

# Student Complaint and Appeal Policy



## 1 Purpose

To establish the structure and assign responsibility for management of Complaints and Appeals made by Students in order to promote the timely and fair resolution of issues.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to all Students of the University, or their Authorised Representative, who wish to make a Complaint or lodge an Appeal about a matter which occurred during the Student's time of Enrolment and which falls within the responsibility or control of the University.

### Inclusions:

This policy applies to Appeals by other eligible appellants who have recourse through the Academic Appeal Procedure and Non-Academic Appeal Procedure.

### Exclusions:

This policy does not apply to:

- Complaints made by Employees or members of the public.
- Appeals in relation to employment matters. Please refer to the relevant human resources policy.
- Appeals in relation to parking and traffic infringements issued in accordance with the *University of Southern Queensland Act 1998*.

## 3 Policy Statement

The University recognises that from time to time problems or concerns may arise. To address these, the University has put in place a Student Complaint and Appeal Policy.

This policy establishes the high level principles that apply to Complaints and Appeals by Students. This policy is supported by a range of specific policies and/or procedures for each Complaint and Appeal type.

The Director (Integrity and Professional Conduct) is responsible for the following in relation to Complaints at the University:

1. oversight of the complaints management processes
2. resolution of Complaints about the management of a specific Complaint
3. resolution of Complaints about the Complaint handling process
4. resolution of Complaints for which the Director (Integrity and Professional Conduct) is the responsible delegate.

With the exception of Complaints that are made in accordance with the University's Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure, the University will not normally investigate anonymous Complaints unless the issues raised within the Complaint are of a serious nature and sufficient information is provided.

## 4 Principles

The following principles apply to Student Complaints and Appeals:

1. Students will have access to a process for resolving Complaints and Appeals;
2. The University will uphold appropriate standards;
3. Where informal resolution of a Student's concern is not possible or is inappropriate, a Complaint may be made or an Appeal may be lodged;
4. The timeframes in which Complaints can be made and Appeals can be lodged are set out in the appropriate procedures;
5. Students can access support services through Student Services or by referral to the Student Guild or other relevant Student associations or support services;
6. Confidentiality will be reasonably maintained. If personal information is required to be released this will be done in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy;
7. There will be an investigation and resolution process established for each Complaint Type;
8. Appeals will be heard by the relevant committee and a process established for each Appeal Type;
9. The Complaint and Appeal resolution processes will apply the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness;
10. Vexatious or frivolous Complaints may result in the Student's conduct being investigated, and may also result in disciplinary action, under the Student Code of

Conduct Policy;

11. The University will aim to resolve all Complaints and Appeals in a fair, impartial, consistent, respectful and timely manner;
12. Students normally will not suffer any form of disadvantage as a result of making a Complaint or Appeal;
13. Students will be kept informed of the progress of their Complaint or Appeal;
14. Outcomes and decisions in relation to a Complaint or Appeal will be communicated to all relevant parties as soon as is practicable;
15. The University Appeals Panel is the highest appeal body of the University and the decisions the Vice-Chancellor makes, based on its recommendations, are final. The Vice-Chancellor will only refer matters to the University Appeals Panel if all other avenues of resolution have been exhausted;
16. Records will be kept of all Complaints and Appeals in the University's formal recordkeeping system; and
17. A Student has the right to refer their Complaint or Appeal to an external agency preferably only after exhausting all of the avenues of resolution available within the University.

## **5 Making a Complaint**

Students who wish to make a Complaint should follow the process set out in the Student Complaint Management Procedure and/or use the process described in the policy and/or procedure for the relevant Complaint Type.

## **6 Lodging an Appeal**

Students wishing to lodge an Appeal should follow the process set out in the procedure for the relevant Appeal Type.

## **7 Complaint Type**

The University has classified Complaints, established the committee structure and assigned responsibility for the management of Complaints in accordance with the Student Complaint Type and Responsibilities Schedule.

## **8 Appeal Type**

The University has classified Appeals, established the committee structure and assigned responsibility for the management of Appeals in accordance with the Student Appeal Type and Responsibilities Schedule.

## 9 References

Nil.

