

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Al Ain University



جامعة العين
AL AIN UNIVERSITY

Contents

Al Ain University's Policy on Reporting Discrimination.....	3
Non-Discrimination and Anti-Retaliation Policy	3
Code of Conduct	3
17.1 Compliance with AAU's Rules and Regulations	3
Harassment or Discrimination	4
Human Resources Development (HRD) Program	4
Grievance Procedures for Complaints	4
Grievance	6
(14) DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND APPEALS.....	8
Faculty Grievance Procedures	11
Reporting to Human Resources Department (HRD)	12
Human Resource Unit	13
Vision.....	13
Mission.....	13
Goals and Objectives.....	13
Duties and Responsibilities	13
Employee Service Portal for Grievances and Suggestions.....	14
Conclusion.....	15

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

Al Ain University's Policy on Reporting Discrimination

Yes, Al Ain University (AAU) maintains clear policies and procedures to protect anyone who reports discrimination from any educational or employment disadvantage. The university upholds a strict non-discrimination policy and has put in place supportive mechanisms through its Human Resources Department (HRD) to ensure **no retaliation or harm** comes to staff or students who raise concerns. Key elements of AAU's approach include its **Human Resources Development programs, formal grievance procedures, and an employee service portal** for reporting issues.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Retaliation Policy

AAU's official policies affirm that all individuals have the right to be treated with **respect and equality**, without fear of prejudice or discrimination. Any form of discriminatory or prejudicial treatment toward students, faculty, staff, or other stakeholders is strictly prohibited by the university aau.ac.ae. This commitment to non-discrimination inherently **protects whistle-blowers** – those who report discrimination – by ensuring that such reports are handled fairly and **without adverse consequences** to the complainant. In other words, the university does *not* tolerate any retaliation or disadvantage (whether in academic standing or employment status) against individuals who come forward with complaints of discrimination. This stance is in line with UAE labor laws and AAU's own ethos of a "happier and safer" work and study environment aau.ac.ae. Through its Human Resources Development initiatives, AAU also fosters a culture of **diversity, inclusion, and awareness** so that employees know their rights and feel empowered to report any wrongdoing.

Code of Conduct

https://aau.ac.ae/uploads/2019/09/al_ain_university_student_handbook_2019_2020_en.pdf

The statements hereunder define some areas of ethical conduct that govern AAU members' behavior towards their peers, faculty members, the University, and the community. These statements do not address every situation; rather, they aim at providing the student with an overview of a general perspective on the code of ethics governing Al Ain University.

17.1 Compliance with AAU's Rules and Regulations

All students at AAU shall abide by the rules and regulations applicable at AAU. If the student is uncertain about any issue, s/he may refer to the HR Manager, the Department Head, the College Dean, AAU Vice President, or AAU President.

Harassment or Discrimination

Al Ain University upholds the principle that all individuals have the right to be treated with respect and equality. **Any harassment, discrimination, or prejudicial treatment towards peers, faculty members, or administrative staff on grounds of ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, age, or disability status undermines the AAU's essential ethics and shall not be tolerated.**

Human Resources Development (HRD) Program

AAU's Human Resources Unit (often referred to as **HRD** – Human Resources Department/Development) plays a central role in protecting employees who report issues. The HRD oversees various development programs and training sessions that educate staff about their rights and the proper channels for raising concerns. For example, the HR Unit regularly arranges **awareness talks on UAE Ministry of Human Resources (MOHRE) laws and employee rights**aau.ac.ae. Through these HR development programs, employees are informed about anti-discrimination laws and university policies, including how to recognize and report harassment or discrimination. By investing in human resources development and training, AAU ensures that its staff are knowledgeable about the grievance procedures and confident that the institution will support them if they lodge a complaint. This proactive approach by HRD demonstrates the university's commitment to **preventing retaliation** and encourages a transparent reporting culture.

