



TIIS
THE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedures

STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURES (ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES)

1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“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:

- Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focused and helps the Institute to prevent grievances from recurring;
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- 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;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records; and
- the way someone has been treated; including all forms of harassment.

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 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.

3. Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance

Complainants are encouraged to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned wherever possible. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level.

Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the Registrar. Note that it is not mandatory for complainants to raise a grievance informally.

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 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; (each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings);
- a full explanation in writing of 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.

4.1 Stage One - Formal Grievance:

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Registrar.

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

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

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Registrar, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps which have been taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) 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 (20) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. 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 and International Students)

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, an independent mediator will be sourced by the Institute through the Resolution Institute* (www.resolution.institute). Should mediation fail at this level, the Resolution Institute also provides advice on legal arbitration. Complainants may contact the Resolution Institute directly. *Costs for such mediation will be shared equally between TIIS and the complainant.*

TIIS has also entered into an arrangement with the legal practice, Stacks Champion, (www.stacklaw.com.au/location/parramatta), who will select an appropriate arbitrator from their approved panel. The principal of Stacks Champion (Geoffrey Roberson) is the former Chair of the TIIS Board, and former Deputy Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney and is very familiar with student-based dispute resolution.

The Institute agrees to be bound by any recommendations arising from the external appeal and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of such recommendations.

4.4 Stage Three - External Appeal (International Students - Administrative Matters)

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 HEP provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/overseas-students.

The Institute agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the *Overseas Students Ombudsman* and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of such recommendations.

**Note: TIIS will become a member of the Resolution Institute following registration.*

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. In addition, 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 and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at the Institute's Head Office.

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

8. Approval, Publication and Training

This Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the Board of Directors on 10 March 2016.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with the Institute through publication in the Student Handbook and on the Institute's website (www.tiis.edu.au).

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process.

9. Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Board of Directors	10 March 2016	Document creation – Final Draft
1.1	Board of Directors	3 August 2017	

Document owner: CEO