

Silver Oak University

Silver Oak University's Policy for Student Grievance Redressal Cell

Preamble

In pursuance of the guidelines laid down by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the establishment of a Student Grievance Redressal Cell, Silver Oak University has instituted a dedicated mechanism to address and resolve concerns raised by its student community. This Student Grievance Redressal Cell is committed to promoting a harmonious academic environment and fostering a culture of open communication.

The primary objective of the Grievance Redressal Cell is to provide an accessible and impartial platform for students to voice their grievances, ensuring a prompt and equitable resolution. The Cell strives to uphold the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability in dealing with various issues affecting the academic and non-academic aspects of student life.

This Cell is empowered to consider and redress grievances related to academic matters, infrastructure, examinations, evaluation processes, and any other concerns impacting the overall well-being of students. It aims to create a conducive learning environment where students can focus on their academic pursuits without hindrance.

The Grievance Redressal Cell operates independently, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality in its proceedings. It encourages students to express their grievances freely, and every effort is made to address concerns in a timely and effective manner. The recommendations and resolutions provided by the Cell are communicated to the concerned authorities for implementation.

The success of the Grievance Redressal Cell lies in fostering a culture of collaboration and constructive dialogue between students, faculty, and administration. Through continuous improvement and feedback, we aim to create an educational ecosystem that is responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of our student community.

This preamble outlines the commitment of Silver Oak University to maintaining a robust and responsive mechanism for addressing student grievances, in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the UGC. Any stake holder with a genuine grievance may approach the Student Grievance Redressal Cell to submit his/her grievance in writing or send through e-mail on grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in in the format attached at Appendix 1.

Silver Oak University is committed to provide a safe, fair and harmonious learning and work environment to all of its students and staff members – teaching and non-teaching. To achieve this objective, a Student Grievance Redressal Cell (SGRC) has been set up at the Silver Oak University. It has been set up in accordance with AICTE Notification F.No.35- 3/legal/2012 dated 25.05.2012, University Grants Commission Regulations 2012 (The Gazette of India, March 23-29, 2013), and the provisions of Chapter 6 of the first statutes of Silver Oak University published in the Government of Gujarat Gazette on September 8, 2016 for handling day-to-day grievances relating to students, parents and staff members, both teaching and non-teaching.

Student Grievance Redressal Cell (SGRC) facilitates the resolution of grievances in a fair and impartial manner involving the respective department/section/faculty/Centre and/or institute representatives, maintaining necessary confidentiality.

Any stake holder with a genuine grievance may approach the Student Grievance Redressal Cell to submit his/her grievance in writing or send through e-mail on grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in in the format attached at Appendix 1.

The Grievance Redressal Committee and all its rules, regulations, including decisions, will be applicable to all the students of the University and their parents during their stint in the University and stay on the University Campus.

Objectives

- To ensure a fair, impartial and consistent mechanism for redressal of varied issues faced by the stakeholders;
- To develop a responsive and accountable attitude among the stakeholders and thereby maintain a harmonious atmosphere in the University campus;
- To ensure that grievances are resolved promptly, neutrally, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- To ensure that the views of each grievant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is neither discriminated against nor victimized; and
- To up hold the dignity of university by promoting cordial relationship among the stakeholders specially students and parents.

Definitions

❖ Grievance

Grievance means a complaint that includes any kind of discontent or dissatisfaction or negative perception, arising out of anything connected with the University that a student or parent thinks, believes, or even feels, is unfair, unjust or inequitable

❖ **Grievant**

Grievant means a student, parent or group of students or parents submitting the grievance.

❖ **Days**

The term “Days” means working days excluding Sundays, Holidays or Vacation days as indicated in the academic calendar. In counting days, the first day shall be the first full working day following the receipt of the grievance.

Grievances Redressal Committee

The Grievance Redressal shall handle the process of Grievance Redressal. It shall be guided by the principles of natural justice while redressing the grievances. The committee considers only formal grievances, received via email at grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in or in person, and shall put its best efforts for prompt redressal of Grievance.

