

## The Voice Study Centre Policy: Handling Informal Student Complaints with Requests for Confidentiality

### 1. Purpose:

- This policy outlines the procedures for handling informal complaints made by students against staff members when the student requests confidentiality.
- The institution is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students and staff.
- This policy aims to balance the student's right to confidentiality with the institution's responsibility to investigate and address potential misconduct.

### 2. Principles:

- **Student-Centered Approach:** The student's well-being and concerns will be prioritized.
- **Fairness and Due Process:** Staff members have the right to a fair process.
- **Transparency:** Students will be informed about the limitations of confidentiality.
- **Safeguarding:** The institution's safeguarding responsibilities will take precedence.

### 3. Procedures:

- **3.1. Initial Contact:**
  - When a student expresses a desire to make an informal complaint and requests confidentiality, they should be directed to a designated staff member (e.g., student services, a designated advisor).
  - **The designated staff member will:**
  - Listen to the student's concerns.
  - Explain the limitations of confidentiality.
  - Assess the severity of the complaint.
  - Inform the student of their options, including formal complaint procedures.
- **3.2. Assessment and Triage:**
  - The designated staff member will assess the complaint to determine:
  - The potential risk to the student or others.
  - The nature and severity of the alleged misconduct.
  - Whether the complaint can be addressed informally with limited disclosure.
  - If the complaint involves:
  - Potential criminal activity.
  - Safeguarding concerns (e.g., abuse, harassment).
  - Serious misconduct that requires formal investigation.
  - Then the institution's safeguarding or formal complaint policies will take precedence, and confidentiality may be limited.
- **3.3. Informal Resolution with Limited Disclosure:**

- If the complaint can be addressed informally, the designated staff member will explore options such as:
  - Speaking to the staff member without revealing the student's identity (where possible).
  - Providing the staff member with general feedback on their conduct.
  - Facilitating a mediated conversation (with the student's consent).
  - The designated staff member will document all actions taken.
- **3.4. Formal Complaint Option:**
  - The student will be informed of their right to file a formal complaint.
  - The designated staff member will explain the formal complaint process and its implications for confidentiality.
- **3.5. Documentation:**
  - All interactions and actions taken will be documented, maintaining as much confidentiality as possible.
  - Records will be kept in accordance with data protection regulations.
- **3.6. Review:**
  - This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness.

#### **4. Limitations of Confidentiality:**

- Students must understand that:
  - Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
  - If the complaint involves serious misconduct or safeguarding concerns, the institution may be required to take action, even if it means revealing the student's identity.
  - Legal requirements may override confidentiality.