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## PROCEDURE S3. 7-P3.9

### STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 Related Policy

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy.

##### 1.2 Purpose

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Student Complaints and Appeals policy and outlines the responsibility and processes involved in the resolution and management of student grievances and complaints at the AIM Business School (ABS).

##### 1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to, complaints and appeals made by students of ABS and ABS's third-party partners.

##### 1.4 Scope Exceptions

This procedure does not apply to complaints made by staff.

#### 2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Students are responsible for complying with this procedure, including timelines, when lodging a complaint, or appeal.
- b. Students who are party to a complaint must comply with requests from ABS for attendance at meetings or to provide information.
- c. The Student Support Team is responsible for referring complaints or appeals to the nominated staff as outlined in Schedule 1 of this Procedure.
- d. The Student Support Team Leader is responsible for receiving appeals from the student, notifying the appropriate panel of the appeal and communicating the decision of the panel to the student.
- e. All ABS staff responsible for responding to informal and formal complaints and appeals are responsible for ensuring timely communication to the student, as outlined in this procedure.

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## 3.0 PROCEDURE

### 3.1 Informal Resolution

In any issue or complaint, students are encouraged to raise complaints at the point of origin so that the matter can be resolved immediately where feasible.

If a resolution cannot be achieved through discussion with the persons or department involved, informal complaints will normally be taken to the Head of School, ABS (or delegate) or Student Support for informal resolution.

Where the matter is not resolved by informal resolution, the student will be advised of the formal process to lodge a complaint.

All information and correspondence relating to informal complaints are recorded in the student management system database.

All complaints and appeals, irrespective of whether the matter is resolved by informal resolution or further escalated, are recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

### 3.2 Lodging a Complaint

- a. If a complaint cannot be resolved informally or the student is not satisfied with the outcome, and wishes to lodge a formal complaint, the student should submit the complaint in writing, providing their name, contact details, details of the complaint and any steps already taken to resolve the complaint. If a student wishes to lodge a complaint anonymously, they may do so, but this may affect the resolution of the complaint.
- b. Lodging a formal complaint is a serious matter (as distinct from informal processes and the provision of feedback) that will be investigated. Other parties who are the subject of a complaint, including in particular those about whom a complaint is made, will be informed that they are the subject of a complaint.
- c. The receipt of a formal complaint from a student will be acknowledged in writing by the Student Support Team Leader within five (5) business days. The acknowledgement will:
  - advise that the assessment of the complaint will commence within ten (10) business days of receipt of the complaint in writing.
  - outline the investigation process, including that the assessment of the complaint will be conducted in a professional, fair and transparent manner.
  - advise that a student will be given an opportunity to formally present their case and be accompanied or assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
  - advise that a decision will normally be made by ABS within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving notice of the complaints in writing, or as soon as practicable.
  - advise that the complaint will be kept confidential and will not disadvantage the student in any way; and

- identify any foreseeable delays and inform the student of progress as required.
- d. The Student Support Team Leader will direct the formal complaint to the responsible ABS staff member for resolution, relevant to the nature of the complaint, as listed in Schedule 1.
- e. The Head of School ABS will ensure the complaint has been recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register (as applicable).

All formal complaints are recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register and should be presented at the subsequent ABS Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) and Academic Board.

### **3.3 The Investigation Process**

The Head of School will:

- a. Declare any perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest prior to investigating a, complaint, or appeal.
- b. Arrange a meeting with the student if required and provide a reasonable opportunity for the student to explain the complaint and to provide any relevant documentation, with the option to be accompanied or assisted by a support person.
- c. Arrange a meeting with the other parties involved to gather relevant information.
- d. Record outcomes of any meetings as a formal record.
- e. Make every effort to advise the student and other parties of the outcome of any investigation, including any final decision made in respect of the complaint (and provide reasons), within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving written notice of the complaint, and no more than ten (10) days after the final decision has been reached.
- f. Enter formal resolutions, including statements of the outcome, reasons for the outcome and actions to be taken on the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- g. Advise affected parties that the decision may be appealed if they are not satisfied with the process or outcome and that appeals may be made as outlined in the Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

### **3.4 Formal Resolution by Head of School ABS**

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- a. Following an investigation, a Formal Resolution decision is made by the responsible ABS Staff and communicated to the student in writing. The decision may be:
- That further investigation is required.
  - To provide more information about the situation or reasons for the decision.
  - To remedy a mistake.
  - To revoke a decision.
  - To change a policy or procedure.
  - To retrain/discipline a student.
  - To retrain/discipline a staff member.