Community Engagement

In support of the AAU's long-term, extensive plan of Community Engagement, the Human Resources Unit carries out its social responsibility in the best manner possible. The Human Resources Unit welcomes interns and provides them with top-training to aid them with their future careers. Moreover, the Human Resources Unit is supportive of other HR and personnel departments at various academic institutions and small-scale companies who require assistance or consultancy. The HR Unit is also ready to arrange for awareness **talks on the MOHRE laws and employee rights**.

Grievance Procedures for Complaints

Al Ain University has a well-defined **grievance procedure** that staff and faculty should follow when raising a complaint, including complaints about discrimination. These procedures are outlined in the Staff Handbook and university policies, guaranteeing that grievances are handled fairly and systematicallyaau.ac.ae. According to AAU policy, an employee who experiences or witnesses discrimination (or any work-related concern) should first report the matter **in writing to their immediate supervisor**aau.ac.ae. This initial step allows for an informal resolution at the lowest level. If the issue is not resolved by the supervisor or if the complaint involves the

supervisor, the policy provides for escalation: **the grievance should then be reported to the next level of management**, such as the department or unit head aau.ac.ac. The department/unit head will review the issue and attempt to resolve it. Should the matter remain unresolved or be of a serious nature, it can be further escalated – ultimately reaching the Human Resources Department and/or a designated Grievance Committee for formal review aau.ac.ac.

AAU explicitly **guarantees the right of staff to submit grievances** against the university or its employees without prejudice aau.ac.ac. The grievance policy covers any concerns related to the work environment, including discrimination or harassment. Importantly, it ensures confidentiality and impartiality in handling complaints. University guidelines state that a complaint should be raised in accordance with these grievance procedures, which are designed to protect the complainant's rights throughout the process. In practice, this means every grievance is taken seriously and investigated promptly, and **no punitive action can be taken against an employee or student for lodging a complaint** in good faith. This formal process is part of how AAU protects those reporting discrimination – by providing a clear, fair avenue to voice concerns **without fear of academic or job-related disadvantage**.

5.m.2 Staff Grievances

Subject	Faculty and Professional Staff	Effective From	Sep - 2011
Policy #	5.m.2	Latest Revision	Feb - 2025
Title of The Policy	Staff Grievances	Next Review	Dec - 2025
Responsible Entity	Staff Grievances Standing Committee	Policy Pages	1
Definitions	Informal Reporting: Verbal discussion between two parties. Formal Reporting: Reporting in writing is considered as formal reporting.		
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to establish the right of staff members to submit grievance against the University or its employees according to proceedings set forth by the University.		
Scope	This Policy shall be applied to all administrative staff.		
Statement	Grievance refers to any concerns raised by an admin member, against AAU or its employees. At the beginning of the Academic Year, the Deans Council forms a Grievance Committee whose mission is to consider grievances by an admin member against the University or its employees.		
Procedures	This section outlines the procedures by which the staff may raise any concerns related to the work. These concerns can be any of the following in nature: • Concerns related to individual work relationship in the university. • Concerns related to working conditions/situations. • Concerns related to employment terms and conditions. Grievance by an admin member against the University or its employees is governed by the following procedures: • An admin member should first work informally with his immediate supervisor to resolve the matter. If the informal procedure does not resolve the grievance, the admin member may initiate the formal grievance procedure. • The admin member must submit a written grievance statement to the immediate supervisor of the person whose action is the basis for the grievance. • Upon receiving the grievance statement, the "Staff grievance" committee will investigate and resolve the grievance. The admin member will receive, a written decision, within ten days. • In case the employee is not happy with the decision, further appeal can be made within two week.		
Recent Changes			

Grievance

https://www.aau.ac.ae/publications/handbooks/al_ain_university_staff_handbook_2024_2025_en.pdf

16. Grievance management policy

This section outlines the procedures by which the staff may raise any concerns related to the work. These concerns can be any of the following in nature:

- Concerns related to individual work relationship in the university.
- Concerns related to working conditions/situations.
- Concerns related to employment terms and conditions.

The employee should first work informally with the administrators (immediate supervisor, Manager, Dean and HR Manager) to resolve the matter. Experience indicates that almost all the cases can be resolved informally. The process should reflect mutual trust, respect and cooperation.