Structure of the Grievance Redressal Committee shall be as under:

Appointment of Ombudsperson and References at University Level:

- The University shall appoint an Ombudsman for redressal of grievances of students under these regulations.
- The Ombudsperson shall be a person who has been a judge not below the rank of a District Judge or a retired professor who has at least ten years’ experience as Professor (up to age of 70).
- The Ombudsperson shall be a part time officer appointed for three years or until he/she attains the age of 70 years to be **appointed by the President of the University**.
- The Ombudsperson shall be paid a fee of Rs.3,000/- per day for hearing the cases, in addition to reimbursement of conveyance expenses. To assist the Ombudsman, a Grievance Redressal Committee will be formed at the University level.

Functions of the committee

- ❖ To foster environment wherein stakeholders can express their grievances freely and frankly without any fear of being victimized
- ❖ To analyze the merits of grievances and conduct formal hearings and investigation as the case may be
- ❖ To protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties during the investigation , consistent with and subject of the policy guidelines

- ❖ To obtain the facts through relevant sources in a fair and objective manner and then to work out a resolution of the issues involved with the parties named in the grievance application
- ❖ To ensure speedy disposal of every grievance application within a maximum period of one month of the receipt of application

Scope of Grievances

Various types of grievances the Grievance Redressal Committee deals with areas listed in Table-1.

Table-1: Types of Grievance

Type of Grievance	Specification
Academic related issues	Admissions, Examinations, Assessments, Evaluation, Library facilities, Issuance of certificates, Add-on courses, Research related issues, etc.
Extension & Extracurricular	Students' club registration, Award of non-academic credits, Physical Education, etc.
Amenities & Maintenance	Allocation of class rooms, Standard of Canteen food, Wi-fi internet connectivity, Utility-stores, Computer facilities, Drinking water, Sanitation & hygiene, Maintenance, Medical facilities, etc.
Placements & Internships	On-campus or off-campus interviews, soft skills training, Internships, etc.
General Administration	Collection of fee-on-line fee payment gateway, ID cards, attendance, Scholarships, Transcript, Transportation, if any, etc.
Other related issues	Safety & Security, Discipline, Misbehaviours, Emergency services, harassment by fellow students, teachers or staff, etc.

Procedure for Redressal of Grievances

Any student or parent or staff member who wishes to initiate a grievance may in the first instance bring the issue to the notice of the Head of the respective department/section/institute, who will first address the issue and try to resolve it within seven working days of the receipt of the grievance. The Head shall keep the GR Cell informed about all such redressal.

If, there is no response within the stipulated time from the respective department/section/institute or if the grievant is not satisfied with the response/resolution to his/her grievance, the grievant is free to represent his/her grievance to the University Grievance Redressal Cell.

If the grievance is against the respective Head of department/section/institute, the grievant may directly submit his/her grievance in writing via email at grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in or submit in person at the Grievance Redressal Cell to the Chairman of Grievance Redressal Cell.

Procedural Steps and Guidelines to Follow: Submission of Grievance

Any aggrieved student or parent or staff member with a genuine grievance shall submit his/her grievance in writing along with necessary documents, if any, in any of the following modes:

- Sending via e-mail at grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in
- submitting a signed hard copy of the grievance complaint in person to the Chairman of the Grievance Redressal Cell
- The grievance must always be in the form of a detailed written complaint within 15 days from the date of occurrence of the event giving rise to the grievance. However, the University may extend this time frame where a delay is due to circumstances beyond the control of the aggrieved person such as illness, etc.
- The grievance complaint shall include:
 - 1 A clear and concise statement of the event/issues, name/s of person/s and a summary of the steps taken, if any, by the grievant to resolve the problem or issues prior to the filing of grievance complaint.
 - 2 Copies of relevant documents or other evidence relevant to the grievance.
 - 3 Full name and contact information of the person initiating the grievance complaint.

If it is a group grievance, list of all persons who are parties to the grievance needs to be attached. The list must include each person's name, university ID, Phone number/Email ID, etc. The list must also designate one individual as representative of the group.

