

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

1. Overview

Kingsford Institute of Higher Education (KIHE or **the Institute**) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance-handling system that is easily accessible to all complainants.

The Institute aims to:

- a. Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- b. Set in place a grievance handling system that is student focussed and helps the Institute to prevent grievances from recurring;
- c. Ensure the prompt and objective resolution of grievances, with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- d. Conduct the assessment of grievances and appeals in a professional, fair and transparent manner;
- e. Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected;
- f. Ensure that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- g. Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

The definition of a grievance is: 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:

- a. the enrolment, induction or orientation process;
- b. the quality of education provided;
- c. academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- d. an issue with the Institute's education agents
- e. an issue with anyone that the Institute has an arrangement with to deliver our courses or any related services;
- f. handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- g. the manner of someone's treatment.

The grievance procedures' design ensures that the Institute responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2. Policy coverage

Concerning non-academic grievances, the term "complainant" applies to current Institute students and anyone seeking to enrol with the Institute.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of:

- a. the location of the campus of the Institute at which the grievance has arisen; or
- b. the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

The Institute will respond to any grievance or appeal that a student may have regarding their dealings with:

- a. the Institute; or
- b. the Institute's education agents; or
- c. anyone that the Institute has an arrangement with to deliver its courses or any related services.

3. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist in resolving issues at this level. Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the Student Support Officer in person or via email at: studentsupport@kihe.edu.au. The Institute strongly recommends that complainants raise a grievance informally, even though this is not mandatory.

4. Procedure

Complainants can utilise this procedure 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 concerning personal information that the Institute holds concerning an individual.

During all stages of this procedure, the Institute will take steps to ensure that:

- the complainant and any respondent is not be victimised or discriminated against;
- the complainant has an opportunity to present their case formally, accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings (either physically or virtually) if they so choose;
- it provides full written explanations of decisions and actions taken as part of the process 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 or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- A complainant shall have access to all stages of this grievance procedure at no cost.

Stage one – formal grievance

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing to the Registrar at: registrar@kihe.edu.au. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing within five working days. The grievance handling process will commence upon receipt of the formal grievance, with all reasonable measures taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

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

The Registrar may seek such clarification by written or verbal request with the complainant. When such clarification occurs verbally, the complainant or any respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Registrar, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance, providing a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten 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.

Stage two – internal appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance, they may appeal in writing by email to the CEO at: ceo@kihe.edu.au within 20 working days of receiving notification of the stage one outcome.

The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of verbal interviews, the complainant or the respondent may ask another person to support them during these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for

the decision, within ten working days of concluding the appeal. 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.

Stage three – external appeal (domestic students)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are a domestic student, then an external review of the grievance can be requested through the Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme. Complainants can contact the Resolution Institute directly as follows:

1.1.1 Address: Suite 602, Level 6, Tower B, Zenith Centre, 821-843 Pacific Highway
Chatswood NSW 2067

1.1.2 Phone: 02 9251 3366 Freecall: 1800 651 650

1.1.3 Email: infoaus@resolutioninstitute

Stage three – external appeal (international students)

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are an international student, then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The Commonwealth 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 education provider. Refer to the Commonwealth Ombudsman website <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

Outcomes from the external appeal

The Institute agrees to be bound by any recommendations arising from the external appeal. The CEO will ensure that any decision or recommendation in favour of a student will:

- a. be implemented immediately; or
- b. take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision and advise the student of that action.

5. Further action

If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may 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 statutes or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, 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 at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained digitally.

All records relating to grievances are confidential and covered by the Institute's *Privacy and Personal Information Procedures*.

8. Publication and training

This Policy and Procedure is available to students and persons seeking to enrol with the Institute through publication in Student Central and on the Institute's website (www.kihe.edu.au).

To communicate to and train staff, this Policy and Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the Dean).

9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Board of Directors	10 March 2023	Document creation and initial approval

Document owner: CEO

Student grievance handling flowchart

