

QAF090 STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE (ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES)

1. Overview

Higher Education Leadership Institute (“the Institute”) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible to all complainants.

The Institute aims to:

- a. Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- b. Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps the Institute to prevent grievances from recurring;
- c. Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- d. Conduct the assessment of grievances and appeals in a professional, fair and transparent manner;
- e. Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- f. Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

A grievance can be defined as a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the Institute’s services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- an issue about one of the Institute’s education agents or anyone that the Institute has an arrangement with to deliver our courses or any related services;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- the way someone has been treated.

These grievance procedures are designed to ensure that the Institute responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2. Policy coverage

In relation to non-academic grievances, the term “complainant” applies to both current students of the Institute and persons seeking to enrol with the Institute.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus of the Institute at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

The Institute will respond to any grievance or appeal that an international student may have regarding their dealings with the Institute or with the Institute's education agents or anyone that the Institute has an arrangement with to deliver its courses or any related services.

3. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level. Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the Student Support Officer via email: support@heli.edu.au. Even though it is not mandatory for complainants to raise a grievance informally, it is highly recommended.

4. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature:

- Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study.
- Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that the Institute holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure the Institute will take steps to ensure that:

- the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;
- the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings (either physically or virtually);
- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, the Institute will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- A complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by the Institute and the complainant with the complainant required to contribute no more than \$100 towards the costs of an external appeal.

4.1 Stage one – formal grievance:

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Operations Manager and sent to admin@heli.edu.au.

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing within five working days. The grievance handling process will commence upon receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

The Operations Manager, or their nominee, will, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request with the complainant. When such clarification occurs verbally the complainant or any respondent may ask another person to support them.

The Operations Manager, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

4.2 Stage two – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance they may lodge an appeal with the CEO (who is senior to the original decision maker) within twenty working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. Internal appeals must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the CEO and sent to: ceo@heli.edu.au.

The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of verbal interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to support them during these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days of concluding the appeal. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

4.3 Stage three – external appeal (domestic students):

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are a domestic student then an external review of the grievance can be requested through the Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme. Complainants can contact the Resolution Institute directly as follows:



Address: Level 1, 13-15 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 02 9251 3366 **Freecall:** 1800 651 650
Fax: 02 9251 3733 **Email:** leadr@leadr.info

Costs of an external review will be shared equally by the Institute and the complainant with the complainant required to contribute no more than \$100 towards the costs of an external appeal.

The Institute will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review of the grievance and the CEO will ensure that they are fully implemented within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations.

4.4 Stage three – external appeal (international students):

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are an international student then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their education provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

The Institute agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman and the CEO will ensure that any decision or recommendation in favour of the international student 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.

5. Further action

If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as The Anti-Discrimination Board or The Office of Fair Trading.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the Institute will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

7. Record keeping and confidentiality

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure, their outcomes and reasons for the outcome shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Operations Manager. These records will be maintained in the Institute’s virtual document repository.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the Institute’s *Privacy and Personal Information Procedures [QAF050]*.

8. Approval, publication and training

This version of this Policy and Procedure was approved by the Board of Directors on 5th June 2019.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with the Institute through publication on the Institute’s website.

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will be included in the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the CEO or Dean) and on the Staff Portal.

9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Board of Directors	21 January 2016	Document creation and initial approval
2.0	Board of Directors	28 February 2018	Minor updates as a result of scheduled review
3.0	Board of Directors	5 June 2019	Changes to accommodate international students
3.1	Board of Directors	4 March 2020	Minor update to policy coverage as specified in National Code 2018 Change to student contribution for an external appeal
3.2	CEO	4 November 2020	Update position title and email address
3.3	CEO	25 March 2021	Minor changes to align to National Code 2018
3.4	CEO	7 July 2023	CEO reviewed the policy and extended review date to 7 July 2024.

Document owner: CEO