financial, etc.), or the fair process of the University and its staff. This includes unreasonable demands, unfounded persistence, and disruptive behaviour.

Grievance Register: A central system for recording all grievances at every level of the University, containing quantitative and qualitative data for analysis and reporting.

Anonymous Complaint: A complaint submitted by a person without identifying themselves. In special cases (a complete case or a significant incident), the University may investigate an anonymous complaint.

Mediator: An impartial and trained person who helps the parties concerned to reach a mutually agreed solution through structured dialogue.

Policy Principles

The University is committed to the following principles when dealing with student grievances:

Personality: A grievance must be submitted only by the student who was directly harmed by the conduct or decision that gave rise to it. Students do not have the right to register grievances by proxy on behalf of other persons or a group.

Gravity: A grievance must not be submitted if its only basis is objection to the University's approved general policies on the grounds that they are unfair or unsuitable.

Informal resolution: It is recognised that the best and fastest way to resolve grievances is normally through the informal process.

Timely resolution: The University is committed to resolving student grievances promptly and effectively, within the limits and statutory periods specified in this policy.

Fairness and impartiality: Every grievance is dealt with fairly, in a manner that ensures an objective and appropriate resolution.

Accessibility: The University must provide suitable and accessible procedures and channels so that all students can submit their grievances. Any suitable Reasonable Adjustment must be made available by the University so that students can use this process equally and without barriers (for example, students with special needs or learning difficulties).

Confidentiality: The principle of confidentiality is respected throughout the grievance process, except where disclosure of information is necessary for the investigation.

Protection from retaliation: Students who raise a grievance in good faith will face no adverse consequences or unjust penalties, even if their grievance is not upheld through the formal process.

Compliance with policies: The grievance process is fully bound by the University's approved policies and procedures, in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct, the Student Code of Conduct, and the Anti-Harassment Policy.

Right of withdrawal: Students have the right to withdraw their grievance before the process formally begins.

Representation: Grievants must represent themselves in any grievance, but may, where necessary, seek advice and guidance from other persons within the University campus.

Part One: Academic Grievance Procedure

The formal grievance process must begin within ten (10) working days of the official recording of the matter complained of. The grievance is formally recognised on the date the Academic Grievance Report Form is submitted to the faculty member (see Appendix 1).

Level One: Appeal of the Grievance to the Faculty Member

- A student who objects to a mark, a specific assessment, or a module grade must first attempt to resolve the matter directly with the lecturer concerned. Objections to mid-term and final module marks are made through the Student Information System (SIS) and then referred directly to the Examinations Committee.

- The student must ask the lecturer for clarification of the marking decision, present their observations and reasons for objecting to the mark, and aim to reach an informal resolution through discussion. If no informal resolution is reached between the student and the lecturer, the student may formally appeal by submitting the Academic Grievance Report Form to the lecturer. This form must be sent through the Student Information System (SIS) in order to preserve the records.

- On receiving the form, the lecturer concerned must provide a written decision with an explanation in the appropriate appendix section of the form; this decision must be shared with the student within ten (10) working days. If the student takes no further action within five (5) working days of receiving the lecturer's decision, the decision is considered final and conclusive.

- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, or receives no reply within ten (10) working days, they may proceed to Level Two of the grievance process.

Level Two: Head of Department and the Academic Grievance Committee

- If the student wishes to continue the appeal after the lecturer's decision (or in the absence of a reply), they must escalate the grievance by resubmitting the original Statement of Academic Grievance Report Form to the head of department within five (5) working days, provided that the relevant appendix section has been completed and the lecturer's written reply (if any) is attached.

- On receiving the documents referred to, the head of department reviews the case and, within ten (10) working days, confirms whether the proper Level One appeal

steps were followed, and informs the student. If the student did not follow the proper steps, the head of department informs the student of the Level One requirements that must be met before any further action. If the student did follow the correct Level One appeal steps, the head of department provides a written assessment in the appropriate appendix section of the grievance report form and refers the form to the Academic Grievance Committee.

