



## Student Appeal, Complaint and Grievance Policy

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Responsible Officer(s) and Committee(s)	Director of Student Services Student Support and Administration Committee Dean/CEO Council
Related documents	Support for Students Policy Assessment Policy Assessment Moderation and Monitoring Procedure Orientation Policy and Procedures Monitoring Course Progress Policy Students at Academic Risk Policy and Procedures Suspension Deferment and Cancellation Policy Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) National Code (2018) TEQSA Guidance Note: Grievance and Complaint Handling (2019)
Higher Education Standards (2021)	2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students
National Code (2018)	Standard 3 Formalisation of enrolment and written agreements Standard 6 Overseas Student Support Services Standard 7 Overseas Student Transfers Standard 8 Overseas Student Visa Requirements Standard 10 Complaints and Appeals

# 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy outlines the principles and procedures for the handling of a student Request for Review of a Decision, Appeal, Complaint and Grievance at the University College and its Member Institutions.
- 1.2 This Policy has been developed to ensure all prospective, current and past students of the University College are given access to a fair process recognising that they may wish to raise a concern relating to their current or past involvement with the University College or its Member Institutions.
- 1.3 The University College is committed to dealing with all Requests for Review, Appeals, Complaints and Grievances efficiently, without bias, in a timely and transparent manner and in accordance with the requirements outlined within the Higher Education regulations and supporting documentation.
- 1.4 This Policy and its associated Procedures is communicated to all University College students, and to both academic and support staff. It is placed in all handbooks, included in all induction and orientation events, located on the website of the University College and all Member Institutions.

# 2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all students who are prospective, currently enrolled or recent graduates of the University College and its Member Institutions.
- 2.2 This Policy defines processes and guides students through the informal and formal stages of this policy as follows:
  - (a) initiate a *request for review of a decision* (Stage 1: Informal)
  - (b) raise an *appeal* (Stage 2: Informal)
  - (c) lodge a *complaint* (Stage 3: Formal)
  - (d) file a *grievance* (Stage 4: Formal)
- 2.3 This Policy sets out the procedures for both academic and non-academic matters affecting decisions which may be made in relation to:
  - Admission and Enrolment
  - Academic Credit
  - Marking and Grades
  - Academic Conduct and Program Progression
  - Curriculum content and delivery
  - Conferral of Awards
  - Customer service and administration
  - Marketing and Information
  - Facilities
  - Fees and Finance related matters
  - Student Wellbeing matters
  - Request for Transfer between Registered Providers
  - Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment
  - Postgraduate Research Student matters including Supervision, Candidature, Progress and Examination

- 2.2 This Policy does not apply to matters for which there is any other separate University College policy and procedure (e.g. *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harm Policy*). Notwithstanding, any person unsatisfied with the decision outcome in another policy may find recourse to this policy for the purposes of appeal, complaint or grievance provided the person making the appeal, complaint or grievance is able to demonstrate a deficiency in that policy process.

### 3. Definitions

3.1 The Policy Document Glossary applies to this policy.

3.2 The following definitions also apply to this policy:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Request for Review of Decision</i>	The first stage of this policy in which a student makes a request to the Member Institution through which they are enrolled (or had hoped to enrol with) to 'reconsider' or 'review' a decision that the Member Institution has made.
<i>Raise an Appeal</i>	The second stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcome from Stage 1 may escalate the issue to the Principal of the Member Institution by raising an Appeal.
<i>Lodge a Complaint</i>	The third stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcomes from Stages 1-2 may lodge a formal Complaint with the Provost, Office of the Dean.
<i>File a Grievance</i>	The fourth stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcomes from Stages 1-3 files a formal Grievance with the Dean/CEO, Office of the Dean. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dean/CEO appoints a Grievance Committee who will investigate the matter and report as soon as possible but no longer than 4 weeks.</li> <li>• If the student remains unsatisfied with the outcome the student may request the Dean/CEO to refer the matter to the relevant Student Ombudsman (domestic or overseas) for investigation and review.</li> </ul>
<i>Complainant</i>	The person making a complaint.
<i>Grievant</i>	The person making a grievance.
<i>Grievance Committee</i>	The group appointed by the Dean/CEO to investigate and report on a grievance that has been filed by a student with the Dean/CEO in relation to an unresolved matter.
<i>Respondent</i>	The person responsible for addressing the request, appeal, complaint or grievance whether formal or informal.
<i>Lecturer</i>	The person teaching a particular unit of study.
<i>Staff</i>	Any person currently employed by the University College or one of its Member Institutions.

