

STUDENT GRIEVANCES, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

Approving Authority	Academic Board	Approval Date	20 Feb 2018
Effective Date	20 Feb 2018	Review Date	20 Feb 2021
Document No	PLA14	Version	1.0
Policy Category	Academic		
Governing Authority			
Responsible Officer	Head of School		
Related Documents	Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure Student Code of Conduct Student Misconduct Procedure Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (TEQSA Act 2011) Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act) 2000 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018		

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy specifies the principles and framework for resolving grievances at Adelaide Institute of Higher Education (AIHE) and provides for the review of both academic and non-academic decisions made at AIHE.

1.2 This Policy sets the expectations for a fair, equitable, transparent and timely complaints handling and appeals process, and the provision of comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about the process and policy to all students, including the student's right to refer a complaint or appeal to a relevant external agency.

2. SCOPE

2.1 The Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy applies to students, potential students and staff at AIHE.

2.2 The Policy includes student complaints and appeals about:

- admissions;
- academic programs;
- assessment;
- student progress;
- student enrolment load;
- breaches of academic integrity;
- bullying, discrimination or harassment;
- decisions of AIHE committees or groups;
- administrative operations or decisions of any unit or group within AIHE or acting under the authority or auspices of AIHE;
- AIHE staff;
- another student; and
- other matters, not listed above, which provide for recourse to the Student Appeals Committee.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 AIHE students will have access to fair and impartial appeal and complaint resolution processes that provide for:

- natural justice and procedural fairness;
- transparency, accountability and confidentiality;
- effective, reciprocal communication and feedback;
- the handling of grievances informally where possible;
- resolution of grievances as early as possible and as close as possible to the source of dissatisfaction;
- the provision of regular procedural review; and
- the enhancement of the appeals process and outcomes.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 AIHE will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all potential students, students and staff are aware of the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and that it is

accessible. Students will receive information about this Policy prior to admission, during orientation programs, and always on the AIHE website.

4.2 Complainants must make complaints or appeals responsibly and AIHE will treat them seriously and have regard to the rights of all parties. All complaints must be made individually. Vexatious or malicious complaints are examples of student misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance to the Student Code of Conduct policy.

4.2.1 Complaints regarding admission decisions must be lodged within six (6) months of the decision's communication.

4.2.2 Complaints lodged by a former AIHE student more than six (6) months after completing their studies will not be considered.

4.3 The rights of all parties involved in a complaint or appeal will be protected.

4.4 Where possible a complaint will be dealt with at the local level and will involve as few people as possible. This will provide an opportunity to achieve a satisfactory outcome for those matters that can be resolved informally.

4.5 If the matter cannot be resolved informally, complainants may lodge a complaint or appeal in writing. Written complaints and appeals must be in English. Receipt of the complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing within ten (10) working days and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

4.6 No fee will be charged to lodge an internal complaint or appeal.

4.7 Any party to a complaint may be assisted or accompanied by a support person at relevant meetings but may not have legal representation.

4.8 Requests for anonymity by the complainant will be considered on a case by case basis by the staff member managing the complaint. This will include consulting with the support person and/or the complainant as appropriate. Staff requiring guidance on this matter should seek advice from their line manager.

4.9 All parties involved in a complaint or appeal will be kept informed regularly, in writing, of progress or outcomes, including the reasons for the outcome.

4.10 A student may remain enrolled in their program of study and continue their studies during the complaint or appeal procedure, except in circumstances where their health or safety is potentially at risk, or where the student poses a health or safety risk to others.

4.11 A complainant may withdraw their complaint or appeal at any time.

4.11.1 The complainant must promptly advise the staff member managing the complaint or appeal that the complaint or appeal has been withdrawn. This advice must be provided in writing.

4.11.2 The staff member managing the complaint or appeal will advise all parties within two (2) working days that the complaint or appeal has been withdrawn.

4.11.3 AIHE may still choose to investigate the complaint or appeal.

4.12 A student has the right to refer a complaint or appeal to a relevant external agency at any time. Where this occurs, AIHE may take further action in response to the complaint or

appeal following the external agency's determination. External agencies may include the Office of the Training Advocate, South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission, Australian Human Rights Commission, or Police.

4.13 Any action arising from a complaint or appeal will be implemented expeditiously in accordance with the relevant AIHE policy or procedure, where applicable.

4.14 Penalties may be instituted against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a complainant or a support person of either party.

4.15 Nothing in this Policy detracts from the provisions contained in relevant AIHE policies and procedures.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 AIHE Council will review the annual report on the work of the Student Appeals Committee and any non-academic appeals that are submitted to Council through the Academic Board.

5.2 The Academic Board will:

- establish and maintain appropriate procedures to oversee and monitor implementation of this Policy and the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure; and
- provide AIHE Council with a report annually on the work of the Student Appeals Committee and any non-academic appeals.

5.3 The Chair of the Student Appeals Committee will consider appeals lodged by students in relation to academic matters and conduct appeal hearings as set out in the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

5.4 The Head of School will:

- ensure that all academic staff are aware of this Policy and the related Procedure; and
- provide or coordinate the provision of relevant information to the General Manager and Secretary to the Student Appeals Committee as requested.

5.5 The General Manager will:

- consider complaints made by students in relation to non-academic matters;
- investigate non-academic complaints; and
- appoint a non-voting secretary to the Student Appeals Committee as required.

5.6 The Student Support Officer will:

- provide students with information about and assist them to resolve grievances, complaints and appeals;
- receive and process written complaints from students; and
- receive notifications from international students where they have decided to pursue a complaint or appeal with an external agency, and will manage reporting of their enrolment status to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in accordance with the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 See the AIHE Glossary of Terms for definitions.