- The Committee must convene within five (5) working days, unless there is a legitimate reason. All discussions remain confidential and closed to external parties. A written recommendation is submitted to the head of department within five (5) working days of the conclusion of the discussions. The Committee must record its decision in the appropriate section of the grievance report form; the decision is communicated by the head of department to all parties concerned.

The decision of the Academic Grievance Committee is final and conclusive, except in the cases set out in the **Appeal Procedure** section of this policy.

Part Two: Non-Academic Grievance Procedure

The formal process must begin within ten (10) working days of the official recording of the matter complained of. The non-academic grievance process formally begins on the date the Statement of Non-Academic Grievance Report Form is submitted to the relevant authority (see Appendix 2).

Level One: Non-Academic Grievance to the Unit Director

Any student who objects to an administrative decision must first, before submitting a written grievance, attempt to resolve the matter with the head of the administrative unit concerned. The student should present their observations and concerns and try to understand the reasons behind the administrative decision. The aim of this meeting is to build mutual understanding and resolve the matter informally and amicably.

If the attempts at informal resolution are unsuccessful, the student may submit a written grievance, using the Non-Academic Grievance Report Form, to the director of the administrative unit concerned. On receiving the completed form, the director must provide a written decision with an explanation in the appropriate appendix section of the form; this decision must be communicated to the grievant within five (5) working days.

If the student takes no further action within five (5) working days of receiving the unit director's decision, that decision is considered final and conclusive. However, if the student is not satisfied with the decision, or receives no reply from the head of the unit within five (5) working days, they may proceed to Level Two of the grievance process to register a formal appeal.

Level Two: Vice President for Student Affairs

If the student decides to pursue the grievance after receiving the decision or recommendation of the unit director, they may escalate the matter within five (5) working days to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The student must submit the Non-Academic Grievance Report Form (together with the unit director's reply, if any).

The Vice President for Student Affairs determines, within five (5) working days, whether the Level One procedures were properly followed. If they were not, the Vice President for Student Affairs requests that the appropriate steps be taken. The Vice President for Student Affairs decides whether to dismiss the case or to form a committee. If the case is dismissed, the Vice President for Student Affairs must complete the appropriate section of the Non-Academic Grievance Report Form and share the completed form with the grievant.

The Committee convenes within five (5) working days, unless there is a legitimate reason, after receiving the grievance form and after the Vice President for Student Affairs confirms that the Level One and Level Two procedures have been properly followed. The Committee issues a written recommendation, which must be recorded in the appropriate section of the Non-Academic Grievance Report Form within five (5) working days of the conclusion of the discussions. This recommendation is sent to all parties concerned through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Committee's decision is final and conclusive, except in the cases set out in the **Appeal Procedure** section of this policy.

Part Three: Mediation

At any stage of the grievance process, the University may propose mediation as an alternative means of resolving the matter.

- The mediator must be an impartial and trained person accepted by both parties.
- Mediation must be by consent of both parties; no party may be compelled to take part.
- If mediation is unsuccessful, the formal grievance process resumes at the level at which it was paused.
- The mediator must sign a Confidentiality Agreement before the process begins.

Part Four: Appeal Procedure

If the student, the faculty member, or a University staff member believes that a breach of the procedures set out in this process has occurred, they may appeal the Committee's decision by submitting the Grievance Appeal Form (see Appendix 3), with the relevant documents attached, to the President of the University within five (5) working days of the date of issue of the Committee's written decision. The President of the University has full

authority to take any steps necessary for a thorough review of the grievance procedure, and then issues a final and binding decision. This decision is communicated in writing to the student and all parties concerned within five (5) working days of the submission of the appeal, unless there is a legitimate reason.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Statement of Academic Grievance Report Form

Soran University

Student Grievance Policy – Forms

Appendix 1: Academic Grievance Report Form

Please record only one grievance per form. Additional pages may be used for the same grievance if necessary. Use separate forms for new or different grievances.

