



ESGMARK® QUICK GUIDE

CREATE YOUR WORKPLACE
GRIEVANCE POLICY

ESGmark®
OCTOBER 2021



ESGmark® Quick Guide:

Grievance Policy and Procedure

As businesses we strive to be the most responsible, supportive employers possible - but every organisation can fall short from time to time, however much we might hate to admit it.

Part of being a responsible employer is ensuring employees have an official process through which to register any disappointment, discomfort or complaint they may have against their employer.

A grievance procedure policy outlines a business's processes and guidelines for filing a formal complaint regarding a workplace, job, and/or coworker dispute or issue. A grievance procedure policy helps address employee concerns in a constructive and fair manner.

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employer. There is no legally binding process that an employer or employee must follow when raising or handling a grievance at work. However, there are some principles both should observe.

Note that a grievance procedure is **a formal way for an employee to raise a problem or complaint to their employer**. The employee can raise a grievance if they feel raising it informally has not worked, they do not want it dealt with informally and/or it's a very serious issue, for example sexual harassment or whistleblowing.

What is a grievance policy?

When an employee feels that they've been wronged – be it an unfair paycheck, an unpleasant assignment, or sexual harassment, they can file a grievance with the company they work for.

A grievance policy is the internal document that lays out what a grievance is, how an employee can raise one to their employers and what the procedure will be should they decide to do so.

The grievance policy means that should the employee decide to raise a formal grievance, they can check how the full process works along the various stages and what to expect. It also means that you as the employer have a framework to deal with the issue.

Ideally, companies should investigate all complaints but, speaking realistically, often employees don't enter into a resolution formal procedure, or Human Resources or manager deals informally with complaints. A grievance, however, documents that there is a problem. Should



the company not resolve the concern, the employee can generally use the documentation in legal action and visa versa - the documentation can prove that a company fully resolved an issue should evidence be needed at a later date.

Best practice also dictates that the procedure should have rules that the investigator must follow.

The grievance policy should be easily accessible by all staff members - whether on your intranet, employee handbook or as part of their employment contract paperwork.

Whilst every grievance issue will have its own particularities, and every company will have its own set of procedures, as we show in our grievance process guide, can be laid out across 6 broad steps:

1. Understand the options
2. Raising a formal complaint
3. Respond
4. The grievance meeting
5. Deciding the outcome
6. After the grievance procedure

What is a grievance procedure?

The grievance procedure is the set of actions taken by the employer, once a grievance has been raised by an employee - all of which must be in line with your grievance policy. Your grievance policy and grievance procedure must work together.

How long should a grievance procedure take?

This is heavily dependent on the situation at hand. When the complaint is something complicated or with a long history, it may take months to resolve a concern. If the complaint involves racial discrimination, sexual harassment, or bullying, you can expect that the procedures will take months. The investigation could involve multiple people and will take a great deal of time - the person conducting the investigation should always try to give those



involved an estimated timeline. A grievance filed over a single incident can sometimes be resolved within a matter of hours.

Whilst there is no official legal policy for a grievance policy, we have based our guide on industry best practice along with the Government's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Grievance policy - the ACAS policy isn't legally binding but an employment tribunal can reduce or increase any money awarded in a case by up to 25% if the code hasn't been followed.

To request our Grievance Policy and Procedure templates, please email us at info@esgmark.co.uk and we will happily share it with you.

If you have any questions or need further help in putting your Workplace Grievance Policy and Procedure in place, do not hesitate to contact the [ESGmark® team](#)