Policy: Staff grievance resolution

Purpose
To outline the principles which underpin the resolution of grievances raised by ANU staff.

Overview
University principles for resolution of grievances raised by staff.

Scope
The policy applies to all staff across the University.

Policy statement

Principles
1. It is the intention of this policy to address staff grievances and resolve them effectively (including those of discrimination, harassment, bullying or other serious complaints) through a common process of explicit discussion and review. The grievance policy and procedures are neither intended to be an end in themselves, nor a prejudicial process nor a punishment.
2. It is expected that before needing to initiate formal grievance procedures, the staff members will generally try to resolve concerns directly with the persons concerned and at a local level wherever possible. Staff members are encouraged to raise issues with their supervisor or manager, especially if these are adversely affecting the university work environment.
3. ANU acknowledges that staff may have the option to seek advice or review from external agencies in relation to issues, especially where there may be allegations of sexual harassment or bullying. In many cases, however, it is anticipated that grievances may be resolved as a result of parties having more information and becoming more sensitive to other perspectives, discussing concerns, taking a conciliatory approach or in some cases where one or more people apologise to one another.
4. Issues of healthy, even robust academic debate and other workplace
dynamics will not necessarily give rise to grievances. Although it is acknowledged that in some cases staff members may need to “agree to disagree”, “grievances” are often characterized by decisions or actions where a reaction is so intense that a disagreement arises which damages the working relationship or work environment.

5. Where it is otherwise inappropriate (such as seniority or relative power imbalance between parties) or staff members are unable to successfully resolve concern directly or locally, then this policy anticipates a review process outlines in the staff grievance resolution procedure which will guide parties through a structured approach to resolution. It is expected, however, that many grievances will be resolved in the first instance after candid but constructive conversation, in many cases where the supervisor takes action to cultivate a positive work environment.

6. It is expected that all staff will participate in good faith in resolving grievances so that ANU establishes and maintains a respectful workplace that contributes to it maintaining its position as Australia’s leading University and one of the best in the world.

7. Where a staff member used a grievance process defined within the staff grievance resolution procedure, it is expected that the grievance process would normally be fully exhausted before any dispute is raised under the Dispute avoidance and settlement provisions of the Enterprise Agreement.

8. To facilitate grievance resolution at the informal and early stages, ANU provides information and training to assist staff, especially supervisor, in managing grievances effectively.