

STUDENT GRIEVANCES, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

Approving Authority	Academic Board	Approval Date of Last Revision	21 Mar 2019
Approval Date	12 Nov 2018	Effective Date of Last Revision	21 Mar 2019
Effective Date	12 Nov 2018	Review Date*	30 Nov 2021
Document No	PLA14	Version	2.1
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) Complaint handling at universities: Australasian best practice guidelines March 2016 Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act) 2000 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018		

* Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Document Control

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	30/1/2018	Approved by Academic Board
2.0	12/11/2018	Significant revision to meet HESF Threshold Standards
2.1	21/03/2019	Revision to 4.7, 4.14, 5.2 and 6.7 to meet ESOS National Code requirements and clarify processes

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy specifies the principles and framework to provide a timely, effective, fair and transparent system for managing student concerns at Adelaide Institute of Higher Education (AIHE) that respects the rights and privacy of all involved parties.

2. SCOPE

2.1 The Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy applies to students, former students, prospective students and staff for managing complaints and appeals about academic, non-academic or administrative matters at AIHE.

2.2 This Policy does not affect or limit the rights of an individual under State or Federal law to pursue a complaint through an external agency.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 AIHE recognises the rights of students to report grievances, lodge complaints and appeal decisions about academic, non-academic and administrative aspects of their educational experience and to have access to effective and efficient internal grievance and complaints resolution processes that are timely, impartial and at no cost to the student.

3.2 AIHE is committed to resolving students' grievances and complaints relating to their studies, their student life, or an adverse experience that relates to the operations of AIHE as quickly and as sensitively as possible.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Procedural fairness will be the guiding principle for all matters related to student grievances. Student grievances, complaints and appeals will be dealt with in a timely manner, will be treated in an equitable manner and will be judged purely on their merits.

4.2 The rights of all parties involved in a complaint or appeal will be protected. The student and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any manner and all details of the complaint and subsequent investigation will remain strictly confidential. Students must make complaints or appeals responsibly and AIHE will treat them seriously and have regard to the rights of all parties.

4.3 Any party to a complaint may be assisted or accompanied by a support person during the complaint process. The support person should not be a legal practitioner acting in a professional capacity.

4.4 AIHE will ensure that potential students, students and staff have access to information contained in the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and its related Procedure. Students will receive information about this Policy prior to admission and during orientation programs, and it will always be available on the AIHE website.

4.5 All complaints must be made individually.

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

4.7 AIHE will acknowledge receipt of the complaint or appeal in writing within five (5) working days and commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within ten (10) working days of it being made, and AIHE will finalise the outcome as soon as practicable.

4.8 Requests for anonymity by the student 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 student as appropriate. Staff requiring guidance on this matter should seek advice from their line manager.

4.9 Where possible a complaint will be dealt with at the local level and will involve as few people as possible. Where a matter cannot be resolved informally, students may lodge a complaint or appeal in writing within the timeframes specified in the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

4.10 All parties involved in a complaint or appeal will be kept informed of progress regularly, in writing. Students will be informed in writing of decisions, including the reasons for the decision, and information on further avenues of resolution including agencies external to AIHE.

4.11 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.

4.12 A student may withdraw their complaint or appeal at any time. AIHE may still choose to investigate the complaint or appeal.

4.13 A student has the right to refer a complaint or appeal to a relevant external agency at any time.

4.14 Where the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, AIHE will 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.

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

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

5. TYPES OF GRIEVANCES

5.1 Academic matters

This Policy applies to academic matters, which include but are not limited to:

- admissions;
- recognition of prior learning,
- curriculum matters, such as content or structure of academic programs, or delivery of subjects;
- assessments, including assignments, tests and examinations;
- provision of learning resources and support;
- academic progress;
- study load; and
- academic integrity.

5.2 Non-academic and administrative matters

This Policy applies to non-academic and administrative matters occurring at AIHE, or in relation to a student's dealings with AIHE's education agents or any other related party, and include but are not limited to:

- bullying, discrimination or harassment;

- financial matters, such as fees, fines, payments and refunds;
- student behaviour and student misconduct (other than academic misconduct);
- critical incidents;
- health and wellbeing;
- AIHE staff or another AIHE student; and
- facilities.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 The Head of School:

- will ensure that all academic staff are aware of this Policy and the related Procedure;
- is responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints made by students in relation to academic matters and
- will provide or coordinate the provision of relevant information to the General Manager and Secretary to the Student Appeals Committee as requested.

6.5 The General Manager:

- will ensure that all professional staff are aware of this Policy and the related Procedure;
- is responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints made by students in relation to non-academic and administrative matters; and
- will appoint a non-voting secretary to the Student Appeals Committee as required.

6.6 The Student Support Officer will:

- provide students with information and assistance to resolve grievances through AIHE's internal complaints and appeals procedures;
- receive and process written complaints from students; and
- assist students where they have decided to pursue a complaint or appeal with an external agency, including advising international students of any implications regarding their visa status.

6.7 The Manager Student and Academic Services will:

- manage student grievances, complaints and appeals processes across AIHE;
- receive written appeals from students;
- contact the Chair of Academic Board to confirm their availability to Chair the Student Appeals Committee or to nominate another member of Academic Board to Chair; and

- determine an alternate complaint resolution process where a complaint directly involves, or where there is a clear conflict of interest with, the Head of School or General Manager.

7. DEFINITIONS

7.1 See the AIHE Glossary of Terms for definitions.