## 10 Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 11 Policy Information

<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	<a href="#">Student Appeal Type and Responsibilities Schedule</a> <a href="#">Student Complaint Type and Responsibilities Schedule</a>
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
<b>Policy Type</b>	Governance Policy
<b>Approved Date</b>	23/2/2015
<b>Effective Date</b>	20/7/2015
<b>Review Date</b>	20/7/2018
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Support Act 2003</a> <a href="#">National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</a> <a href="#">University of Southern Queensland Act 1998</a>
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Academic Integrity Policy</a> <a href="#">Code of Conduct Policy</a> <a href="#">Employee Complaints and Grievances Policy</a> <a href="#">Employee Equity and Diversity Policy</a>

[Fraud Corruption and Control Management Policy and Procedure](#)

[Handling Personal Student Information Policy and Procedure](#)

[Harassment and Discrimination Complaint Resolution for Students Policy and Procedure](#)

[Policy on Complaints Involving Council Members](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure](#)

[Records and Information Management Policy](#)

[Refund of Student Fees Policy and Procedure](#)

[Research Code of Conduct Policy](#)

[Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)

[Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure](#)

[Under 18 International Students Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

## **Related Procedures**

[Academic Appeal Procedure](#)

[Academic Integrity Procedure](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Procedure](#)

[Children on Campus Procedure](#)

[Complaints Involving Council Members Procedure](#)

[Credit and Exemption Procedure](#)

[Disciplinary Action for Misconduct or Serious Misconduct Procedure](#)

[Enrolment Procedure](#)

[Higher Degree by Research Thesis Examination Procedure](#)

[Non-Academic Appeal Procedure](#)

[Research Code of Conduct: Management of Potential Breaches](#)

	<p><a href="#">Procedure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Smoke-Free Procedure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Student Complaint Management Procedure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Student General Misconduct Procedure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Transfer Between Providers Procedure</a></p> <p><a href="#">University Appeal Procedure</a></p>
<p><b>Related forms, publications and websites</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Feedback, Complaints and Appeals</a></p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p><b>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</b></p> <p><a href="#">Academic Appeal</a></p> <p>A formal, written request made by a Student to the Academic Appeals Committee to have a Decision, in relation to an academic matter, overturned.</p> <p><a href="#">Appeal</a></p> <p>A formal, written request made by a Student or Employee to a higher authority to have a Decision overturned.</p> <p><a href="#">Appeal Type</a></p> <p>The classification of an Appeal in accordance with the Appeal Type and Responsibilities Schedule* *The Appeal Type and Responsibilities Schedule is subordinate to the Student Complaint and Appeal Policy</p> <p><a href="#">Authorised Representative</a></p> <p>A representative who has been authorised to represent or act on behalf of a Student and acknowledged as such by the University in writing and in compliance with relevant University policy.</p> <p><a href="#">Complaint</a></p> <p>A Complaint is an “expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the University, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required”.</p>

### [Complaint Type](#)

The classification assigned to a Complaint in accordance with the Complaint Type and Responsibilities Schedule\*. The Complaint Type determines the process to which the Complaint will be referred for resolution by the Student Complaint Management Triage System.

\*The Complaint Type and Responsibilities Schedule is subordinate to the Student Complaint and Appeal Policy

### [Decision](#)

A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.

### [Employee](#)

A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the USQ Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.

### [Enrolment](#)

The process of admitting Students to one or more Courses for the current Academic Year.

### [Non-Academic Appeal](#)

A formal, written request made by a Student to a higher authority to have a Decision, in relation to a non-academic matter, overturned.

### [Student](#)

A person who: has been Admitted or Enrolled in an Academic Program at the University, but has not yet graduated from the program; or has been Enrolled in a Course at the University but has not yet completed the Course.

### [University](#)

The term 'University' or 'USQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

### [University Appeal](#)

A formal, written request made by a Student or other eligible appellant

	who has recourse through the Academic Appeal Procedure and Non-Academic Appeal Procedure to the University Appeals Panel, to appeal a Decision made by any University committee which provides for recourse to the University Appeals Panel.
	<b>Definitions that relate to this policy only</b>
<b>Keywords</b>	
<b>HPE RM Record No</b>	15/264PL