

# Grievance Concerns

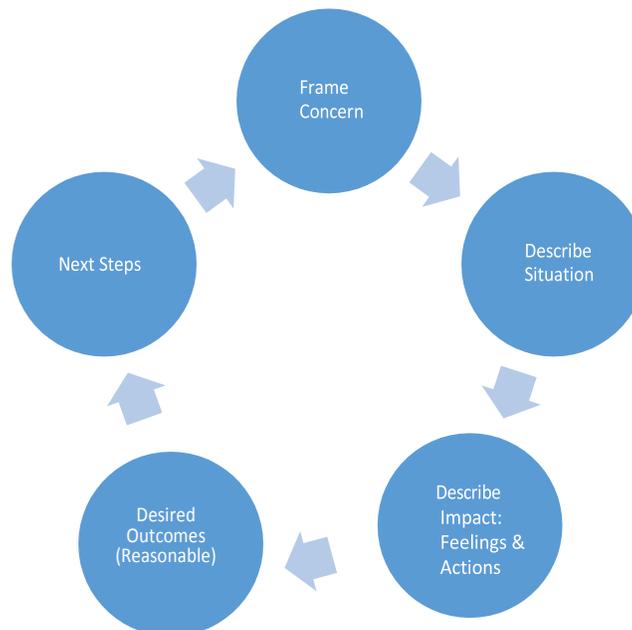
When you have a concern with someone at the University, speaking with the person you have a concern with directly is the recommended first step. However, in cases where you need extra support in doing so, or if you find speaking is difficult for you for whatever reason, you might choose to seek out the support of this office to work on your self-advocacy skills or other skills work such as: communication/active-listening/conflict resolution skills. We can also attend meetings between students and MRU folk, with at least 24 hours' notice.

## Communication Chain for Concerns



Alternatively, you can choose to follow the template of the attached: "Letter of Concern" and address it to the person you have issue with, or another person that you choose, like a Department Chair/Associate Dean/Dean. Sometimes, using your voice to express your experience, when you are not tied to an outcome/re-course, can be enough so that you're heard and that another student doesn't have to experience what you experienced, within the future.

## Letter Tips & Process



## Letter Format

Date: October 24, 2016

Name: Person you're addressing the concern to at Mount Royal University

4825 Mount Royal Circle

Calgary, AB, T3E 6K6

RE: Instructor/Staff/Faculty Incident

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, OR (To Whom It May Concern)

### Frame Concern:

- Keep this to a sentence at most.
- This is the main concern you had, summed up briefly.
- Keep it topical and directly related to the situation or interaction of concern.
- Try to keep your wording neutral, yet specific here (i.e. "I experienced a concerning situation in the computer lab")

### Describe the situation of concern: (Facts only)

- Factually describe what took place with the situation or interaction
- In this section, describe what happened as though you observed it, not experienced it
- Pose yourself the following questions:
  - *How did the interaction begin?*
  - *How long of an interaction was it?*
  - *What did people say and do before, during, and at the end of the interaction?*
  - *Who was in the immediate vicinity when it took place?*
  - *What did these people in the immediate vicinity say and do? (related to the concerning interaction)*
  - *Where were each of you (those directly involved in the interaction) standing/sitting?*
  - *What kinds of non-verbal communication took place? For who?*
  - *How did the situation end?*

### Describe your feelings & actions: (Facts only)

- Describe how you felt (after the interaction took place)
- Use an "I voice" (i.e. I felt upset and frustrated OR I felt embarrassed) to describe feelings
- How did you attempt to resolve the situation on the same day? The next class? The following week?
- What were the results of your attempts at resolving or addressing your concerns about the situation?

### Describe desired outcome:

- Keep your outcomes reasonable: expecting the other person to write you an apology letter may not work for both of you
- Awareness: perhaps you want the person to know the impact the interaction had on you

- Education: perhaps you want the person to know and educate themselves on communication practices
- Mutual Respect: perhaps you want to discuss your meaning of respect in search of common understanding
- Empathy: you may want the person to connect with feeling, to have an understanding of your feelings and how it might have felt for you during that interaction and afterwards

#### Express thanks:

- A sentence is ok, but keep it to a brief, yet warm/appreciative tone
- This can be a general 'thank you for hearing this concern' or,
- A unique expression of thanks, specific to you (I appreciate the support and time you've provided me in past; you rock!)

#### Next steps:

- Be specific, but reasonable: Are you hoping you'll be able to meet in person/by phone to discuss it further?
- Search for agreement: Perhaps a mutually agreeable resolution time/place
- Consider availability: What is yours? Ask the person to share their availability with you.
- Actions: Would you like the letter retained by someone? If so, who? Are you hoping others won't experience what you did? How are you hoping this will be achieved? Through discussion? Education?
- Communication mode: How can you best be reached? Email/Phone/ In-class

Sincerely,

\*Insert your written signature\*

John Doe

Student ID #