



GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM (GRM) POLICY FOR UR- ACEs PROJECT

I. Introduction:

In order to deliver relevant and quality education, and applied research addressing key development challenges, the World Bank has funded the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II) to establish and strengthen specialization and collaboration in the region.

Among the 24 Centers selected through an open and merit-based competitive process in eight countries UR is home to four Centers: African Center of Excellence in Data Science (ACE-DS), African Center of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACE-ESD), African Center of Excellence in Internet of Things (ACE-IoT), and African Center of Excellence for Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACE-ITLMS).

The African Centres of Excellence (ACEs) established at the University of Rwanda wish to redress any grievances from beneficiaries. ACEs has Grievance and Redress Mechanism Committee (GRMC) with adequate means and powers to investigate grievances (e.g., interview witnesses, access records, etc).

Grievance: A grievance may be any kind of discontent or dissatisfaction or negative perception, whether expressed or not, arising out of anything connected with ACEs that a student, staff or community member thinks/feels victim of unfairness, inequality, subjectivity among others.

Students, staff or institutions that believe they are adversely affected by the ACEs or ACEs activities may submit complaints to the Center Grievance Mechanism (GRM) Committee that was appointed through different channels. Individuals seeking information or providing feedback about the ACEs should also be able to do this through the GRM.

The GRM Committee is made of at least 5 members: Chairperson, Secretary and 3 members

The ACEs GRM aims at functioning like a customer service center where information processed through this system helps improve service delivery by responding to information requests or complaints. Periodic analysis can also reveal systemic issues and bottlenecks and help the ACEs anticipate and get ahead of problems in effective and efficient ACEs operation.

The ACEs GRM committee will ensure that complaints received are promptly reviewed and attended in order to address ACEs -related concerns. The complainant may reveal his/her identification or remain anonymous.

II. Guiding Principles of the Grievance Redress Mechanism

Each Centre will have appropriate Grievance Redress Mechanism committee whose members are selected among the staff whose responsibilities are in line with the Centre activities. The grievance is received and recorded in the grievance log book with the following information: Grievance Reference Number, Date for grievance receipt, Name/Anonymous of one(s) who submitted grievance, Description of the grievance/complaint, Narrative of how the grievance was addressed, Venue and date when the grievance was addressed and Signatures of GRM Committee who attended the meeting. The number of days for resolving a complaint is 7-10 days.

Depending on the status of the complaint, some are resolved immediately while others may require some verifications/investigations. However, if the complainant, is not satisfied with the response, he/she is referred to the College. For effective functioning of GRM, the key principles to be dully observed include visibility, accessibility, responsiveness and predictability, legitimacy and objectivity, confidentiality and fairness, transparency and accountability, capability and continual improvement.

III. Procedure for filing the formal/informal complaint/grievance

1. Any complainant to ACEs may lodge a complaint.
2. Complaint should be made to Grievance Redress Mechanism Committee.
3. Complaint may be reported orally or by filling online form available at ACEs website or by writing and submit it in suggestion box available at the Center. If the complaint is oral, it will be converted into a written form by the GRMC member who received the complaint and authenticated by the complainant under his / her signature.

4. Upon receipt of complaint by any member of GRMC, the member should forward it to the Chair person who will invite the GRMC to sit and handle it.

IV. Process for addressing the Grievance:

1. Upon receipt of complaint, the Secretary of the Committee will send a response to the complainant acknowledging the receipt of grievance immediately.
2. At this stage, based on the nature of the complaint and severity of its possible impact, the Secretary may take one of the two options to proceed on addressing the concerns while keeping the Chairperson, GRMC copied in all communication:

Option 1 which can be exercised on matters that could be more routine operation:

- i. The Secretary of the Committee may address the issue directly
 - ii. In this case, it is important that the complainant is apprised of the actions taken or the work-in-progress in a timely manner.
 - iii. Once the matter has been resolved the Secretary will send a final update to the complainant on the matter.
- b. Option 2 which can be exercised in matters of very serious concerns, in consultation with the Chairperson:
- i. The Secretary may also call for a meeting of the GRMC. The quorum for the meeting is 3 (three).
 - ii. The Committee, as required, may also call for a written complaint by the complainant and the person/representatives from the complainant group.
 - iii. Final decision of the GRMC has to be communicated to the complainant within 7-10 working days of the receipt of the complaint.
 - iv. The Secretary of the Committee will communicate the decision to the complainant via email or other convenient way and copy the Director of the ACE.
3. The Secretary will maintain an updated record of all complaints, actions taken and closure status.
 4. In case the complaint has been made against a member of the GRMC the concerned member will be excluded from participating in any proceedings till the case is closed.