In case the matter is not resolved informally, the employee can use the formal proceedings as mentioned below:

- The employee shall report the matter in writing to the immediate supervisor.
- Where the issue is not resolved through the immediate supervisor, the grievance should be reported to the Department/unit head.
- The Department/Unit head shall meet with the relevant parties, review the matter, and arrive at a decision within five working days after the meeting is held. The decision should be communicated to the employee in writing.
- In case the employee is not happy with the decision, further appeal can be made to the HR Manager. The decision of the HR Manager is considered final.

17. Discipline

An employee who is deemed to be in breach of any of the AAU standards of performance and conduct shall be subject to disciplinary measures. These disciplinary measures may include any of the following:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- A fine
- Disciplinary investigation
- Loss of due increment
- Loss of due promotion
- Dismissal

In the case of verbal warning, the employee's immediate supervisor shall discuss with the employee the problems giving rise to disciplinary measures and give him / her, an opportunity to solve the problem.

A written warning may be imposed on the employee after reviewing the circumstances, hearing the employee's defense and consulting with the HR Manager. A record of a written warning shall be given to the employee and a copy shall be placed in the employee's file.

In case of a matter/issue that requires an investigation, a written case including a set of all the relevant documents must be forwarded to the investigation committee.

- The committee is to record all the findings and the conclusion in a report that must be signed by all members of the committee on each page.

- The report should be submitted to the HR Manager who, in turn, takes a swift correction action based on the recommendation of the Investigation committee.
- Based on the findings, a letter is prepared by the HR Unit mentioning the type of the penalty imposed on the employee. This letter must be signed by the employee upon receiving it.
- If the employee refused to receive a warning or a penalty letter, it must be sent to his/her official mail address and/or two people must testify to the refusal of receipt of the letter by employee.

During the investigation, the employee may be suspended with or without pay. The period of suspension shall be considered from the date the incident is reported until a decision is rendered on the matter. The results of a disciplinary investigation may include any of the above mentioned measures including termination of employment. All disciplinary decisions other than a verbal notice or warning shall be communicated in writing to the employee and a record shall be placed in the employee file. In the event executive employees are subject to disciplinary investigation, the matter will be handled through the President's or Chancellor's Office.

18. Appeals

The employee may appeal the disciplinary decision by presenting his / her appeal in writing to the University President within two weeks of the date on which the disciplinary decision is communicated to him/her in writing. Upon receiving the appeal, the administrator shall review the matter. The decision on the appeal shall be issued within two weeks and will be considered final.

(14) DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND APPEALS

https://www.aau.ac.ae/publications/handbooks/al_ain_university_faculty_handbook_2024_2025_en.pdf

AAU is committed to professional honesty and integrity, and it also recognizes the need for fair and adequate investigation of alleged violations of rules and policies relating to the conduct of AAU faculty members.

◆ Discipline

Discipline means any sanction except dismissal that may be imposed by the administration against a faculty member for misconduct. Sanctions may extend from mild to severe and from informal to formal. In cases of employment offenses or misconduct, a range of sanctions/measures short of dismissal should be available. This range of sanctions from minor to major constitutes progressive discipline. However, the imposition of any sanction must be regarded as a serious disciplinary step and even a first offense may warrant the most extreme penalty.

Any sanctions/measures that are imposed by the university must be selected to meet the severity, the frequency, and/or flagrant nature of the infraction. Appropriate sanctions may include:

- I. an oral reprimand
- II. a written reprimand

III. reassignment to other duties

IV. restitution

V. placement of the faculty member under the direct supervision of the Head/Dean with a specific plan for remediation, for a specific period of time

VI. loss of summer teaching employment for a faculty member on a contract of less than twelve months

VII. loss of perquisites or of privileges of rank for a stated period, not to exceed two years

VIII. reduction in contract period

IX. dismissal

◆ **Misconduct**

Misconduct may include the following:

I. neglect of duty or responsibilities, including unauthorized absence, which impairs teaching, research or other normal and expected services to the university

II. failure to perform the terms of employment for reasons other than documented illness or injury

III. willful violation of the rules and regulations of the university

IV. violation of the ethics of the academic profession

V. action(s) that results in preventing other members of the university community from fulfilling their responsibilities, or actions that create a clear and direct danger to members of the university community

VI. conduct, professional or personal, involving moral turpitude

◆ **Disciplinary procedures**

The following procedures must be followed when a faculty member is alleged to have committed an employment offense or misconduct. If, however, the Head regards the alleged employment offense or misconduct as one that warrants only an oral reprimand, the Head may follow these procedures at his/her discretion.