Acknowledgement

The Grievance Redressal Cell shall acknowledge the receipt of each grievance complainant immediately. In the case of e-mail at grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in, the sender will receive an instant auto reply acknowledging the receipt of his/her e-mail.

Forwarding

Upon receipt of a grievance, the Grievance Redressal Cell shall categorize and analyze the merits of the grievance and forward the grievance to the respective department /section /institute

/individual requesting him/her/them to enquire into the grievance and redress it within such period as may be specified but not exceeding seven days from the receipt of the grievance complaint.

Hearing and Investigation

If any grievant is not satisfied by the resolution provided by the respective departments /sections/Institutes/Individuals, it may approach the Grievance Redressal Committee with the procedure mentioned under formal registration.

The GR committee shall undertake hearing of concerned parties, verify the facts, ask for more information, etc., and present the report to the Provost with its recommendations.

Communicating the Decision

Upon completion of the proceedings and submission of the report to the Provost, the Grievance Redressal Committee shall communicate the final decision to the concerned parties via email, which shall be binding to all.

Proxy

The aggrieved student or parent or staff member shall have to apply personally and represent his/her case before the Grievance Redressal Committee – in other words no proxy will be allowed to represent a case.

Closure of Complaint

The complaint shall be considered as disposed off and closed when the concerned parties have received the communication regarding final decision.

Monitoring and Timeframe

It shall be the endeavor of the Grievance Redressal Committee to ensure redressal/disposal of every grievance within a period of one month from the date of receipt of the application/grievance complaint. It shall regularly co-ordinate and monitor the redressal activities to achieve this.

Records and Confidentiality

The proceedings concerning each grievance will be recorded in a systematic manner. The information relating to the proceedings shall be treated as confidential.

Silver Oak University shall maintain confidentiality of information shared throughout the grievance process. All information collected will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without the consent of the parties involved. However, disclosures may be required for the purpose of fact-finding or efforts to resolve the grievance. Parties involved in the grievance process will also have to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed during the fact-finding process and the identity of the grievant.

In order to monitor the redressal process from time to time, the Grievance Redressal Cell shall maintain a grievance register under the supervision of the Chairman of the Grievance Redressal Cell. It shall contain the following heads as listed in Table 2. The register will be treated as confidential and may not be accessed by anyone other than the members of the Grievance Redressal Committee.

Other related matters like proceedings, hearings, complaints, communication, etc., shall be recorded and maintained in a systematic manner by the GRC.

Review and Feedback

The Grievance Redressal Committee will make a periodical review of the redressal process. It will collect a formal feedback from relevant stakeholders (students, parents, staff, etc.) from time to time; to review and improve the grievance handling and redressal process.

Prohibition against Retaliation

Silver Oak University strictly prohibits victimization of any grievant, witness, or any other participant in the grievance redressal process by reason of such participation. Any concerns about the victimization related to this process should be disclosed by the party to the Grievance Redressal Committee via grievance@silveroakuni.ac.in

Alternative Avenues for Redressal of Grievances

Although all students, parents and staff members may avail themselves of this procedure towards resolving their grievances, they can also try to resolve issues informally – if they believe that an informal resolution is possible at their department/ section/institute level.

Appeals

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the decision/ resolution of the Grievance Redressal Committee, then he/she can appeal the decision to the Board of Management (BOM) within seven days of receipt of the committee's decision. The Board of Management shall provide the final decision within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, which shall be binding to all concerned.

Exclusions

The following complaints/grievances shall not be entertained by the Grievance Redressal Cell for consideration and shall be considered as null and void:

- Decisions of the Board of Governors, Board of Management, Academic Council/Academic Committees constituted by the Silver Oak University
- Complaints in matters where the grievant is not affected directly or indirectly.
- Decisions with regard to the Award of Fellowships, Fee Concessions, Medals, etc.
- Decisions with regard to Recruitment and Selection
- Decisions by competent authority on Assessment and Examination Result/ Revaluation or Remarking of Answer Sheets
- Anonymous and Frivolous Complaints
- Rules, Regulations, Ordinances, Statutes and other such promulgations of University.