



# Australian Chiropractic College

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

---

### NON ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT (Students)

#### PURPOSE

In an effort to maintain its commitment to accountability, equity and confidentiality, the following policy and procedures outline a set of rules by which any non-academic grievance matter will be resolved.

Non-academic grievances are decisions made by the College. They cover issues such as harassment, vilification, discrimination, financial matters, fines and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities, and complaints regarding students' personal information.

Matters which are identified as outside the remit of the College, such as being criminal in nature, falling under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* or anti-discrimination legislation will be referred immediately to the appropriate person or authority.

Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of an academic grievance, the relevant Student Academic Appeals Procedures apply. An academic grievance covers issues such as student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course.

#### SCOPE

This document applies to all students (prospective and current) who may have a non-academic grievance.

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Every effort will be taken to resolve grievances informally. The grievance procedure is designed to enable the timely resolution of grievances. It has four stages:

1. Informal complaint – managed by the parties to the complaint
2. Formal complaint – managed by the Program Convener or delegated Complaints Manager
3. Internal review – managed by the Academic Dean
4. External review – managed by the ACC President.

Matters of a highly sensitive matter, including but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment, can be escalated in confidence to the ACC President direct.

ACC promotes common sense and encourages good will towards students and staff. All grievances will be handled in a confidential and respectful manner, with outcomes communicated in writing.

Parties privy to the grievance will be afforded appropriate transparency and safety, free of victimisation and discrimination. Specifically, all parties to this process have a right of access to relevant records. ACC will ensure that the records are treated as confidential.

Students (prospective and current) will not be charged for accessing any stage of this grievance process. ACC bears any costs associated with access to external appeals.

## PROCEDURES

- 1.1. All complaints and/or grievances will be documented.
- 1.2. The timeframe for complaint resolution will be clearly communicated to all parties.
- 1.3. Correspondence to students will include information regarding advocacy and support, in addition to appeals options.
- 1.4. Outcomes of formal complaints and appeals will be acknowledged in writing.

1.5. Complaints-handling processes are set out below:

### **1.5.1. Stage 1: Informal Complaints Process**

- i. Student raises concerns with the specific ACC staff member who is directly involved so that they may address the matter together.
- ii. Students who are uncomfortable with direct contact apply to the Student Support Officer for a facilitated discussion and/or informal mediation.
- iii. If the matter is not resolved or if the student is not satisfied with the result, they escalate their concerns to Stage 2.
- iv. Students have a right to support and advocacy at all stages of the complaints-handling process.

### **1.5.2. Stage 2: Formal Complaints Process**

- i. Student submits their formal grievance in writing to the Academic Dean.
- ii. The grievance must contain the nature of the complaint and details of steps already taken in an attempt to resolve the matter.
- iii. Within 5 working days of receipt, the Program Convener (or delegated Complaints Manager) creates a complaints file, acknowledges the grievance in writing and provides the complainant with the indicative 10 working day timeframe for complaint resolution.
- iv. The Complaints Manager notifies the respondent of the allegations made against them and provides the respondent with 5 working days to state their case.
- v. The Complaints Manager ensures all parties involved in the dispute receive copies of this policy and procedure.
- vi. The Complaints Manager interviews all individuals involved, and considers all information provided in an unbiased, fair and impartial manner before arriving at a decision.
- vii. The Complaints Manager communicates the outcome of the formal complaint in writing to both parties.
- viii. If a complaint or grievance is substantiated, the underlying issue will be reported to the Quality Assurance Committee to ensure corrective actions are taken.
- ix. The Complaints Manager maintains and keeps securely on file written records including the date, and nature of the complaint, individuals involved, the outcome of the investigation and any disciplinary action implemented.

### **1.5.3. Stage 3: Internal Review Process**

- i. Student submits their appeal in writing to the Academic Dean.
- ii. The appeal must contain the reasons why the formal complaints process was unsuccessful.
- iii. Within 5 working days of receipt, the Academic Dean requests the complaints file, acknowledges the appeal in writing and provides the appellant with the indicative 10-day timeframe for resolution.
- iv. The Academic Dean notifies the respondent of the allegations made against them and provides the respondent with 5 working days to re-state their case.
- v. The Academic Dean interviews all individuals involved, and considers all information provided in an unbiased, fair and impartial manner before arriving at a decision.
- vi. The Academic Dean communicates the outcome of the formal complaint in writing to both parties.
- vii. If an appeal is substantiated, the underlying issue will be reported to the Quality Assurance Committee to ensure corrective actions are taken.
- viii. The Academic Dean updates the written records and keeps them securely at all times.

### **1.5.4. Stage 4: External Review Process**

- i. Should either the appellant or respondent be dissatisfied with the decision they have the right to an external appeal.
- ii. ACC uses The Resolution Institute – <https://www.resolution.institute> as its independent dispute resolution body and accepts up to \$AUD 200.00 related to the appointment of an external arbiter.
- iii. The dissatisfied party submits their request for an external review to the ACC President.
- iv. The President notifies the Board of Directors of the request and seeks formal approval to engage The Resolution Institute.
- v. The President contacts The Resolution Institute and requests the appointment of an independent and appropriately qualified external arbiter to review the decision of ACC.
- vi. The President liaises with all parties concerned regarding the scheduling of the external review.
- vii. The arbiter's findings will be communicated back to both parties within 21 working days.
- viii. Additional channels of review with specific jurisdictions include:
  - Overseas Student Ombudsman (for international onshore students) – <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/overseas-students>
  - Office of the Training Advocate – <http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/>
  - Equal Opportunity Commission (for discrimination and sexual harassment) – <https://eoc.sa.gov.au>
  - The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (for complaints about providers) – [www.teqsa.gov.au](http://www.teqsa.gov.au) – note TEQSA is not a dispute resolution agency

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The College President is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

ACC administration will be responsible for lodging and maintaining a record of all documents that pertain to a Grievance process.

## **REVIEW**

The policy is to be reviewed by 15 November 2019.

Draft Date: 1 October 2018

Version: 3.0

Endorsed: Academic Board 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Approval Date: 18 October 2018

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date of Next Review: 15 November 2019