The procedures listed below are to be followed in sequence:

I. The Head notifies the Dean in writing of the alleged offense or misconduct. This notification includes the policies/procedures which may have been violated, with supporting evidence.

II. The Dean notifies the University President. This notification includes the policies/procedures which may have been violated with supporting evidence.

III. The Head, Dean, and University President consult the legal advisor of the university, who verifies all the facts related to the alleged offense or misconduct.

IV. The Head notifies the faculty member in writing of the alleged offense or misconduct, clearly identifying the policies/procedures which may have been violated with supporting evidence.

V. The faculty member is given an opportunity to respond both orally and in writing to the allegations and to any evidence prior to any determination of culpability.

VI. If the faculty member chooses to respond, the response must normally be made within ten working days to the Head.

VII. The Head reviews the faculty member's response (if any was made), his/her past performance- and employment record, as well as any additional information prior to determining if a sanction is warranted.

VIII. Normally, within ten working days after receiving the faculty member's response, the Head notifies the Dean of the response and includes his/her recommendations regarding the alleged offense or misconduct. If warranted, the Head's recommendation may include an appropriate sanction. Resolution of the matter may occur at this point.

IX. The Dean consults with the University President and the university's legal advisor, then notifies the faculty member and the Head of the sanction (if any) to be imposed. Notification is normally given within fifteen (15) working days.

X. The faculty member is given ten days to respond both orally and in writing to the Dean before any sanction(s) becomes effective. The response should indicate any intention to appeal the recommended sanction(s) to the grievance committee

When a Department Head is alleged to have committed an employment offense or misconduct, the Dean will follow the above procedures fulfilling the Head's duties and University President will act in the Dean's role. When a Dean is alleged to have committed an employment offense or misconduct, the University President will follow the above procedures fulfilling the both the Department Head's duties and the Dean's roles.

Depending upon the severity of the alleged offense or misconduct, the University President or the President's designee may immediately place a faculty member on leave with pay, pending an investigation of alleged misconduct or other employment offense. The leave pending investigation shall commence immediately upon the University President or designee providing the faculty member with a written notice of the reasons. The leave shall be with pay, with no reduction of accrued leave.

If, as a result of the investigation, the faculty member is to be suspended or his/ her contract terminated, written notice shall be given to the faculty member. In all cases, the faculty member will be given an opportunity to respond within ten working days before any sanction(s) become(s) effective. The response may be made both orally and in writing to all allegations and evidence.

◆ Appeal of Recommended Sanctions

A faculty member may appeal the Dean's recommended sanctions to the Grievance Committee. Resolution of the matter may occur at this point and the committee may recommend acceptance, modification, or rejection of the findings and/or sanctions.

Faculty Grievance Procedures

Grievances by a faculty member against the university or its employees are governed by this procedure. A faculty member should first work informally with administrators (the University President, Deans, and Department Heads) to resolve the matter. Experience indicates that almost all cases can be resolved informally. The process should reflect mutual trust, respect, collegiality, and cooperation.

The grievances governed by this procedure may include the following:

I. unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, religion, race, or national origin

II. salaries

III. resource support

IV. teaching assignments

V. office assignments

VI. leave of absence applications

◆ Discipline against a Faculty Member Short of Contract Termination

Informal Procedure

A faculty member shall first attempt to resolve the grievance informally with the person whose action is the basis for the grievance. However, if in the faculty member's sole discretion, it is not practical to do that, the faculty member shall first attempt to resolve the grievance informally with that person's immediate superior.

