

STUDENT GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS

Procedures

DEFINITIONS

Terms in this document, for which definitions are not provided in the text or may not be self-evident or for which usage at ACC may differ to that in other higher education institutions are as follows:

Appeal: A formal communication of objection to an academic outcome or decision.

External Assessors: Designated associates of the College who have been given responsibility for assessing student learning outcomes (knowledge and skills), be it a written or oral assessment or clinical practice based.

Grievance: Informal (usually verbal) or formal (usually in writing) communication of dissatisfaction with an academic or other student matter which is not an Appeal (as defined above).

Independent External Review or Appeal: Avenues of Appeal that are external to, and independent of the College.

Internal Processes: Refers to those processes (in this instance Appeal processes) conducted by the ACC staff, the Student Academic Appeals Committee and or, where relevant, the Finance Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) or the Academic Board (AcB).

Program Exclusion (or Program Dismissal): Termination of the student's enrolment. After a specified period, the student may apply again for admission, in accordance with the ACC's *Recruitment and Admission Policy*.

PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures is to document ACC's approach to the handling of student grievances and appeals. These Procedures detail the informal and formal sections of the process and the escalation of grievances and appeals through internal processes and to independent external review.

Student grievances and appeals include all manner of student dissatisfaction including academic appeals under the *Assessment of Coursework Policy*, *Grades and Results Policy*, *Academic Progress Policies* and *Academic Integrity Policies*, *Attendance Policy* and any other academic related matter. Student grievances also include dissatisfaction with admission and/or enrolment, appeals against finding from an investigation under the *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy* or the *Code of Conduct* or any other non-academic matter.

The Student Grievance and Appeals Procedures provide clear disclosure of the appropriate processes that are to take place to ensure that all students are treated in a fair equitable and confidential manner.

SCOPE

This policy and related procedures apply to all students (domestic and international), both already enrolled and who have applied for admission to studies at the ACC, who may have a non-academic grievance.

They also apply to staff of the College, including local and international agents engaged by the ACC to provide recruitment and admission services, or third parties (in Australia or overseas) through which an arrangement is made by the ACC to deliver some or all of its higher education course(s) that lead to the award of the ACC's Bachelor of Chiropractic or other regulated higher education qualification.

PROCEDURES

Grievances

A grievance can be in relation to an academic or other matter that is not specifically an appeal in relation to an outcome or decision.

Grievances can be raised informally (usually verbally and/or off the record) or formally (usually written and on the record).

Grievances may include but are not limited to:

- Misleading information provided during the student recruitment process
- Denial of enrollment into an ACC program
- Breach of policy or failure to apply due process
- Grievance in relation to a unit grade.

Grounds for Academic Appeal

A student has the right to make a formal academic appeal in the following circumstances:

- An application for grade review was denied / unsuccessful;
- Failure to follow due process;
- New or differing grounds for appeal have been identified;
- Unit, Subject or Program exclusion or dismissal as a result of failure to meet academic progress requirements;
- Unit, Stream, Program exclusion or dismissal on grounds of academic misconduct.

Grievance and Appeal Stages

Grievances and appeals are managed and escalated through the following stages:

Non-Academic

- Informal consideration
- Formal consideration
 - Stage 1 – Appeal to Marketing and Student Engagement Manager. If the grievance or appeal involves the Marketing and Student Engagement Manager, the Stage 1 appeal can be made to the Academic Operations Manager
 - Stage 2 – Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If the grievance or appeal involves the CEO, the Stage 2 appeal can be made to the President

- Stage 3 – Independent External Review or Appeal to the National Student Ombudsman

Academic

- Informal consideration
- Formal consideration
 - Stage 1 – Appeal to the Academic Dean.
 - Stage 2 – Appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee (SAAC).
 - Stage 3 – Independent External Review or Appeal to the National Student Ombudsman.

