



Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

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Related Documents	Academic Integrity Policy and associated Procedure Academic Progression Policy and associated Procedure Admission, Enrolment and Credit Policy and associated Procedure Assessment Policy and associated Procedure Records Management Policy and associated Procedure Research and Scholarship Policy and associated Procedure Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy and associated Procedure Student Charter Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy Student Misconduct Policy and associated Procedure

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure supports the Student Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy of the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM). It seeks to facilitate the informal resolution of grievances as close as possible to the source of student dissatisfaction, and to provide a framework for how the AIPM will handle and respond to complaints and appeals in a prompt and procedurally fair manner.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all students enrolled in higher education programs offered by the AIPM who wish to either:
- raise a problem or concern regarding their treatment as a student, the quality or delivery of a service provided by the AIPM, or the conduct of staff as not being in accordance with the expectations set out in the Student Charter; or

- appeal an academic or administrative decision of the AIPM relating to their studies where the appeal process set out in the relevant procedure has been exhausted (refer [Section 6](#) below).
- 2.2 There is no assurance that all complaints or appeals will be resolved to the satisfaction of the student.

3. Informal Resolution

- 3.1 As a general principle, staff and students are mutually responsible for resolving problems quickly through discussion and/or in writing at the local level, limiting the number of people involved to a minimum, for the purpose of avoiding an escalation of the problem in scope and impact.
- 3.2 Interactions among students and staff are to be based on mutual respect, fairness and fulfilment of their obligations as specified in the [Student Charter](#).
- 3.3 Students should consider the issue calmly and present their complaint in a measured and courteous manner upon which the AIPM can reflect, identify how it may improve its performance and respond in a respectful way. Students who use aggressive, malicious or defamatory language in making complaints to or about staff or other students may not facilitate resolution of their concern.
- 3.4 A complaint is generally made independently of an appeal of a decision and if related to a decision under appeal (such as the quality of service provided with respect to the appeal decision) then the complaint is considered separately from the appeal.
- 3.5 If the issue is unable to be resolved informally with the relevant person, and where the student requires formal resolution, a formal grievance must be lodged as provided in section 4 of this procedure.
- 3.6 It is recognised that in some instances students may choose to make a complaint anonymously. While the AIPM treats such complaints seriously, it may be unable to either properly or fully investigate such a complaint or provide a decision or take action to resolve the complaint when the source is unknown.

4. Lodging a Formal Grievance or Complaint

- 4.1 A student must lodge their complaint through the AIPM Complaints email (complaints@aipm.gov.au) an email address managed in strict confidentiality that also allows for anonymous reporting. The complaint will be directed to the attention of the Director of Academic Programs, or if the complaint involves the Director of Academic Programs, to the Head of School.
- 4.2 In order for a complaint or grievance to be accepted for consideration it must:
- 4.2.1 Contain the name of the complainant (anonymous is acceptable; however, see clause 3.6 above).
 - 4.2.2 Where relevant outline the informal steps taken to seek resolution.
 - 4.2.3 Where relevant the name and contact details, if known, of any respondent or witnesses to the incident which has led to the grievance.

- 4.2.4 Contain sufficient information about the matter to enable an assessment of the grievance to be made.
- 4.2.5 Be lodged by the student who has been aggrieved or a by a third party with explicit written consent from the aggrieved student.
- 4.2.6 Where relevant, be lodged within 14 calendar days of the decision/action giving rise to the grievance. In exceptional circumstances the timeframe may be extended by the Director of Academic Programs upon receipt of a request from the student that includes sufficient justification for the extension.
- 4.3 Where a student complaint includes allegations of sexual harassment or sexually-based assault, reports will be managed under the [Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy](#) and associated [Procedure for Students](#) and in accordance with the Australian Federal Police and home jurisdiction policies.
- 4.4 Where a student wishes to appeal the findings of a student misconduct hearing, the matter will be considered by the AIPM Appeals Committee (refer [Section 7](#) of this procedure).
- 4.5 Where a student complaint includes allegations concerning the conduct of a staff member, and the substance of those allegations might construe misconduct, the allegation shall be referred to their relevant home jurisdiction for management in accordance with their policy, or in cases where a home jurisdiction is not applicable, the matter shall be managed in accordance with the relevant state legislation.
- 4.6 Where several students have the same complaint, those students may act as a group in making a complaint, providing that each student is seeking the same outcome.
- 4.7 There is no cost associated with lodging a formal complaint or appeal. A student's enrolment will be maintained while the appeal process is ongoing.
- 4.8 A student may choose to withdraw a complaint at any time by informing Client Services in writing of the request (refer [clause 5.8, Student Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)). Notwithstanding this, the AIPM reserves the right to continue to investigate the complaint if required to do so to satisfy other requirements or to protect its own interests.