Formal Procedure

If the informal procedure does not resolve the grievance, the faculty member may initiate the formal grievance procedure. To do so, the faculty member must submit a written grievance statement to the immediate superior of the person whose action is the basis for the grievance, within 20 days.

The grievance statement must include the following:

I. a concise statement of the grievance

II. a description of actions taken so far to resolve the grievance

III. a description of the responses received IV. a proposed resolution of the grievance

Upon receiving the grievance statement, the administrator will take the steps he/she deems necessary to investigate and resolve the grievance. The administrator will then give the faculty member a written decision, within a period of ten days.

◆ Appeals

The faculty member may appeal a department Head's decision to the Dean. The faculty member may appeal a Dean's decision (whether an original decision or an appellate decision) to the University

President. The faculty member must submit any appeal in writing within two weeks after receiving the decision. Upon receiving the appeal, the administrator will take the steps he/she deems necessary to investigate and resolve the grievance. The administrator will then give the faculty member a written decision, within a period of two weeks.

◆ Confidentiality

Sensitive information disclosed in the proceedings should be kept confidential. Except for simple announcements about the status of the proceedings and similar matters, both the university and the concerned faculty member(s) shall avoid making public statements about the case until the proceedings have been completed.

◆ Exhaustion of Remedies

A faculty member shall not initiate civil litigation or civil administrative remedies against the university or its employees until all the remedies provided by this procedure have been exhausted.

◆ Non-Retaliation

Retaliation by the university or its employees against a faculty member for seeking redress through this procedure is prohibited, and is a separate cause for grievance.

◆ Resignation

Notice of resignation must be made at least three months before the end of the academic year or the contract end. If a faculty member fails to submit his/her resignation within the period stated above, he/she shall pay to the university one month and half of his/her total salary based on recent salary paid. A faculty member who resigns from the University while under contract must do so in writing to the Dean of the college via the department Head. In all cases, a letter of resignation should be forwarded to the Dean's office. The Dean's office should then forward the resignation letter to the Vice President and to the Human Resources.

Reporting to Human Resources Department (HRD)

Any grievance that cannot be resolved at the immediate supervisory or departmental level is **reported to the Human Resources Department (HRD)**, which oversees employee relations and ensures compliance with policy. AAU's HR Department is tasked with supporting conflict management, including providing guidance on disciplinary issues and grievances aau.ac.ae. In cases of discrimination complaints, HR personnel will typically coordinate the investigation and resolution process, often in conjunction with a grievance committee. The HRD's involvement is a safeguard for employees: as a neutral unit, HR ensures that the complaint is heard objectively and that the complainant is **shielded from retaliation** during and after the investigation. According to AAU's own descriptions of its HR services, the Human Resources Unit offers

support in conflict resolution and upholds employee rights within the institution aau.ac.ae. By channeling formal complaints through HR, AAU centralizes the protection for reporters – HR can monitor that no adverse actions (like unfair performance reviews, dismissal, or academic penalties) are taken against someone for making a discrimination report. This aligns with international best practices and federal requirements (in the UAE, every entity is expected to have a grievance committee to handle such issues fairly u.ac). AAU's policies thus ensure that **whistle-blowers are protected** by involving HR professionals who are trained to handle sensitive complaints discretely and justly.

Human Resource Unit

<https://aau.ac.ae/en/units/hru/vision-and-mission>

Vision

To serve AAU by providing, retaining and developing qualified, diverse & highly motivated staff.

Mission

The mission of the Human Resources Unit is to develop, practice and facilitate the processes which create an environment where the entire staff can make a vital contribution to achieve the AAU's mission.

Goals and Objectives

In Alignment with AAU Goals, following are HR Unit's Goals and Objectives.