To maintain full accountability, fairness and academic transparency, the ACC has established a Student Academic Appeals Committee (SAAC) of the Academic Board. This Committee is available as the second stage of formal escalation of an academic grievance or appeal. A full outline of the SAAC functions, responsibilities and membership can be found within the Student Academic Appeals Committee Terms of Reference within the *ACC Governance Framework*.

Informal consideration

Students can raise any grievance or appeal on an informal basis with:

- Academic grievances – the relevant Program Coordinator
- Non-academic grievances – the Admissions and Student Services Coordinator
- If the grievance involves the individual that it would otherwise be raised with it can be raised with the President.

The person to which the grievance has been raised will arrange a meeting with the student to discuss the grievance or the basis of their appeal.

The student is responsible to determine if they are satisfied that their grievance is resolved or if their basis of appeal is valid or invalid.

Where the student remains dissatisfied they are responsible to escalate the matter for formal consideration.

Formal consideration – Stage 1

Lodging a Grievance

Students lodge an academic grievance for consideration under Stage 1 of the formal consideration process by providing a letter to the SAAC. This letter must include details of the grievance and have any available evidence in support of the grievance attached. The academic grievance letter is provided via email to College Administration at admin@acc.sa.edu.au.

Students lodge a non-academic grievance for consideration under Stage 1 of the formal consideration process by providing a letter to the CEO. This letter must include details of the grievance and have any available evidence in support of the grievance attached. The grievance letter is provided via email to College Administration at admin@acc.sa.edu.au.

Lodging an Academic Appeal

All applications for appeal must be received in writing by the College Administration, via email to admin@acc.sa.edu.au, as soon as possible and no later than fifteen (15) working days after notification of the initial determination.

Appeal applications must be made using the ACC Appeal Application Form and contain the following:

- Student's full name, date of birth, address and contact details;
- Documentation surrounding the nature of the appeal, previously handed down decisions, basis for the current appeal;
- Name and details of a support person that can advocate for the student and attend an appeals hearing; and
- Any other relevant documents.

Acceptance of the Grievance or Appeal

Within 10 working days of receipt of the Grievance Letter or the Appeal Application, the committee or individual responsible for the Stage 1 process will review and consider the letter/application and decide whether the grievance/appeal should be accepted, in whole or in part, or should be dismissed.

Grievances or appeals may be dismissed on the following grounds:

- No reasonable grounds for grievance/appeal;
- Insufficient evidence demonstrating a lack of due process;
- No new or different grounds for appeal have been demonstrated than those previously considered by the initial decision maker;
- The appeal is lodged outside the allocated timeline.

Where a grievance/appeal has been dismissed, the student will be notified in writing via e-mail, the result of the consideration and the reasons for dismissal.

Where a grievance/appeal is accepted, in whole or in part, the student will be notified in writing, via e-mail, and will be provided with information on which elements of the grievance/appeal have been accepted or denied and on what grounds they have been accepted or denied.

On those occasions where the result of an appeal relates to the student's continued enrolment, the College shall maintain enrolment whilst all internal and external appeal processes are taking place.

Stage 1 Decision

Notification of outcome will be e-mailed to the student with formal written statement(s) issued to the address provided in the appeal application within 5 days of the decision.

All notifications will include the written decision along with reasons for the decision and advice of their right to escalate their appeal internally through to the Student Academic Appeals Committee (for academic appeals) or the CEO (for non-academic appeals).

Formal consideration – Stage 2

Should the student wish to appeal the Stage 1 decision, they have the right to escalate the appeal to a the Student Academic Appeals Committee (SAAC) (in relation to academic Stage 1 appeals) or the CEO (in relation to non-academic Stage 1 appeals). The student must submit the escalation of the appeal, in writing, to the CEO within 5 days of the decision notification.

The SAAC/CEO will consider the original application and the Stage 1 decision and make a determination to uphold the decision, overturn the decision or make an alternative decision.

The SAAC/CEO must make a decision within 10 days of the escalation and formally notify the student within 5 days of the decision. The notification to the student will also refer them to this Policy for escalation to Independent External Review or Appeal.

Meetings of the SAAC

Responsibility for the orderly and just running of the meeting lies with the Chair of the SAAC.