<i>Prospective Student</i>	Any person seeking to enrol in University College directly or through one of its Member Institutions.
<i>Student</i>	Any person currently or recently enrolled in the University College directly or through one of its Member Institutions.
<i>Student Ombudsman</i>	<p>The official external person appointed to address grievance processes where an outcome has not been satisfactorily reached through the internal institutional policy and processes and where that process is now exhausted.</p> <p>Domestic Students information about contacting state-based representatives can be found on the <i>Study Assist</i> website: <a href="https://www.studyassist.gov.au/support-while-you-study/higher-education-student-complaints">https://www.studyassist.gov.au/support-while-you-study/higher-education-student-complaints</a></p> <p>Overseas Students information can be found on the dedicated Commonwealth Ombudsman website: <a href="https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints">https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints</a></p>
<i>Support Person</i>	Means any individual who accompanies for the purpose of providing support to the student or responder (such as a family member, friends, counsellor or other professional support person but not a legal practitioner). Noting that such a person is not there to advocate, speak or act on behalf of the individual they are supporting.

## 4. Statements and Objectives

- 4.1 This Policy and its associated Procedure recognises that effective management of raised concerns:
- contributes to an improved educational environment for students
  - assists the University College to improve the student experience by identifying areas of risk and areas for improvement.
- 4.2 The University College provides students with access to a clearly outlined four-stage process for handling Requests for Review, Appeals, Complaints and Grievances. It contains both informal and formal stages that encourages students, wherever possible, in the first instance to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. In addition:
- Enrolled students accessing any stage of this process remain enrolled in their program whilst the process is ongoing and until a final decision has been made.
  - If any part of the process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, the University College and its Member Institutions must immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision and advise the student of that action (National Code, Standard 10, item 10.4).
- 4.3 Students no longer enrolled in a University College award and wishing to lodge a grievance retrospectively should direct their grievance to the University College Dean/CEO.

- 4.4 There are nominated personnel at each Member Institution and within the Office of the Dean who are identified as the contact person should students wish to raise issues or concerns. This Policy also outlines key contact personnel who support and facilitate the procedures outlined within this policy.
- 4.5 All matters raised are guided by the following principles:
- (a) *Confidentiality*: All parties have a basic obligation to maintain confidentiality. However, procedural fairness requires that the respondent knows who has raised a Request for Review, Appeal, Complaint or Grievance.
  - (b) *Procedural Fairness*: Both the student complainant and the respondent must receive appropriate information, support, and assistance in resolving the issue. Processes followed are transparent, consistent and supported by ethical and equitable practices.
  - (c) *Freedom from Unfair Repercussions or Victimization*: The University College will take all necessary steps to ensure that victimization does not occur. Any staff member who is shown to have victimized a student will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
  - (d) *Respect for all Parties*: All issues raised, whether as a Request for Review, Appeal, Complaint or Grievance must be dealt with sensitively, and with care for all involved.
  - (e) *Timeliness*: Time limits set out in this Policy are aimed to enable a swift and efficient resolution to the issues raised. However, they may be altered by the University College for the purposes of properly considering the matter with the consent of all parties. All parties should be kept informed of the progress and advised if resolution of the matter is likely to extend beyond the period noted, in writing if requested.
  - (f) *Local resolution where possible*: Issues raised should in the first instance attempted to be resolved informally at the Member Institution concerned. However, the University College may determine that, because of the nature of the issue or those involved in the issue, it is more appropriate for the resolution procedure to be conducted at another Campus or location.
- 4.6 A matter may be dismissed or discontinued at any time if found to be frivolous, vexatious or result in abuse, harassment or victimisation to any person.
- 4.7 A student may withdraw a Request for Review, Appeal, Complaint or Grievance at any stage.
- 4.8 Where an issue results in the need for any meeting or hearing, the student or respondent may be accompanied by a Support Person. The Support Person:
- may not act as advocate
  - may not be a person who was, or may be perceived to be involved in, or associated with the issue being managed
  - must not be a legal practitioner unless permitted in writing by the University College

## **Procedure: Stages and Process**

### **Stage 1: Request for Review of a Decision (Informal)**

- 4.9 The first stage of this policy in which a student makes a request to the Member Institution through which they are enrolled (or had hoped to enrol) to 'reconsider' or 'review' a decision that the Member Institution has made.
- (a) This Request for Review should be made in writing by the Student to the Member Institution outlining the issue and identifying the desired outcome. This request should be sent to the person immediately responsible for the issue to which the student is raising (e.g. to the Lecturer for a graded mark, to the Registrar for an admission decision).
- (b) The Member Institution must:
- acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 business days
  - clearly respond to the request in no less than an additional 5 business days
  - provide information to the student about the next available course of action should the student be unsatisfied with the outcome of this *Request for Review of Decision*