- To make AAU an "Employer of Choice" through continuous image improvement by providing best HR services.
- To cultivate the culture of trust and welfare; where employees are fully engaged as efficient individuals to AAU and social community.
- To motivate existing staff by inspiring long-term commitment, career development in order to achieve and sustain higher retention rate.
- To ensure the compliance of HR policies with (MOHRE) employment laws in order to make AAU a workplace that has all the necessary support for productive relationships.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Human Resources Unit at AAU renders a wide range of services. The key services are mentioned below:

- Job identification, advertisement, screening selection and recruitment.
- Job evaluation and grading.
- Issuance of employment visas, contracts, and associated paper work.
- Employee Relations Management.
- Provision of advisory service on employment legislation/terms and condition of service.
- Management of pre and post-arrival arrangements for new staff orientation and onboarding etc.
- Designing Training and development programs according to the requirements of the organization and Units.
- Management of compensation and benefits.
- Overseeing Time and Leave management.
- Performance management and Career Development.
- Development and review of HR policies and procedures.

- Budgeting and Periodic Reporting.
- Provision of support on conflict management i.e. disciplinary and grievance advice.
- Employees Separation management

Employee Service Portal for Grievances and Suggestions

To further support a safe reporting environment, AAU's Human Resources Department has implemented an **Employee Service Portal** for handling grievances and suggestions from staff. This is an online platform (accessible through the university's e-services) that allows employees to **submit a complaint or suggestion electronically**. The portal provides a confidential and convenient way for staff to report incidents of discrimination or other concerns without having to do so in person. AAU's privacy policy notes that users can fill out online suggestion or complaint forms on the university website aau.ac.ae, which indicates the availability of digital channels for raising issues. Through the Employee Service Portal, a staff member can log in with their credentials and lodge a formal grievance that will go directly to the HR/concerned department for review.

The HRD has provided **clear instructions to all employees on how to access and use this portal**. During orientation sessions and HR communications, employees are guided on the steps to submit a complaint or suggestion via the portal. For instance, they are informed about how to log into the system (using their employee self-service account) and how to fill out the grievance submission form with details of the incident. The portal typically allows the attachment of any evidence or documents and can anonymize the complainant's identity if requested, ensuring privacy. By implementing this e-portal, AAU makes it easier and safer for employees to voice concerns – even sensitive ones like discrimination – since they can do so **securely and, if needed, anonymously**. This digital tool is part of AAU's Human Resources Development Program to enhance employee engagement and trust. It modernizes the complaint process and reinforces the message that the university encourages feedback and will act on grievances without harming the reporter's standing.

Privacy Policy

The Al Ain University understands and respects users' privacy and it is committed to protect it. By visiting the AAU Portal and using the online services users agree to the practices stated in this disclaimer and AAU Privacy policy. In order to maintain Al Ain University's website, provide and develop future services, the University may collect and store web usage information. This information will be used to improve the functionality and content on the site.

Please read our [Privacy Policy](#) carefully to understand how we collect and use information.

Some non-identifiable information is collected automatically while surfing our website

- The IP address you are using to access the website.
- The type of web browser used as well as the time and date of the visit.
- The pages you viewed anonymously on the website.
- Geographical location

Users' Personal Identifiable information

- Sends personal information such as name, date of birth, email id if required.
- Completes an online registration, suggestions or complaints form.
- Applies for a job through AAU Job Opportunities site.
- Uses online academic services

Conclusion

In summary, Al Ain University does have robust policies and mechanisms that protect individuals who report discrimination from any educational or employment disadvantage. The university's non-discrimination policy explicitly forbids unequal treatment aau.ac.ae, and its grievance procedures ensure complaints are addressed through proper channels with no retaliation aau.ac.ae. AAU's Human Resources Department is deeply involved in this protective framework – from educating staff on their rights aau.ac.ae, to handling escalated complaints objectively, to providing an online portal for easy reporting. Complaints of discrimination are meant to be raised according to the defined grievance process and **will be handled confidentially and fairly**, with the HR department and grievance committees overseeing the outcome. By providing training, clear policies, and accessible reporting tools, AAU creates a supportive environment where whistle-blowers are safeguarded from negative consequences. Employees are encouraged to **“speak up” about discrimination** knowing that the university will protect them and resolve the issue in line with its commitment to equal opportunity and justice aau.ac.ae.