



POLICY NUMBER:	2.15	VERSION NUMBER:	1.1
DATE LAST REVIEWED:	November 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE:	July 2025
RELATED POLICIES:	2.14	RESPONSIBILITY:	Governing Board

NON-ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides a set of principles that regulate the Institute's approach to managing non-academic student complaints and appeals and utilises information and feedback from complaints to improve the student experience at the Institute.
- 1.2 This policy enables students make complaints on non-academic matters to be submitted for resolution/recourse.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to enrolled and prospective students and to staff involved in managing matters related to complaints received, and to members of Institute decision-making bodies.

3.0 Principles

The Institute's approach to student complaints reflects the following principles:

- 3.1 managing student non-academic complaints and appeals is approached fairly, equitably, reasonably and transparently, and in accordance with principles of natural justice and with relevant state and Commonwealth legislation;
- 3.2 managing international student complaints and appeals is compliant with education provider obligations under Standard 10 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018);
- 3.3 complaints and appeals are used as an opportunity to develop a culture of improvement at the Institute;
- 3.4 access to the internal complaints and appeals process is free and easily accessible
- 3.5 access to the internal complaints and appeals process is available to students irrespective of their campus location, the mode in which they study, or their place of residence;
- 3.6 clear and comprehensive information on the complaints and appeals process is published in the Student Handbook, which is available on the Institute's website and will be communicated, in particular, to international students as a part of their orientation program;
- 3.7 complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity, and as consistent with relevant privacy legislation;



- 3.8 assessments of complaints and appeals are student-focussed and evidence-based;
- 3.9 complainants, appellants, and respondents are respected and no party to a complaint is discriminated against or victimised;
- 3.10 outcomes to complaints and appeals are consistent and help the Institute to take proactive and pre-emptive action to address systemic issues identified through complaints data.

4.0 Non-Academic Complaints

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy and procedure, a non-academic complaint can be submitted by a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol to express dissatisfaction with any aspect of the Institute's services and activities. The complaint may be an expression of dissatisfaction with, but not limited to:
 - The enrolment, induction/orientation process;
 - The quality of education provided;
 - The quality of support services provided
 - Handling of personal information and access to personal records;
 - The way someone has been treated;
 - Interactions with an AIPC-approved education agent; and
 - Interactions with any AIPC-preferred services partner.
- 4.2 At any time during the process, the student can seek independent professional advice and/or have another person or third party communicate or advocate on their behalf. Confirmation from the student that another person or third party is communicating or acting on their behalf is required in writing.

5.0 Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Complaint

- 5.1 The Institute/College strives to deal with complaints as soon as they emerge to avoid further disruption or the need for a formal complaint.
- 5.2 In the first instance, students or potential students who are dissatisfied with an Institute service or activity are encouraged to speak immediately with Student Support Staff or an Academic staff member to resolve the issue. Please note that it is not mandatory for complainants to raise a complaint informally.

6.0 Procedure

- 6.1 The complaints procedure can be used by complainants to submit a complaint of a non-academic nature, including complaints in relation to personal information that the Institute holds in relation to a student.
- 6.2 During all stages of this procedure the Institute/College will take all 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 complaint may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided to both the complainant and respondent;
- where the internal or external complaint 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; and
- there is no cost to the complainant to utilise Stage One or Stage Two of this procedure.

7.0 Stage One – Formal Complaint

- 7.1 The following procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a complaint of a non-academic nature. Students who wish to appeal an assessment result should use the procedure outlined in *Policy 2.14 Academic Complaints and Appeals* in lieu of the information below.
- 7.2 Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Provost.
The address to send this correspondence is:
- AIPC Provost
Locked Bag 15
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
Emailed to provost@aipc.net.au
- 7.3 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within seven (7) days. The complaint handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal complaint and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- 7.4 The AIPC Provost, or their nominee, (who must be independent of the complaint) will then assess the complaint; determine the outcome; and provide a written response to the complainant, including detailed reasons for their decision, within twenty-eight (28) working days.
- 7.5 The complainant will be advised of their right to access Stage Two of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One.

8.0 Stage Two – Appeal Against Complaint or Review Outcome

- 8.1 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One, they may lodge an appeal in writing to the AIPC Chief Executive Officer within twenty (20) working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their Stage One complaint or appeal.
- Chief Executive Officer
c/- AIPC Head Office
Locked Bag 15



Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Or ceo@aipc.net.au

- 8.2 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within seven (7) days. The assessment of the Stage Two appeal will commence within ten (10) working days of being received. The complainant will be advised in writing the outcome of their Stage Two appeal, including detailed reasons for the decision, within twenty-eight (28) days of lodgement of the appeal.
- 8.3 The complainant will be advised of their right to access Stage Three of this procedure if they consider the matter unresolved.

