Embedding New Procedures: How Do You Embed, Monitor and Enforce New Procedures and Stop Staff Slipping Back Into Old Habits?

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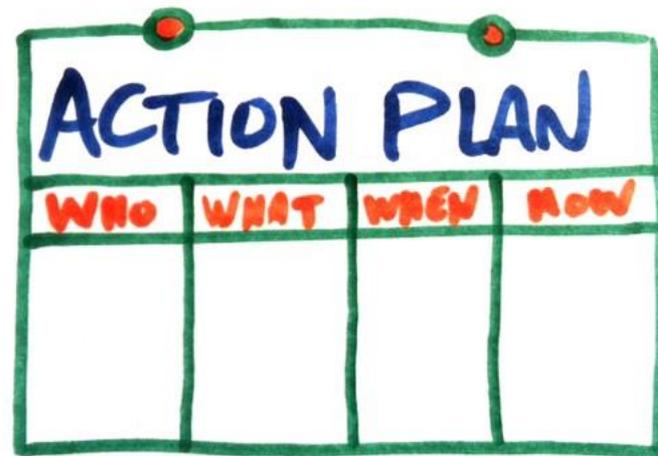
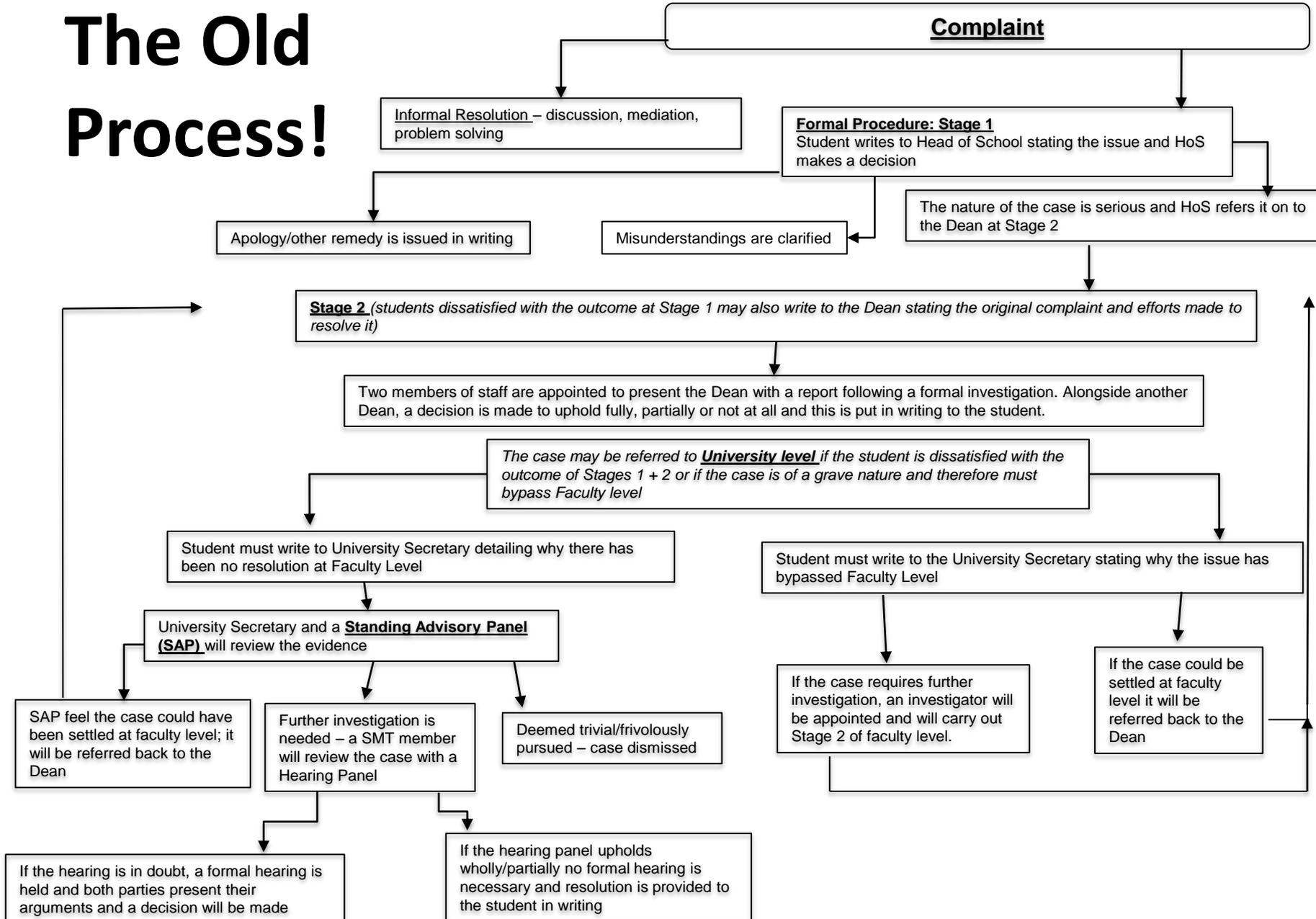Governance Manager

