

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE Procedure



RESPONSIBLE MANAGER: Executive Manager Teaching and Learning
CATEGORY: Student Information and Services
DATE APPROVED: 19 May 2009.
RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS: [Complaints Resolution Procedure](#)
[Privacy Information Act 1988](#)
[Assessment Policy](#) and [Procedures](#)
[Plagiarism Policy](#)
[Exemption Procedures](#)
RPL Procedures
[Student Records Management Procedures](#)
[Higher Education Support Act, 2003 \(HESA\)](#)

Introduction

The Institute is committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just learning environment by ensuring that students have access to processes that allow for grievances, disputes, problems and complaints of an academic nature to be resolved.

Principles

- The Institute has an obligation to resolve grievances as early and simply as possible.
- Every student has the right to register a complaint or grievance about matters or issues relevant to their involvement with the Institute.
- Any grievance will be considered with courtesy and respect and dealt with in a timely, fair and consistent manner.
- The views of each complainant and respondent will be respected and any party to a complaint will not be discriminated against nor victimised.
- While the parties attempt to resolve the matter, the student can continue to attend classes as normal.

Scope

This procedure is applicable to all enrolled students of the Institute or who have a concern of an academic nature regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study.

This Academic Grievance Procedure is designed to meet the requirements of Clause 19 of Schedule 1A and Subdivision 4-D of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA).

Issues of a non academic matter should be referred to the [Complaints Resolution procedure](#).

Definition

Grievance	is a concern or complaint about any act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision which a student thinks is unfair or unjustified.
Academic grievance	relates to student progress, assessment, curriculum and/or awards in a course of study.
Complainant	person with a grievance
Respondent	person or entity that the grievance is with

Complaint procedures

Students enrolled in any course delivered by the Institute have access to processes by which a complaint may be addressed. There is no cost imposed by the Institute to the complainant in making or resolving a grievance; however an external agency engaged for support may choose to charge the complainant a fee for service.

Reasons for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be given if so requested by any party and at any stage of the process.

The complainant and the respondent have the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if desired. Legal representation is not permitted unless either party elects to take the grievance externally.

Informal stage

In the first instance, complaints should be discussed as soon as possible with the person/s involved. However, if this is impractical, students should make a complaint to the relevant Teaching Centre Manager.

The Centre Manager will consider the complaint and attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution within 10 business days.

Formal stage

Where consideration at the informal level does not lead to a satisfactory resolution or the complainant is not satisfied with the Centre Manager's decision, the complainant may proceed to a formal grievance.

The grievance must be submitted in writing to the Executive Manager Teaching and Learning.

Where a grievance includes allegations concerning the conduct or actions of a staff member, and the substance of those allegations is not minor in nature, the staff member will be immediately notified of the grievance by the Executive Manager Teaching and Learning. The affected staff member will be given an adequate opportunity to respond.

The Executive Manager Teaching and Learning will determine appropriate processes to investigate and make a decision. This may involve the parties to the complaint being interviewed. An outcome will be advised in writing within 10 business days.

Appeal

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcomes of the complaint, they may appeal to the CEO in writing within 21 days of receiving this advice.

The CEO determination in the matter will be final within the Institute's processes.

External agency for grievances

If the complainant is still dissatisfied or is unsatisfied with the fairness of the process, the complainant has the right to lodge a complaint externally with an appropriate authority such as:

Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
Level 6, 35 Spring Street
GPO Box 2317
Melbourne 3000

Tel: (03) 9637 2806 Fax: (03) 9651 3266
Email: vrqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

If the VRQA makes recommendations in relation to a grievance they have received, the VRQA will forward these recommendations to the Institute's CEO who will consider the recommendations for implementation.

Withdrawal of a grievance

A student may withdraw a complaint or grievance at any time during the grievance resolution process and in this case the matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved. If the original complaint or grievance was made in writing then the withdrawal must also be in writing to the relevant staff member or external entity who is handling the matter at the time the withdrawal is lodged.

Confidentiality and record keeping

Once formal grievance procedures are invoked, details of allegations and investigatory notes will be kept in confidential files. During the investigation process, these shall be kept separately from either the student or the staff member's personal file.

The Institute will take all necessary steps to ensure that information regarding the grievance shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the appeals process.

Following resolution of the complaint, records will be kept in accordance with Student Management Records Procedures and maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records upon written request. Where a complaint is proven, the outcome may be placed on the student's or staff member's personal file.

Assistance with a grievance

In addition to external supports, staff are available at the Institute to assist students with lodging a grievance. Students may contact a member of the Student Access and Equity team via any campus reception.

Awareness and training

All policies, procedures and required documents and information relating to VET FEE-HELP will be published on the South West TAFE website and will therefore be accessible to all members of the public and students regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study.

Information will be available to staff from the Institute's intranet and will form part of staff professional development and staff induction. Any significant changes in this policy or process will be advised to staff through the Institute's staff newsletter, intranet and if appropriate, training workshops will be offered.

Access and equity

The Institute is committed to adhering to access and equity principles in the implementation of these procedures.