Section A: To be completed by the grievant

Name: Student ID number:

Email: Mobile:

Grievance details:

Module: Assessment: Date of decision/incident:

Grievance information: give a clear and brief summary of the basis of the grievance:

Name of grievant: _____

Signature of grievant: _____

If this form was completed by another person, name of that person: _____

Date of submission: _____

Section B: For the faculty member only

Date of receipt of Section A: _____

Faculty member identification:

Position/Department: Name:

Mobile: Email:

Response to the grievance: give a clear and brief summary and explanation of the response to the grievance:

Name of faculty member: _____

Signature of faculty member: _____

Date the grievant was notified: _____

Section C: To be completed by the Dean only

Date of receipt of Sections A and B, if applicable: _____

Confirmation that the Level One procedures were properly carried out: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the Level One procedures were carried out:

Grievance dismissed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the grievance is dismissed, give the explanation for the dismissal below:

If a committee is formed, give a clear and brief summary of the final decision:

Name of Dean: _____

Signature of Dean: _____

Date the grievant was notified: _____

Appendix 2: Statement of Non-Academic Grievance Report Form

Please record only one grievance per form. Additional pages may be used for the same grievance if necessary. Use separate forms for new or different grievances.

Section A: To be completed by the grievant

Name: Student ID number:

Email: Mobile:

Grievance information: give a clear and brief summary of the basis of the grievance:

Name of grievant: _____

Signature of grievant: _____

If this report was completed by another person, name of that person: _____

Date of submission: _____

Section B: For the administrative staff member only

Date of receipt of Section A: _____

Administrative staff member identification:

Position/Department:	Name:
Mobile:	Email:

Response to the grievance: give a clear and brief summary and explanation of the response to the grievance:

Name of administrative staff member: _____

Signature of administrative staff member: _____

Date the grievant was notified: _____

Section C: Vice President for Student Affairs

Date of receipt of Sections A and B, if applicable: _____

Confirmation that the Level One procedures were properly carried out: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the Level One procedures were carried out:

Grievance dismissed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the grievance is dismissed, give the explanation for the dismissal below:

If a committee is formed, give a clear and brief summary of the final decision:

Name of Vice President for Student Affairs: _____

Signature of Vice President for Student Affairs: _____

Date the grievant was notified: _____

Appendix 3: Grievance Appeal Form (Appeal of Procedures to the University Presidency)

This form is used to appeal a grievance decision under the "Appeal of Procedures" section of the Student Grievance Policy.

An appeal may be submitted only on the grounds of a suspected breach of the procedures set out in the Student Grievance Policy. The completed form and supporting documents must be submitted to the President of the University within five (5) working days of the date of the Committee's written decision.

Section A: To be completed by the person submitting the appeal

Name: _____

Student ID number (if applicable):

Role: ☐ Student ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff

Email:

Mobile:

Type of grievance being appealed:

☐ Academic grievance

☐ Non-academic grievance

Date of the Committee's decision: _____

Section B: Grounds for the appeal

The appeal must be based only on a breach of the grievance procedures.

☐ I, as the grievant, believe that a breach of the grievance procedures has occurred.

Please explain briefly which procedure was breached. (Identify the specific steps of the Grievance Policy that were not carried out in accordance with the policy.)

Explanation:

Section C: Attach supporting evidence and copies.

☐ Original grievance report form

☐ Committee decision

☐ Relevant correspondence

☐ Additional supporting evidence

List the attachments below:

Section D: Declaration

I declare that this appeal is submitted in good faith and is based solely on a breach of the grievance procedures as set out in the Student Grievance Policy.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date of submission: _____

Section E: Presidency review (office use only)

Date of receipt of the appeal: _____

Was the appeal submitted within five (5) working days? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Grounds confirmed as an alleged breach of procedure: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Presidency decision:

☐ Appeal dismissed – no breach of procedure found

☐ Appeal upheld – breach of procedure confirmed

Action taken (if applicable):

☐ Case returned for re-review

☐ Decision amended:

☐ Other (specify): _____

Final decision by:

Name of the President of the University: _____

Signature: _____

Date of decision: _____

Date the parties were notified: _____