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## POLICY S3.7

### STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 Context

The AIM Business School (ABS) aims to provide a fair, equitable and productive learning environment for all its students. This includes ensuring that students have access to processes which effectively resolve complaints or issues and facilitate a seamless appeals process.

##### 1.2 Purpose

This policy provides the principles which guide a transparent and consistent process for resolving academic and non-academic complaints at ABS.

##### 1.3 Scope

This policy applies to academic and non-academic complaints and appeals that:

- a. relate to academic and non-academic complaints made by students of ABS on or off campus, and
- b. involve people who are officers of, are employed by, or otherwise engaged by ABS (such as contractors), or third-party partners, and/or
- c. have already been dealt with at the point of origin for response, but where the complainant remains dissatisfied, or
- d. meet the definition of a serious matter.

##### 1.4 Scope Exceptions

This process does not apply to behaviour that is addressed as part of other policies that include the student code of conduct, harassment, unacceptable behaviour and diversity and equity, and that address challenging and unacceptable behaviours.

#### 2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students are responsible for complying with this policy and its procedure when making a complaint or appealing a decision.
2. Staff are responsible for complying with this policy and its procedure in managing complaints and appeals.
3. ABS's Quality and Compliance Risk Management Committee is responsible for preparing a quarterly report on the Complaints Register to be reviewed by

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ABS's Academic Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. The Academic Board reports emerging risks related to complaints to the ABS's Corporate Board.

## 3.0 POLICY

### 3.1 Principles

1. ABS welcomes all forms of feedback from students, who are openly invited to offer feedback on any matter at any time. This feedback may be positive, negative or identify an area of ABS service, product or people that requires an improvement or immediate rectification.
2. Students are encouraged to raise complaints at the earliest opportunity with the person directly involved so that the complaint can be resolved immediately where feasible.
3. ABS is committed to identifying and responding to any issue or grievance relating to any aspect of its business operations, including education agents or related third parties. ABS has established a complaint resolution system to resolve:
  - academic appeals and complaints, including in relation to student progress, assessment, marking, facilitators, plagiarism, course materials, curriculum or awards in a course of study.
  - non-academic appeals and complaints, including in relation to personal information held and any other administrative matters including course fees; and
  - issues between students and staff, and students between students.
4. Resolution of complaints in accordance with this policy is free of charge.
5. Complaints and appeal procedures are transparent to ensure that all students understand their rights and responsibilities.
6. ABS ensures its students and prospective students have access to this policy and corresponding procedure via the ABS website.
7. At all times, ABS will respect the rights of all students to use any avenue available to them to address their complaint and/or appeal, and to lodge a complaint anonymously or confidentially.
8. ABS responds quickly and objectively to any complaint or appeal raised by students in order to reach satisfactory outcomes for all parties.
9. Students and respondents involved in the complaint resolution process will not be disadvantaged, victimised or discriminated against as a result of lodging the grievance or at any stage of (or because of) using this policy and its procedure.

10. The student and respondent have the right to be represented by a third party (such as a family member, friend, counsellor, advocate, or support person) at all times.
11. ABS will provide students with the option for review by an external independent third party if internal appeal processes fail to resolve a complaint.
12. The Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure is communicated:
  - to academic and support staff via the Facilitator Handbook, the website and the HR portal; and
  - to students via the Learning Management System, Unit Guide and the ABS website.
13. All parties involved should behave in line with the ABS code of conducts and act in a cooperative, fair and respectful manner to achieve resolution.
14. Staff members must not manage a complaint or appeal where there is a conflict of interest.
15. ABS will monitor complaints and appeals to identify opportunities for improvement.

### **3.2 Registers**

1. ABS and third-party partners maintain a Complaints and Appeals Register that records details of all complaints, actions taken and their resolution (including any appeals). The Complaints and Appeals Register records both academic and non-academic student complaints.

### **3.3 Confidentiality and Records**

1. The complaints and appeals recorded on the Complaints and Appeals Register are kept for seven (7) years on a strictly confidential basis, including a statement of the outcome and reasons for the outcome. Parties to the complaints are allowed supervised access to the Complaints and Appeals Register and the Remissions Register on request.
2. Management of and access to any complaint records (including the Complaints and Appeals Register) is restricted to the Student Support Team Leaders, Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education and the Head of School, ABS (as well as the Student Complaints and Appeals Panel, the ABS Academic Board and the ABS Quality and Compliance Risk Management Committee). Where appropriate ABS will take measures to de-identify student information on the Complaints and Appeals Register.
3. All parties who are involved with complaints and their resolution shall at all times treat the complaint as confidential and shall not reveal the names of any other party who is the subject of or involved in the complaint or its resolution, without express permission.

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## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Appeal** - a formal application in writing to a higher authoritative figure or court to have a decision reversed.
- **Assessment Appeal** is a request by a student for reconsideration of an unfavourable assessment outcome. The appeal must be made in writing after the Assessment Decision Review process has been completed first, and the student remains dissatisfied with the decision.
- **Complaint** - the term complaint refers to an expression of dissatisfaction about ABS that requires review, investigation and/or action, and that is drawn to the attention of ABS either informally or formally. **Grievance** the term grievance is often used interchangeably with the term complaint, as both deal with issues a student may have with ABS services, products or a member of staff, or involve a perceived breach of terms and conditions.
- **Compliant resolution** - A complaint may be resolved in two ways:
  - a. As a minor issue that can be addressed informally and usually resolved easily (e.g. by a discussion with local staff, clarification of a misunderstanding etc)
  - b. A formal process for resolution of a 'grievance' or 'complaint' through completion of a written complaint.
- **Complaints Register** is the register of all formal complaints and appeals
- **Formal Complaints** is a complaint that is recorded in the Complaint Form
- **Independent review** is when a Complainant has exhausted the internal complaint and review process and is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint appeal. In this case, the Complainant may apply for an external review (by an independent third party) to resolve the dispute
- **Student**- Refers to domestic and international ABS students.

## 5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- Assessment and Examination (including Reassessment) Procedure
- Complaints Form
- Complaints and Appeals Register
- Remissions Register
- Domestic Enrolment, Deferral, Withdrawal and Refund Policy and Procedure
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act) 2000
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

## 6.0 POLICY OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Chief Education Officer Higher Education
Status	Reviewed on September 2025
Approval Authority	ABS Academic Board
Date of Approval	11/09/2025
Effective Date	15/09/2025
Implementation Owner	Head of School, ABS
Maintenance Owner	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education
Review Due	August 2028

## 7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
S3.0	14 June 2017	Head of Compliance, Partners	Initial document - first draft
S3.3	22 June 2021	Academic Board	Policy and procedure separated. Title Change to Student Grievances and Complaints.
S3.4	06 December 2022	Head of Compliance	Updates to Principles, Confidentiality and Records, and References. Update to staff titles
S3.5	10 March 2023	Head of Compliance	Minor administrative change: update to staffing titles.
S3.6	25 June 2024	Executive Director	Reference to behavioural expectations, information provided to student, continuous improvement, and conflict of interest.
S3.7	11 September 2025	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of title to Complaints and Appeals</li> <li>• Update of policy to align with TEQSA Statement of Regulatory Expectations and benchmarking</li> <li>• Minor administrative changes</li> <li>• Update to staff titles</li> <li>• Template slightly revised following benchmarking</li> <li>• All versions from 2017-2020 (S3.1 to S3.2) are archived and available upon request</li> </ul>