

STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS POLICY

Approving authority	Academic Board
Purpose	This policy outlines the grounds on which students can have their complaints and appeals heard and outlines the processes and procedures to be followed for resolution.
Responsible Officer	Head of Student Services & Administration
Next scheduled review	June 2021
Document Location	http://www.ozford.edu.au/higher-education/policies-and-procedures/
Associated documents	Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure Academic Progress Policy and Procedure Assessment Policy and Procedure Credit Transfer & Articulation Policy and Procedure Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling a student's enrolment policy and Procedure Student Consultation Policy and Procedure Student Feedback Policy and Procedure Student Grievances and Appeals Procedure Student Support and Services Policy and Procedure

1. PRINCIPLES

Oxford Institute of Higher Education (hereafter referred to as “the Institute”) is committed to considering and resolving student grievances/complaints and providing a formal mechanism for students to appeal in a manner that both protects and respects the rights of both the Institute and the student.

This Policy for considering student complaints or appeals will be governed by the following principles:

- students who lodge an academic or administrative complaint or appeal have the right to due process and a fair hearing. Any staff member involved in the complaint or appeal equally has the right to due process and a fair hearing;
- student complaints or appeals will be treated in a serious, sensitive, confidential and timely manner and discussed only with those persons relevant to the case or who can provide specialist advice;
- staff involved in resolving student complaints or appeals will act fairly at all times and base their decisions on a thorough and unbiased consideration of facts and views expressed by all parties;
- a student must be able to invoke the complaints or appeals procedures without fear of reprisal, discrimination or victimisation;
- each complainant, and appellant will have the opportunity formally present his or her own case, and each party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting;
- provision for review by an independent third party is available if internal process fails to resolve a grievance or if the student remains dissatisfied with the internal appeal outcome;
- The Institute will implement the grievances and appeals policy at no cost to the complainant or appellant.

2. SCOPE

This policy covers all forms of student complaints and appeals in relation to the operations of the Institute that may include, but are not limited to, the quality of the teaching, administration, student support and services, bullying, harassment, discrimination and any other areas of perceived inappropriate, unfair or discriminatory treatment, action or decision.

It does not apply to appeal by students against academic issues such as:

1. the outcome of a review of result of assessment or grade of subject ;
2. a penalty for academic misconduct and plagiarism;
3. a refusal of an application for course credit;
4. a failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Students wishing to appeal against any academic issue will be referred to the Academic Appeal Policy and Procedures.

3. DEFINITIONS

ESOS National Code

The ESOS National Code refers to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 established under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

PRISMS

Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). It provides Australian education providers with the Confirmation-of-Enrolment (CoE) facilities required for compliance with the [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Legislation](#).

Compassionate or Compelling circumstances

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents;
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies;
- a traumatic experience that has impacted on the student which could include involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, supported by police or psychologist's reports; or
- where the Institute was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit.

4. POLICY

- 4.1 Students must be informed in writing of the availability of the Institute's grievances and appeals policy and procedures during the enrolment process. The information is made available on the Institute's website and student handbook for student access.
- 4.2 The Institute will receive student complaints or appeals concerning any decision, action or situation relating to or arising from the operations of the Institute and will carefully and respectfully consider all complaints and appeals in a fair and judicious manner.
- 4.3 All complaints and appeals will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution that is fair and equitable to all parties. The Institute will encourage the parties to approach a complaint or appeal with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems informally through discussion and conciliation.
- 4.4 If the informal approach through discussion and conciliation is unsuccessful or the student may make a formal complaint.
- 4.5 Resolution of a formal complaint or appeal will commence within 5 working days of receipt.
- 4.6 At any stage in the internal complaints or appeals process students are entitled to be assisted or accompanied by a support person. Any staff member who is the subject of a complaint or appeal also has the right to have an accompanying support person.
- 4.7 Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved by the Institute or the Institute's determination of a matter is not accepted by all parties, access is available to an appropriate external and independent body to review the process and decision of the Institute.

- 4.8 A student's enrolment must be maintained whilst consideration of a complaint or whilst the appeal is in progress and the outcome has not been determined.
- 4.9 The outcome of any appeal or complaint will be communicated in writing to the student within 5 working days of the determination.
- 4.10 If there is any matter arising from a student complaint or appeal that is a systemic issue which requires improvement action this will be reported to the Institute management as part of the continuous improvement process.
- 4.11 Students will be provided within 10 working days with details of external authorities they may approach, such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeals process. Students will be advised that the purpose of the external appeal process is to consider whether the Institute has followed its policies and procedures, rather than make a decision in place of the Institute.
- 4.12 The Institute will keep proper records of all grievances and Appeals lodged under this policy and their outcomes on student files.
- 4.13 The Institute will make records of a complaints/appeal available for external review authorities upon request.
- 4.14 The Institute will consider all outcomes from formal complaints and appeals. If the result of the appeal or complaint is favourable to the student, the Institute will immediately implement the decision, and or corrective / preventative action, if applicable.
- 4.15 The Institute will respond to any complaint or appeal the overseas student makes regarding his or her dealings with the Institute, the Institute education agents or any related party the Institute has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas student's course or related services

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that this policy is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of the HES Threshold Standards the policy will be:

- 5.1 internally endorsed by the Executive Management Team on development or review, prior to approval by the Governing Board, or the Academic Board or other delegated authority;
- 5.2 externally reviewed as part of any independent review of the HES Threshold Standards approved by the Governing Board;
- 5.3 internally reviewed by the Responsible Officer every three years from the date of approval (if not earlier).
- 5.4 referenced to the applicable HES threshold Standard and/or other legislation/regulation.

6 FEEDBACK

Feedback or comments on this policy are welcomed by the listed Responsible officers of the Institute.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy was initially developed with reference to the following institutions' policies:

Monash University (2013). Academic and Administrative complaints or appeals Policy, November 2013

Avondale College of Higher Education, Student Grievances and Appeals Policy, July 2013

8 VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Description	Approved by
1.0	April 2014	Initial issue	AB
2.0	May 2017	Internal review	AB
3.0	June 2018	To align with National Code 2018 and HES Threshold Standard 2.4 Minor formatting and edits	AB
4.0	May 2019	Internal Review	AB
Related legislation/ regulation/standard	HES Threshold Standards (2015) 2.4 (Student Grievances and Complaints) ESOS National Code 2018 Standard 10		