



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

# COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT CENTRE

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### PURPOSE

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The Complaints Management Centre (CMC) operates under a decentralised complaints handling model. Its main purpose is to provide advice, receive and refer complaints to the appropriate areas for investigation and response and to manage the collection, analysis and reporting of complaints data.

The CMC is responsible for:

- receiving complaints and referring them to the appropriate area/officer for investigation and response;
- advising complainants and staff managing complaints on all aspects of the complaint process including the conduct of investigations;
- monitoring the progress of investigations to ensure they are dealt with in a professional and timely manner;<sup>1</sup>
- collating details of complaints received by UOW, analysing and identifying trends and system improvement opportunities to meet the University's reporting requirements and to facilitate continuous improvements in our policies and processes;<sup>2</sup>
- maintaining a complaints database and reporting on complaints management at an institutional level;<sup>3</sup>
- providing advice, training and guidance to UOW staff who deal with complaints;
- liaising with relevant areas within UOW as required in the management and coordination of high level complaints and associated communications (eg with the Vice-Chancellor's Unit, Media Unit, Government Relations, HR);
- assessing and providing appropriate referral of complaints to ensure they are dealt with by the most appropriate person/unit;
- responding to enquiries from external agencies relating to a complaint;
- maintaining a contact list of external and internal investigators and advising on the most appropriate investigators for major investigations (including drafting relevant scope of work);
- coordinating complaints of a complex nature referred to the CMC by the senior executive;
- investigating complaints that fall within the scope of this Terms of Reference (see below);
- ensuring that the complaints management system is compliant with applicable legislation and industry best practice.

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<sup>1</sup> At present only high level complaints are monitored. The implementation of a Complaints Management System will enable more comprehensive monitoring and reporting.

<sup>2</sup> Pending the implementation of a Complaints Management System, only trends and improvements gleaned through the Complaints Network are regularly identified.

<sup>3</sup> Pending implementation of a Complaints Management System.

## **SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT**

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The scope of complaints managed by the CMC includes, but is not limited to, managing the following types of complaints:

- concerns relating to the conduct of an investigation carried out by UOW including, but not limited to, the treatment, quality, timeliness and accuracy of the investigation (excluding matters covered by the appeal processes relating to specific complaints);
- complaints for which there is no established internal process under a University policy for investigation or review;
- complaints that require the involvement of several areas of UOW and require a coordinated response;
- enquiries from external agencies relating to a complaint.

Investigations undertaken by the CMC are confined to UOW and may only extend to its controlled entities or associated bodies under the direction and approval of the Vice Chancellor.

The CMC will not investigate matters that are already managed by other areas of UOW unless directed to do so by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

## **AUTHORITY**

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The CMC is authorised by the CAO to oversee or carry out investigations within the defined scope of this Terms of Reference.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the CMC will have:

- with the appropriate approvals and delegated authorities, free and unrestricted access to all UOW-controlled premises and the right to inspect all correspondence, files, records, accounts and all other forms held by UOW as is necessary for the conduct of investigations;
- the right to require all officers of UOW to supply such information, explanations and documentation as is necessary for the conduct of investigations;
- assistance from UOW staff as is necessary for the conduct of investigations.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

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The CMC is a Unit within the Governance and Legal Division that reports to the CAO. It shall be accountable for the following operations:

- identification and reporting of systemic issues across UOW;
- reporting on significant investigations;
- providing information periodically on the status and results of the program of activity for the CMC including reporting of trends, volume, types of complaints and identified issues;
- coordination of reporting with other control and monitoring functions, (internal audit, compliance, risk management, security, legal, external audit) including relevant government agencies.