5. Decision-maker Processes

- 5.1 A complaint or grievance lodged through the AIPM Complaints email address will be directed to the Director of Academic Programs or Head of School, as appropriate.
- 5.2 The AIPM may decline to consider a formal complaint that:
- is lodged more than 14 days from the date the matter occurred
 - is lodged anonymously
 - has been considered previously or is currently being assessed under another policy.
- 5.3 The AIPM may dismiss a formal complaint that is considered to be:
- vexatious
 - frivolous or lacking in substance
 - not made in good faith, i.e. dishonest or contains intentionally misleading information

- based on a misconception
 - pursued with undue persistence or in a manner that threatens, menaces or harasses a member of the AIPM or a fellow student.
- 5.4 Unless made anonymously, the complainant will be informed in writing of the grounds for dismissal of a complaint.
- 5.5 The complaint will be processed as expeditiously as possible with a view to resolution and written advice concerning the outcome being forwarded to the student within 30 working days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are unforeseen delays, in which case the student will be notified in writing accordingly.
- 5.6 Management of a formal complaint will adhere to the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. An assessment of the facts will be undertaken for each formal complaint and will:
- address all relevant issues raised in the formal complaint
 - invite complainants, respondents and relevant stakeholders to respond
 - consider relevant documents
 - present a fair and balanced outcome and report
 - ensure the outcome is evidence-based and defensible.
- 5.7 The privacy and confidentiality of parties to a formal complaint will be respected to the extent that is practical and appropriate.
- 5.8 When a finding in relation to a grievance or complaint is in favour of the student, possible remedies might include, but are not limited to:
- offering an apology where appropriate
 - correcting an error to the extent possible
 - making a new decision
 - undertaking to revise and improve existing services and processes.
- 5.9 As soon as practicable after a decision is made, the decision must be communicated to the student in writing and must contain the reasons for the decision to enable the person to understand why the decision was made. Where the decision is in favour of the student, the student must be informed of the decision or corrective action that will be, or has been, taken.
- 5.10 If an action by the AIPM is required as a result of a formal complaint, that action will be initiated promptly.

6. Appealing an Academic Decision by the Head of School

- 6.1 A student may appeal a final decision made by the Head of School and the Higher Education Assurance and Regulation (HEAR) Committee in relation to an academic matter to an Academic Appeals Committee constituted of three representatives from the Academic Governance Board.
- 6.2 Students should exhaust the processes for a review of an academic decision as set out in the following relevant policies and procedures before lodging an appeal:
- [Academic Integrity Procedure, Section 7.](#)

- [Academic Progression Procedure, Section 6.](#)
- [Assessment Procedure, Section 9.](#)
- [Admission, Enrolment and Credit Procedure, Sections 3 and 5.](#)

6.3 The AIPM may consider appeals on the following grounds:

6.3.1 Denial of procedural fairness.

6.3.2 Inaccurate or incomplete application of an AIPM policy or procedure.

6.3.3 Additional information has become available to the complainant or the decision was otherwise affected by new evidence which was not reasonably available to the student prior to the date of the decision.

6.3.4 A penalty was imposed that was manifestly excessive.

6.4 The appeal should be lodged in writing to Client Services no later than 14 calendar days following receipt of the outcome of the respective decision. The appeal must:

- state the decision being appealed
- state the ground(s) for appeal
- attach all supporting documentation the student requests be considered for an appeal.

6.5 In applying for the review or appeal of a decision, the student bears the onus of proof and is responsible for establishing that the decision in the first instance was an unreasonable decision in accordance with the grounds set out in clause 6.3 of this procedure.

6.6 The Academic Appeals Committee will be provided with a copy of:

- the appeal notice and any attachment
- the decision under appeal
- all relevant material which was considered in the case under appeal
- any further evidence relied upon by the Head of School in response to the appeal.

6.7 The AIPM will use its best endeavours to ensure the Academic Appeals Committee considers the appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving the student's appeal application.

6.8 An appeal of the decision of the Head of School under this procedure suspends the implementation of any penalty imposed by the Head of School that is the subject of the appeal.

6.9 The Director of Academic Programs and /or Head of School may provide additional information in response to matters raised in the student's appeal. In this case the student must receive a copy of the additional information with a sufficient timeframe so as to respond in writing to the additional material.

6.10 The Academic Appeals Committee may consider and rely on:

- The original material.
- The written notice of the Head of School's decision.
- The appeal application and supporting material provided by the student.
- Any further documents, material or evidence the Head of School has provided to the student and the Committee at the time of referring the appeal.