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Aims

- What was broken?
- The changes
- Embedding
- Monitoring
- Enforcing
- The Future?

The Old Process!

Complaint

Informal Resolution – discussion, mediation, problem solving

Formal Procedure: Stage 1
Student writes to Head of School stating the issue and HoS makes a decision

Apology/other remedy is issued in writing

Misunderstandings are clarified

The nature of the case is serious and HoS refers it on to the Dean at Stage 2

Stage 2 *(students dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 may also write to the Dean stating the original complaint and efforts made to resolve it)*

Two members of staff are appointed to present the Dean with a report following a formal investigation. Alongside another Dean, a decision is made to uphold fully, partially or not at all and this is put in writing to the student.

*The case may be referred to **University level** if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stages 1 + 2 or if the case is of a grave nature and therefore must bypass Faculty level*

Student must write to University Secretary detailing why there has been no resolution at Faculty Level

Student must write to the University Secretary stating why the issue has bypassed Faculty Level

University Secretary and a **Standing Advisory Panel (SAP)** will review the evidence

SAP feel the case could have been settled at faculty level; it will be referred back to the Dean

Further investigation is needed – a SMT member will review the case with a Hearing Panel

Deemed trivial/frivolously pursued – case dismissed

If the case requires further investigation, an investigator will be appointed and will carry out Stage 2 of faculty level.

If the case could be settled at faculty level it will be referred back to the Dean

If the hearing is in doubt, a formal hearing is held and both parties present their arguments and a decision will be made

If the hearing panel upholds wholly/partially no formal hearing is necessary and resolution is provided to the student in writing

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The Problems

- Confusing
- Complex
- Inefficient
- Too many stages

Head of School	→	Dean	→	SAP	→	Referral back or further investigation	→	Panel Meeting	→	Possibly to Hearing
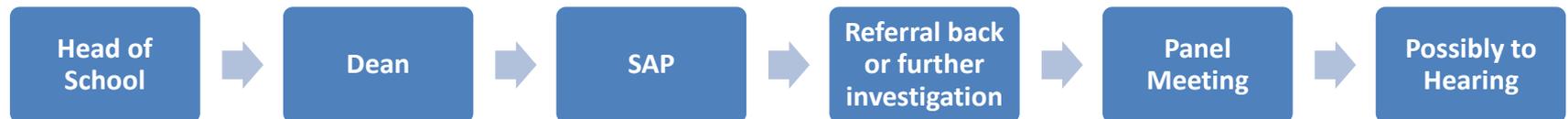
The Problems

