

POLICY NUMBER:	2.14.2	VERSION NUMBER:	7.1
DATE LAST REVIEWED:	July 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE:	July 2026
RELATED POLICIES:	2.14.1	RESPONSIBILITY:	Governing Board

ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

1.0 Purpose

This procedure complements the Academic Complaints and Appeals Policy. These procedures provide a framework to investigate and resolve academic complaints and appeals in a timely, fair and just manner.

2.0 Scope

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

3.0 Principles

3.1 The complaints and appeals procedure can be used by complainants to submit a complaint of an academic nature. Complaints of an academic nature include issues related to:

- assessment;
- awards in a course of study; curriculum; and
- student progress.

3.2 During all stages of this procedure the Institute 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.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Stage One – Informal Resolution with Lecturer

- 4.1.1 Students should initially contact their Lecturer, within 15 days from the day on which their result was released and seek further information regarding the reason for their assessment result.
- 4.1.2 The lecturer will review the result and notify the student in writing of the outcome, including reasons for the decision, within 10 working days.
- 4.1.3 The email will advise the student of any change of mark, provide a clear explanation for the decision to change or not change a mark, provide an explanation of the next step in the appeals process, and give you a link to the AIPC appeals policy.

4.2 Stage Two – Program Leader Assessment

- 4.2.1 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One, they may lodge an assessment appeal form with the relevant program leader.
- 4.2.2 Students complete the form and submit, via email, to the relevant Program Leader (Undergraduate – Diploma/Bachelor; Postgraduate – Graduate Certificate/Masters). Incomplete forms will not be considered.
- 4.2.3 Students should submit the form within 10 working days of the outcome of their Stage One appeal.
- 4.2.4 The relevant program leader will review the appeal and advise the student in writing of the outcome of the Stage Two appeal, including detailed reasons for the decision, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- 4.2.5 The email will advise the student of any change of mark, provide a clear explanation for the decision to change or not change a mark, provide an explanation of the next step in the appeals process, and provide the student with a link to the AIPC appeals policy.
- 4.2.6 The Program Leader may award the student a mark which is higher, lower or the same as the mark received originally.

4.3 Stage Three – Appeal to Provost

- 4.3.1 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they may lodge an appeal, via email, to the AIPC Provost within 10 days of receipt of the outcome of the Stage Two Appeal process.
- 4.3.2 The Provost will review the decision, and provide the student with a response, via email, within 10 days of receipts of the Stage Three appeal.
- 4.3.3 The email will advise the student of any change of mark, provide a clear explanation for the decision to change or not change a mark, provide an explanation of the next step in the appeals process, and give a link to the AIPC appeals policy.

4.4 External Review – Domestic Students

- 4.4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Three, and feel that the Institute has not followed its policies, or there is procedural unfairness, the student may lodge an external appeal to the Resolution Institute

- 4.4.2 The student must lodge their appeal within 20 days of receipt of the outcome of their Stage Three Appeal process.
- 4.4.3 Contact Details for Resolution Institute:
 - PO Box 440
 - Chatswood NSW 2057
 - Ph: 1800 651 650 Fax: (02) 9251 3733
 - Email: infoaus@resolution.institute
 - Website: www.resolution.institute
- 4.4.4 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.
- 4.4.5 The Institute agrees to participate in good faith in the mediation process and be bound by the external Mediator's recommendations.
- 4.4.6 The Chief Executive Officer ensures any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report from the external Mediator.
- 4.4.7 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 National Student Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, Office of Fair Trading, or other bodies as appropriate.
- 4.5 External Review – International Students
 - 4.5.1 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.
 - 4.5.2 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).

- 4.5.3 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.
- 4.5.4 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 National Student Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, Office of Fair Trading, or other bodies as appropriate.

5.0 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- 5.1 The Complainant will be given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including detailed reasons for the outcome.
- 5.2 The Institute will keep a written record of the complaint or appeal, including a statement of outcome and reasons of the outcome 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.
- 5.3 These records will be maintained at AIPC Head Office, 230 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Qld, 4006.
- 5.4 Complainants' privacy will be respected at all times of the complaints and appeals process. All records are treated as strictly confidential and stored according to the National Privacy Principles as required by the Commonwealth Privacy Act and to AIPC's Privacy and Personal Information Policy.

6.0 Additional Information

- 6.1 Nothing in the 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.
- 6.2 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.

7.0 Approval and Training

- 7.1 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.

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

8.0 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

9.0 Version Control History

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Summary of Changes
1.0	Jun 2007	Head of School	Policy created titled 2.8 Avenue for Review of Decision Making
2.0	Jun 2009	Chief Executive Officer	Major revision of policy to clarify the Institute's overarching commitment and purpose. Amendments include updated policy aims, expanded definitions, and integration of key components: Grievance Handling and Resolution Procedure, Appeals of Results, Record Keeping and Confidentiality, and other grievance-related procedures.
2.0	Jun 2010	Chief Executive Officer	Reviewed and no changes made.
2.0	Jan 2012	Chief Executive Officer	Reviewed and no changes made.
3.0	Nov 2013	Chief Executive Officer	Terminology updated to refer to AIPC as 'the Institute'. Policy intent and scope clarified. Responsibilities of the Institute throughout all stages of the grievance process defined. Appeals of assessment results updated to reference LEADR in place of ACPET. Legal disclaimer added to clarify the policy's limits in relation to external legal rights. Responsibilities for staff communication and training on grievance procedures included.
3.0	Jul 2015	Chief Executive Officer	Reviewed and no changes made.
4.0	Mar 2016	Chief Executive Officer	New content added to reinforce that all grievances are handled with respect and confidentiality. Students may seek independent advice or nominate a third party to act or communicate on their behalf, with written authorisation. External appeals process updated to refer students to the Resolution Institute.
4.0	Nov 2019	Chief Executive Officer	Reviewed and no changes made.

5.0	Nov 2020	Chief Executive Officer	Formatting changes. The Institute now referred to as AIPC/COLAB to include the establishment of the College of Leadership and Business. Contact details added to stage one and two of the grievance procedures.
6.0	Jul 2022	Governing Board	Formatting updated. Policy renamed and renumbered to 2.8 Student Complaints and Appeals. Major revisions include clarified purpose, scope, and guiding principles; inclusion of procedures for both academic and non-academic complaints; and updated contact details for appeals. Responsibility for managing the process assigned to the Provost. External review procedures for international students added, along with updated Resolution Institute contact information. Relevant legislation incorporated.
7.0	Jul 2024	Governing Board	Formatting changes. Policy separated into two standalone documents: 2.14.1 Academic Complaints and Appeals Policy and 2.14.2 Academic Complaints and Appeals Procedure. 2.14.2 expands the procedure for academic complaints and appeals.
7.1	Jul 2025		Addition of National Student Ombudsman