- Any other documents, material and evidence provided to or obtained by the Academic Appeals Committee after the Head of School's decision, provided a copy is also given to the student.
- 6.11 The student must be given a reasonable opportunity to provide evidence in response to any further evidence relied upon by the Head of School in the appeal and provide a written submission in support of the appeal.
- 6.12 Subject to the nature of the appeal, the Academic Appeals Committee may decide to hold an oral hearing in relation to the appeal or may determine the appeal on the papers alone (without an oral hearing).
- 6.13 In deciding the appeal, the Academic Appeals Committee may:
- Dismiss the appeal and affirm the original decision because the academic decision seems to the Committee to have been properly taken and the student has not presented sufficient evidence to justify a change.
 - Set aside the decision and substitute its own decision.
 - Uphold the appeal and set aside the decision.
- 6.14 As soon as practicable after the Academic Appeals Committee makes a decision, the student must be given a written notice of the decision and the reasons for the decision. In relevant circumstances, the student's home jurisdiction may also need to be informed.
- 6.15 Where relevant, the outcome of the appeal will be recorded on the student's progression record.
- 6.16 The decision of the Academic Appeals Committee is final and there is no recourse to further appeal within the AIPM.
- 6.17 Where the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal process, the student may lodge a complaint with the [NSW Ombudsman](#). The student appeal process within the AIPM should be exhausted before such a complaint is lodged.

7. Appealing other Grievance / Complaint Outcomes

- 7.1 An appeal against the outcomes of a formal grievance or complaint process, other than an academic decision, will be heard by an Appeals Committee constituted from a panel of jurisdictional liaison officers, excluding the liaison officer from the student's jurisdiction.
- 7.2 An appeal will only be considered if the initial assessment of the facts has been completed and the complainant advised of the outcome.
- 7.3 The AIPM may consider appeals on the following grounds:
- 7.3.1 Inaccurate or incomplete application of an AIPM policy or procedure.
 - 7.3.2 Denial of procedural fairness.
 - 7.3.3 Additional information has become available to the complainant.
- 7.4 In applying for the review or appeal of a decision, the student bears the onus of proof and is responsible for establishing that one or more of the grounds as set out in clause 7.3 apply,

- 7.5 The appeal should be lodged in writing to Client Services no later than 14 calendar days following receipt of the outcome of the respective decision. The appeal must:
- state the decision being appealed
 - state the ground(s) for appeal
 - attach all supporting documentation the student requests be considered for an appeal.
- 7.6 The Appeals Committee process will follow that set out for the Academic Appeals Committee (refer clauses 6.6 to 6.13 above).
- 7.7 The outcome of the appeal and the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the student in writing as soon as possible after the outcome has been determined.
- 7.8 If the appeal is upheld, any actions required to implement or give effect to the decision, will be initiated promptly.
- 7.9 The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and there is no recourse to further appeal within the AIPM. Where the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal process, the student may lodge a complaint with the NSW Ombudsman (refer clause 6.17 above).

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 AIPM staff receiving and managing formal complaints and appeals will keep appropriate confidential records of the assessment of facts and outcome, in accordance with [Records Management Policy](#). Documents shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the complaints or appeals process, or as required by law.
- 8.2 Where relevant, the outcome of a complaint or appeal will be kept in a confidential file while the outcome of an academic appeal may be recorded on the student's progression record in accordance with [Records Management Procedure](#).

9. Definitions

Appeal is an application made by a student to have a decision reviewed where that decision relates to a matter affecting their studies or life as a student.

Appellant is a student who is submitting an appeal against a decision made by the AIPM.

Complainant means a person making a complaint. For the purpose of this procedure they must be a student of AIPM.

Complaint refers to an expression of concern or dissatisfaction in relation to the treatment of a student, the quality or delivery of a service, or the conduct of staff and students.

Grievance is the issue that led to a complaint, whether formal or informal. The term complaint is often used interchangeably with grievance.

Procedural fairness is a principle that is applied by the AIPM to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with the rule against bias and the hearing rule (i.e. a person is given an opportunity to present their case with knowledge of any prejudicial material that may be taken into account by the decision-maker). It is the processes by which an outcome is reached and not the outcome itself.

Respondent is the person who responds to an informal or formal complaint made by a student.

Staff includes continuing, fixed-term, casual, affiliate and visiting staff associated with the learning, teaching and scholarly activities of the AIPM.

REVISION HISTORY				
Version	Endorsed By	Approved By	Approval Date	Description of changes
1.0	Head of School	DAP	4.8.23	New document.
1.1	Head of School	DAP	31.10.23	Minor revision of wording for clarification and including reference to the AFP and jurisdiction policies.