9.0 Stage Three – External Review (Domestic Students)

- 9.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they may lodge an external appeal to Resolution Institute, an association offering dispute resolution services, within 20 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal.

Contact Details for Resolution Institute:

Suite 1902, Level 19, Tower A, Zenith Centre

821-843 Pacific Highway

Chatswood NSW 2067

PO Box 440

Chatswood NSW 2057

Ph: 1800 651 650 Fax: (02) 9251 3733

Email: infoaus@resolution.institute

Website: www.resolution.institute

- 9.2 Complainants who wish to lodge an external appeal can contact Resolution Institute and request details of a suitable Mediator. Resolution Institute have a free referral service to a Mediator and the Mediator will charge a fee for the first four hours of their services, with an hourly rate applying thereafter. 50% of the fee will be borne by the Institute/College and 50% by the student.
- 9.3 The Institute/College agrees to participate in good faith in the mediation process and be bound by the external Mediator's recommendations. The Chief Executive Officer ensures any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report from the external Mediator.
- 9.4 If the complaint 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 Commission, Office of Fair Trading or other bodies as appropriate.

10.0 Stage Three – External Review (International Students)

- 10.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they may request for an external review of the complaint. In accordance with Standard 10 of the National Code, international students will also be advised that the purpose of the

external appeals process is to consider whether the Institute has followed its policies and procedures, rather than decide in place of the Institute.

- 10.2 International students may request for the external review by contacting the Overseas Student Ombudsman within 20 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal. This a free service for international students and the international student will not be charged for making a complaint.

Contact details for the Overseas Student Ombudsman:

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>

Phone: 1300 363 072 (in Australia) or +61 2 6276 0111 (outside Australia).

Alternatively, students can make a complaint in their language by calling Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450, or +61 3 9268 8332 (outside Australia).

- 10.3 The Institute agrees to participate in good faith in the mediation process and be bound by the Overseas Student Ombudsman's recommendations. The Chief Executive Officer ensures any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report from the Overseas Student Ombudsman.
- 10.4 If the complaint 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 Commission, Office of Fair Trading, or other bodies as appropriate.

11.0 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- 11.1 Records of all complaints responded to under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Chief Executive Officer. These records will be maintained at AIPC Head Office, Level G, 1&2, Transport House, 230 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006.
- 11.2 All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by AIPC's Privacy and Personal Information Policy.

12.0 Additional Information

- 12.1 Nothing in this *Non-Academic Complaints and Appeals Policy* limits the rights of students or persons seeking to enrol with the Institute to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law. Also, these dispute resolution procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

13.0 Approval and Training

- 13.1 This Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the AIPC Governing Board of The Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors Pty Ltd 29 August 2022. This Policy and Procedure is included in the Student Handbook and is available for all students on the Institute's website at www.aipc.net.au.

- 13.2 For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure is included in the Policies and Procedures suite and is covered during the staff induction process.

14.0 Procedure for Processing Complaints

- 14.1 Upon receipt, the receiving party will process the complaint as follows:
- Accumulate all relevant documentation to investigate the complaint such as assessment student record/file, etc.
 - Talk with academic or administrative staff to gather information on what happened or the basis of the decision.
 - Once the information is gathered, consultation will occur between the Provost and respective Program Leader or Manager to determine how the complaint will be resolved.
 - The student is responded to in writing. This response is to include reasons as to why the decision has been made.
 - All complaints are logged and kept in a central file.
- 14.2 Complaints and their responses will be reviewed by the AIPC Academic Board at their next meeting to inform decision-making on identified systemic issues.
- 14.3 Students who are not satisfied with the written response are able to write to the Chief Executive Officer for review of the decision. Upon receipt, the Chief Executive Officer will:
- Gather information on the student's situation.
 - Decide on how to resolve the situation with the student.
 - Respond to the student in writing, stating the decision and reasons for the decision, within 28 days.
- 14.4 As detailed in the Policies above, students can seek mediation/resolution through external avenues. The Institute's management and academic staff will participate willingly as required in these external avenues to reach successful resolution of the matter.

15.0 Relevant Legislative and Regulatory Documents

- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 Cth
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Cth
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Cth
- The Privacy Act 1988 Cth

16.0 Version Control History

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Summary of Changes
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1.0	Nov 2022	Governing Board	Non-academic complaints separated and new policy created 2.15 Non-Academic Complaints and Appeals.
1.1	Jun 2025		Formatting changes. Updated addresses.