



Policy and Procedures –

# Student Grievance Handling

PENDING APPROVAL

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



## 1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“TIIS”) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible to all complainants.

TIIS aims to:

- a. develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- b. create a grievance resolution system that is complainant-focused, seeks causes, and helps prevent grievances from recurring;
- c. ensure that grievances are resolved promptly, objectively, sensitively and in complete confidentiality;
- d. ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised; and
- e. ensure consistent response to grievances.

A “grievance” can be defined as a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of TIIS’s services and activities. They may include academic and non-academic matters such as:

- the enrolment, induction, and orientation;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards;
- the handling of personal information and access to personal records; and
- the way someone has been treated (e.g., any form of harassment);
- the manner that a policy or procedure is implemented; and
- any action or behaviour that a reasonable person would consider as inappropriate.

This *Policy and Procedures* is designed to ensure that TIIS responds conscientiously and effectively to all cases of dissatisfaction.

## 2. Policy Scope

In relation to non-academic grievances, the term “complainant” applies to both students of TIIS and applicants to TIIS.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this *Policy and Procedures* regardless of their study mode 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 student support and/or the Registrar. It is not mandatory for complainants to raise a grievance formally.

## 4. Procedures

**Complainants can 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 TIIS holds in relation to an individual. TIIS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- a. the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;

- b. 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 meeting);
- c. a full explanation in writing of decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if requested by the complainant or respondent;
- d. where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, TIIS will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- e. A complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this Policy and Procedures at no cost. TIIS will cover the reasonable costs associated with external appeal bodies.

#### **4.1 Stage One – Formal Grievance**

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the **Registrar or delegate**. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing by the **Registrar or delegate**. The grievance handling process will commence within 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. If necessary, the Registrar, or delegate, will 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 delegate, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance. Within 10 working days, a written report will be provided to the complainant on the steps which have been taken to address the grievance and the reasons for the decision. 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 Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) within 20 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or a committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within 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 nominee, will within 10 working days provide a written report to the complainant advising the steps taken to address the grievance and the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

#### **4.3 Stage Three – External Appeal (Domestic and International Students)**

##### **Resolution Institute**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal at TIIS, an independent mediator will be sourced by TIIS through the Resolution Institute (<https://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. (<https://www.resolution.institute/about-us/about>). *TIIS will cover any reasonable cost to students using the services of Resolution Institute.*

### External Reviewer for Academic-related Issues

TIIS will provide students with external reviewer(s) to consider decisions on students' appeals in relation to academic-related matters upon request. **TIIS will cover the reasonable costs associated with external appeal bodies.**

### NSW Fair Trading

Students residing in NSW can also have the option to submit a complaint in relation to TIIS products or services to NSW Fair Trading (<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/help-centre/online-tools/make-a-complaint>.)

### Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

If the complaint is about any breach of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 in Australia, students can lodge a complaint with ACCC. For further details, please visit [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au).

### Commonwealth Ombudsman for International Students

*International students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their HEP provider can also contact The Commonwealth Ombudsman* <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students>.

### TEQSA

Please note that TEQSA can only take action on concerns that relate to its regulatory responsibility. Some examples are:

- a) wellbeing and safety concerns – for example sexual assault or harassment
- b) significant issues with academic quality, teaching or standards
- c) concerns about academic integrity – for example academic or research misconduct
- d) providers significantly misrepresenting their offerings/courses
- e) serious issues with admission practices
- f) serious issues with the quality of delivery, including by the provider's third parties
- g) providers conferring awards when the courses have not been completed
- h) serious data or information security breaches
- i) serious financial concerns
- j) breaches of the law
- k) entities representing to offer higher education awards when unregistered.

For further information, please refer to TEQSA website: [www.teqsa.gov.au/raising-complaint-or-concern](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/raising-complaint-or-concern).

### Decision of External Appeal(s)

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

## 5. Further Action

*The availability of student grievance handling policy and procedure does not remove the right of the students to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws. TIIS's dispute resolution processes do not circumscribe the student's rights to pursue other legal remedies. This Policy and Procedures does not replace or modify responsibilities which may arise under other policies or laws.*

## 6. Enrolment Status

Where a current student chooses to access this *Policy and Procedures*, TIIS 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 *Policy and Procedures* and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance, upon written request to the Registrar, appropriate access to these records. These records will be maintained at TIIS's Head Office.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential.

## 8. Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Details
1.0	Board of Directors	10 March 2016	
1.1	Board of Directors	3 August 2017	Minor changes
1.2	Executive Management Committee	Outstanding	Minor changes

Document owner: CEO