The relevant Program Coordinator, relevant teaching staff and external assessors must be present in cases where an academic appeal relates to a review of grade.

The student will be invited to the meeting of SAAC to state their case. An advocate/support person of their choosing will also be invited to attend to assist the student. Whilst this is a specific requirement for international student under Standard 10 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018), ACC provides the option for attendance with or without an advocate/support person to all students.

A request for adjournment may be presented by any party at the hearing, prior to the final determination. This request will be considered by the SAAC in cases where the nature of the case being heard is deemed to warrant it, and/or to ensure fair and just proceeding.

Independent External Review or Appeal

If the student is still unsatisfied with the outcome of the grievance/appeal, the student may escalate the appeal to the National Student Ombudsman. ACC will notify the student of the contact details of the National Student Ombudsman. The final findings of the National Student Ombudsmen must be communicated to the Academic Board/Board of Directors within 21 working days. The Academic Board/Board of Directors will ensure that any actions required by the decision of the Ombudsmen are implemented.

The decision of the National Student Ombudsmen are final.

Students can seek further advice of information from the following bodies.

- TEQSA
<https://teqsa.gov.au>
- Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia
<http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au>
- Australian Human Rights Commission
<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>

The College will only report an overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress in PRISMS after:

- the internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the breach has been upheld; or

- the overseas student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within a twenty (20) working day period;
- the overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process; or
- the overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process, by notifying the registered provider in writing.

In line with Standard 10 of the National Code 2018, if the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of any student, ACC does not limit this to overseas students only, the College will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision, and advise the overseas student of that action.

Record Management

The CEO is responsible for maintaining a record of all documents that pertain to a non-academic grievance/appeals process. The Academic Operations Manager is responsible for maintaining a record of all documents that pertain to an academic grievance/appeal. These documents include ensuring that the appeal application and the outcome documents are securely recorded in the student file, and in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the process.

The result of all grievances/appeals will be provided in writing to the following:

- Student who lodged the grievance/appeal;
- The Stage 1 and Stage 2 decision maker as applicable
- Academic Staff involved within the appeal;
- The Academic Board and Board of Directors as per the reporting requirements below;
- Any other relevant parties that maybe affected by the result.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of the Academic Operations Manager to ensure the implementation of the resulting decision of the student academic grievance/appeal process.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure the implementation of the resulting decision of the student non-academic grievance/appeal process.

All decisions made by the SAAC/CEO are reported to the Academic Board and in turn are reported to the Board of Directors. All decisions made by the National Student Ombudsmen are reported to the Academic Board (where relevant) and to the Board of Directors.

IMPLEMENTATION and MONITORING

The CEO is responsible for the implementation of these Procedures.

POLICY REVIEW

The ACC's *Student Grievance and Appeals Procedures* is reviewed, at least, every three years.

It is a policy of the ACC that any Policy or Procedure may be reviewed earlier as indicated by internal or external factors (including but not limited to such factors as changes in the guidelines of regulatory authorities, accreditation/registration requirements of the profession, or relevant legislation at state or federal level) as determined the Board of Directors and/or Academic Board.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Grievance and Appeals Policy
- Academic Progress Policy and Procedures
- Student Support Policy and Procedures
- Grades and Results Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment and Admission Policy.

VERSION CONTROL

Document: T005 Student Grievance and Appeals Procedures		
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HESF	2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints	
Nature of Change	- Minor spelling, other text and formatting edits - Addition of definitions February 2023 - Consolidated the student academic and non-Academic appeals procedures in line with the policy to Student Grievance and Appeals Policy - Expand the procedures in line with the Policy to also include grievances - Clarify the informal verses formal and internal verses external stages - Reallocate responsibilities to ensure confidentiality is maintained - Clarify responsibilities and reporting - Allocation implementation responsibility to the President - Include the HESF reference in the Version Control Table. August 2025 - Update the procedures to reflect the May 2025 approved changes to the Student Grievance and Appeals Policy.	