- Overlap in responsibilities
- Over-investigated
- Inefficient use of resource
- Escalation
- Complexity encouraged staff to operate outside of the system
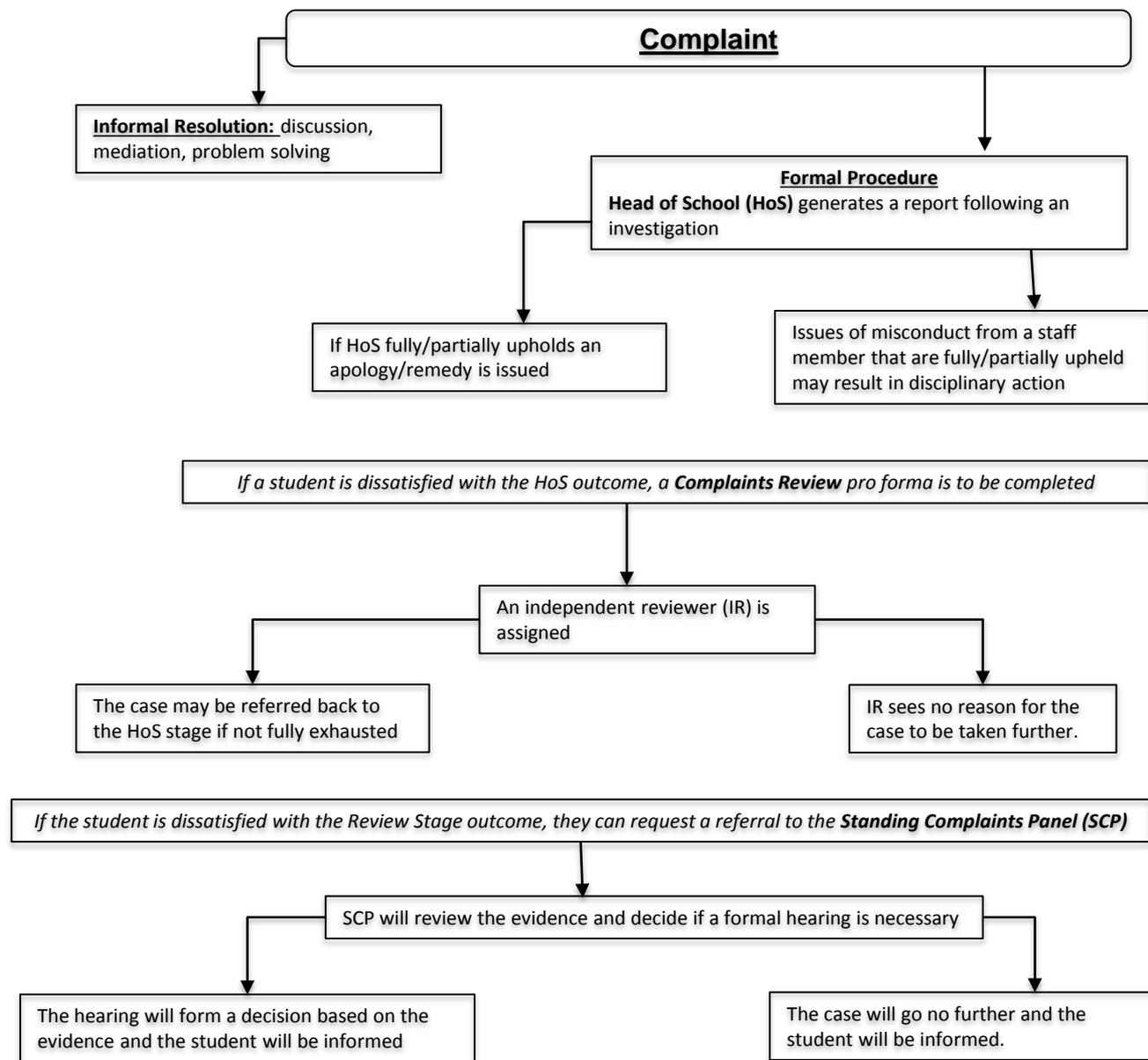
What did we do about it?

- Reduction in formal stages

  - Head of School investigation
  - Independent Review
  - Standing Complaints Panel
    - Hearing or
    - Completion of Procedures

- Minimises the involvement of senior staff

The New Process!

Efficient
Effective
Fit for Purpose

Complaint

Informal Resolution: discussion, mediation, problem solving

Formal Procedure
Head of School (HoS) generates a report following an investigation

If HoS fully/partially upholds an apology/remedy is issued

Issues of misconduct from a staff member that are fully/partially upheld may result in disciplinary action

*If a student is dissatisfied with the HoS outcome, a **Complaints Review** pro forma is to be completed*

An independent reviewer (IR) is assigned

The case may be referred back to the HoS stage if not fully exhausted

IR sees no reason for the case to be taken further.

*If the student is dissatisfied with the Review Stage outcome, they can request a referral to the **Standing Complaints Panel (SCP)***

SCP will review the evidence and decide if a formal hearing is necessary

The hearing will form a decision based on the evidence and the student will be informed

The case will go no further and the student will be informed.

Embedding

- Extensive consultation for 'buy in'
- Training
- Pro formas
- Case management
- Work with SU

- Further changes since 2012/2013
- Student complaints against staff
- Trades Unions and HR

Monitoring

- Written into the regulations
- Annual reporting
- New student complaints database
- Provide guidance when needed
- Conversations
- Complaints against staff

Enforcing

- SCOs – guardians of the process
- Good working relationships
- Cases studies used institutionally
- OIA

Have we fixed what was broken?

Yes

- Less complex
- Clearer, more transparent process
- Use of pro-formas introduces a standard

No

- Complainants (and staff) do not always co-operate!
- The curse of the scattergun approach!

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The Future

- Training
- Significant increase in OIA cases
- Students as consumers
- Data Subject Access Requests
- Continuous Improvement