



Student Grievance Resolution Policy

****In order to support students and staff and ensure their safety during the period of significant disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, any meetings required under this policy should proceed using an agreed communication medium, such as videoconference or teleconference. Face to face meetings should be avoided due to the risk of coronavirus transmission****

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OVERVIEW

The policy refers to the formal process by which Students are able to pursue grievance or complaint, as well as the timeframes in which the University will respond. It also serves to confirm that Students have the right to access external redress and review.

Students may pursue a grievance or complaint, or lodge an appeal, about decisions or determinations made by members of University staff through the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#). This includes decisions and determinations which involve the exercise of academic judgement, exclusion or suspension from enrolment, administrative matters, the quality of administrative service, and the provision of facilities.

The University will deal with any grievance or complaint in a transparent, professional and fair manner at minimal or no cost to the Student.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

The Student Grievance Resolution Policy and Process is intended for use by all Students at the University of Adelaide who have an academic or administrative grievance or complaint against a decision or determination made by the University or any related party the University has an arrangement with to deliver the student's program or related services. For international Students this includes Education Agents (as defined by the National Code). The University will ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with the principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness.

OUTSIDE SCOPE

This policy and process will not apply to Students who have a grievance or complaint against an action by another University Student, or group of University Students involving Unfair Treatment. In such instances Students should refer to the University's [Student Behaviour and Conduct Procedure](#).

Allegations of misconduct, including Unfair Treatment, by staff or titleholders raised in a Student grievance must be referred to Human Resources and the Area Manager to be assessed and managed in accordance with the [University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021](#).

This policy does not apply to grievances or complaints about research misconduct. Refer to the [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#) and associated [Research Misconduct Procedure](#).

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Processes for Resolving Student Grievances

- a) The University encourages the informal and early resolution of Student grievances and complaints where possible and appropriate.
- b) The University will ensure that all grievances are considered, processed and resolved in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#).

2. Natural Justice

The principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness apply to any proceedings or decisions under the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#).

3. Minimising Disadvantage

Parties to a Student grievance or complaint will not be subjected to reprisals, discrimination or victimisation due to their involvement in the complaint-handling process and will be advised by the University of the support and advocacy options available to them under the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#).

4. Obligations under this Policy

Parties to a student grievance or complaint must:

- a) Cooperate in good faith.
- b) Adhere to the University [Privacy Policy](#).
- c) Immediately disclose any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

5. Dismissal of a Complaint

A Student who lodges a grievance or complaint that is frivolous, unreasonable, or lacking substance will have their grievance or complaint dismissed or discontinued in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#). Grievances or complaints which are unreasonable may be considered as misconduct and investigated under the University's [Student Misconduct Policy](#).

6. Record Keeping

- a) All records created in managing a complaint or grievance must be retained in accordance with the [University Records Policy](#) and include:
 - i. the details of each grievance or complaint,
 - ii. a statement of the outcome and
 - iii. the reasons for the outcome.

7. Timely Response to Reports

- a) Grievances and complaints will be resolved expeditiously in accordance with the timeframes outlined in the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#).
- b) The University will:
 - i. Notify students in writing about the final outcome of a grievance or complaint and provide reasons for the outcome;
 - ii. Inform Students of any further avenues of external review: and;
 - iii. Implement any follow up actions promptly.

8. External Resolution

- a) A Student may pursue any grievance or complaint through an agency external to the University at any stage of the [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#).
- b) Students are encouraged to explore all internal grievance and appeal processes before taking other courses of action or external redress or review.
- c) The University will implement any decision or action required from an external review as soon as practicable.

9. Support for Students with a Grievance or Complaint

- a) [Student Grievance Advisors](#) will assist students with information about lodging a grievance or making a complaint under this policy.
- b) Students are able to access free, confidential, and independent advice and support from Education and Welfare Officers at [Student Care](#) who can act as advocates for a Student grievance or complaint.

10. Compliance

This policy is in compliance with the University's obligations under the [Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (ESOS Act), the [National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#). This policy meets the requirements described in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) and the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

AUTHORITIES

Key	Authority Category	Authority	Delegation Holder	Limits
Student Affairs	Grievance Resolution	Preliminary assessment of the merits of an appeal.	Student Grievance and Conduct Advisors	
Student Affairs	Grievance Resolution	Determine the outcome of an appeal that is referred to a Student Grievance and Appeals Committee hearing.	Student Grievance and Appeals Committee	
Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)	Grievance Resolution	Make a determination based on the findings of a prehearing review.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)	

PROCEDURES

The [Student Grievance Resolution Process](#) can be found on the [Student Affairs website](#).

DEFINITIONS

Area Manager – means Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Vice Presidents, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans, Director Human Resources, Chief Executive of External Relations (and a person acting in these positions) and Institute Directors.

Domestic Student – a student who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or who holds Permanent Residency status or Permanent Humanitarian Visa in Australia.

Education and Welfare Officers – people who provide confidential and independent advocacy, counselling and welfare services to students (a list of [Education and Welfare Officers](#) is provided on the Adelaide University Union website).

Education Agent – A person or organisation (in or outside Australia) who recruits overseas students and refers them to education providers. In doing so, the education agent may provide education counselling to overseas students as well as marketing and promotion services to education providers. Education agent does not refer to an education institution with whom an Australian provider has an agreement for the provision of education (that is teaching activities).

ESOS Act – the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

Grievance or *Complaint* – an expression of dissatisfaction lodged by a student according to this policy in relation to an academic or administrative decision or determination by the University, its Education Agents, or any third party the University has an arrangement with to deliver a program or related services.

International Student – a student who is studying on a valid student visa issued by the Australian Government.

National Code – the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students established under the ESOS Act.

Natural Justice and *Procedural Fairness* –

Natural Justice, also referred to as Procedural Fairness, is the procedural requirement to ensure that a standard of fairness is applied in the investigation and adjudication of a dispute. This involves:

- fully informing a person of any allegation/s made against them;
- giving them the opportunity to state their case, provide an explanation or put forward their viewpoint ;
- conducting a proper investigation of the allegations, ensuring that all parties are heard and that all relevant submissions are considered, with reasons given for any decision; and
- acting fairly, impartially and without bias.

Student – a person who is currently enrolled in an award program at the University or is a cross-institutional or non-award student, exchange student or study abroad student enrolled in a course of study at the University. This includes prospective international students who have engaged in the application process with the University (including via an Education Agent).

Student Grievance Advisors – University professional staff who provide advice to students on the Student Grievance Resolution Process (a list of [Student Grievance Advisors](#) is provided on the University's website).

Titleholder – a person who is not a member of academic staff and has been awarded a title by the University of Adelaide under the [Titleholder - Conferral of Honorary Role Procedure](#).

Unfair Treatment - includes harassment, bullying vilification, racial vilification and racist behaviour, sexual harassment, discrimination, victimisation, intimidating behaviour or violence.

RMO File No.	2018/7989
Policy Custodian	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)
Responsible policy officer	Executive Director, Division of Academic and Student Engagement
Endorsed by	Academic Board on 7 November 2018
Approved by	Vice-Chancellor and President on 7 November 2018
Related Documents and Policies	Student Grievance Resolution Process University Records Policy Student Misconduct Policy Privacy Policy Responsible Conduct of Research Policy Research Misconduct Procedure
Related Legislation	Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Support Act 2003 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Superseded Policies	
Effective from	7 November 2018
Review Date	6 November 2021
Contact for queries about the policy	Executive Director, Division of Academic and Student Engagement