### **Stage 2: Raise an Appeal (Informal)**

- 4.10 The second stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcome from Stage 1 may escalate the issue to the Principal of the Member Institution by raising an Appeal.
- (a) This Appeal should be made in writing and must include grounds as to why the original and subsequent decision made concerning the matter has been insufficient. The appeal should also clearly identify the student's desired outcome.
- (b) The Principal of the Member Institution must:
- acknowledge receipt of the Appeal within 5 business days
  - clearly respond to the Appeal in no less than an additional 5 business days
  - provide information to the student about the next available course of action should the student be unsatisfied with the outcome of this raised *Appeal*
  - provide a copy of the Appeal and the Response to the University College Provost, Office of the Dean

### **Stage 3: Lodge a Complaint (Formal)**

- 4.11 The third stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcomes from Stages 1-2 may lodge a formal Complaint with the University College Provost, Office of the Dean.
- (a) Lodging a Complaint must be done in writing by the Complainant using the form supplied and must include documentary evidence from the previously actioned Stage 1 and Stage 2. It must also clearly outline the dissatisfaction with a decision, action, process or omission, which the complainant considers likely to be insufficient and, to which was within the control of the Institution and for which the Institution is asked to officially respond.

- (b) The Provost must:
- acknowledge receipt of the Complaint within 5 business days
  - respond to the Complainant in no less than an additional 5 business days
  - provide information to the student about the next available course of action should the student be unsatisfied with the outcome of this lodged *Complaint*
  - provide a copy of all documentary evidence including the response to the University College Dean/CEO, Office of the Dean

#### **Stage 4: File a Grievance (Formal)**

4.12 The fourth stage of this policy in which a student who is unsatisfied with the outcomes from Stages 1-3 files a formal Grievance with the University College Dean/CEO, Office of the Dean who actions an external review to be conducted.

- (a) Filing a Grievance must be done in writing by the Grievant using the form supplied and must include documentary evidence from the previously actioned Stages 1-3. It must also clearly outline the dissatisfaction with a decision, action, process or omission, which the Grievant considers likely to be insufficient.
- (b) The Dean/CEO must:
- acknowledge receipt of the Grievance within 5 business days
  - outline the external process that will be conducted and the potential timeframe for the actions to occur
- (c) The Dean/CEO will:
- appoint a Grievance Committee of two or three persons with relevant experience, external to the part of the University College in which the grievance arose with no more than one employed in any part of the University College, to investigate and report on the matter as soon as possible but at least within four weeks
  - provide the Committee with relevant materials, including any further submission from the student
  - invite one person to chair and coordinate the report of the Committee
  - receive the report of the Committee
  - communicate its contents to the student, including clear and comprehensive written advice about the outcome
  - provide information to the student about the next available course of action should the student be unsatisfied with the outcome of this filed *Grievance*

4.13 If the matter has been resolved to the student's satisfaction, the Dean:

- (a) provides the student with a letter noting the conclusion of the grievance process and the outcome
- (b) reports this process to Council, including the Grievance Committee Report and the letter provided to the student



- 4.14 If the student remains unsatisfied with the outcome the student may request the Dean/CEO to refer the matter to the Student Ombudsman for investigation and review.
- (a) The Dean/CEO must provide a copy of all documentary evidence to the Student Ombudsman (domestic) or Overseas Student Ombudsman (overseas student) as appropriate.
  - (b) The student will receive a report from the relevant Student Ombudsman.
  - (c) The Dean reports the process to Council, including the Ombudsman’s response if that has been made known to the University College.
- 4.15 In all instances, the Dean/CEO ensures that all documentation is stored in the Office of the Dean for at least seven years. These records remain confidential, except that:
- (a) any party to the grievance will be allowed supervised access upon request
  - (b) the University College may be required to report the matter to a Government agency.

## 5. Related Procedures and Forms

Templates/Forms	
Appendix 1	Student Complaint/ Grievance Notification Form
Appendix 2	Student Appeal/ Complaint/ Grievance Flowchart



**STUDENT COMPLAINT/ GRIEVANCE NOTIFICATION FORM**

I am:

- Lodging a Complaint (submit form to SCD Provost: [Prof. Maggie Kappelhoff](#))
- Filing a Grievance (submit form to SCD Dean/CEO: [Prof. Steve Smith](#))

**NAME OF STUDENT:**

**CONTACT PHONE:**

**EMAIL:**

Please describe the problem/issue in your own words, with as much detail as possible (e.g. names, dates, times, and actual incidents) including the steps already taken to resolve the matter.

Please outline what would you like to see happen as a result of raising this matter and submitting this form?

**STUDENT'S  
SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**