The Head of School advises the student, within ten (10) days of the decision that they must provide notice of any intention to lodge an appeal of the Formal Resolution, in writing, to ABS within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving notice of the decision.

### **3.5 Internal Appeals Procedure**

Where the student is dissatisfied with the formal resolution, the student can lodge an appeal. The Senior Manager Compliance will:

- a. Acknowledge the appeal in writing within five (5) business days of the appeal being lodged.
- b. Where the complaint concerns the refund of fees, arrange for the Remissions Committee to investigate the complaint fairly and impartially. The Remissions Committee must make a decision in respect of any appeal within twenty-one (21) business days of the receipt of the complaint. The resolution of the complaint must be provided by the Remissions Committee to the Student Support Team Leader to be entered in the Complaints and Appeals Register, and the decision communicated to the student within ten (10) business days of the decision being reached.
- c. Where the appeal relates to a release application outcome, intention to report to Immigration due to unsatisfactory course progress, or where ABS initiates a cancellation the Student Complaints and Appeals Panel must make a decision within twenty-one (21) business days.
- d. For all other complaints, arrange for the Student Complaints and Appeals Panel to conduct an independent investigation that is professional, fair, transparent and impartial. The Student Complaints and Appeals Panel must make a decision in respect of any appeal within twenty-one (21) business days.
- e. Make every effort to arrange for the outcome of the appeal to be communicated to the student and other involved parties in writing within twenty-one (21) business days of receipt of the complaint, or no more than ten (10) business days after the final decision has been reached, outlining the reasons for the decision and any actions to be taken.

- f. Provide the student with information on ABS's external complaint procedure that is available if a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeals procedure, including advising the student of their right to access an external complaints process at low or minimal cost.
- g. Advise the student that they must provide notice of any intention to lodge an external appeal of the decision on the internal appeal, in writing, to the Senior Manager Compliance within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving the outcome of the internal appeal.
- h. In the event that an international student's enrolment is suspended or cancelled following the conclusion of the internal complaint process, advise the student of the need to seek advice from Immigration on the potential impact on their student visa and report the change to the international student's enrolment in accordance with section 19 of the ESOS Act (2000).

### 3.6 External Appeals Procedure

- a. In the event that the internal appeal process does not resolve a complaint (for example, where the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal) the student may provide written notice to the Senior Manager Compliance that they request independent external review of the complaint. Notice must be provided within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving the outcome of the internal appeal.
- b. ABS has appointed the following to conduct the external appeal procedure:
  - Negocio Resolutions, an external qualified dispute resolver, will identify the issues and provide the parties advice about appropriate methods to resolve the complaint.
  - Negocio Resolutions may:
    - at the election of the student, conduct mediation between the complainant and respondent in the first instance to try to reach a negotiated outcome.
    - if the student elects, or if an acceptable final resolution is not reached by mediation within ten (10) business days, Negocio Resolutions will appoint an independent arbitrator (at ABS's cost) to conduct arbitration proceedings between the parties in accordance with the Resolution Institute Arbitration Rules 2020 and the arbitrator will make a final and binding decision in respect of the complaint.
    - The external appeals procedure, including the dispute resolution services provided by Negocio Resolution, is available to the student at no cost.
    - Further details in respect of Negocio Resolution can be found at [www.negocio.com.au](http://www.negocio.com.au). Contact details:
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Mr Stephen Lancken  
0418 272 449  
[mediator@negocio.com.au](mailto:mediator@negocio.com.au)

- c. The student may also elect to contact:

- The Equal Opportunity Commissioner - this will be state based with information on the relevant website.
  - National Student Ombudsman.
  - The Overseas Student Ombudsman (international students only)- procedure on the Ombudsman's [website](#).
  - Legal Advice/Assistance- this may be at the student's expense depending upon State provided legal assistance services.
- d. Any agreed resolution or decision (where applicable) in relation to a complaint that is made under an external appeal procedure will be implemented, wherever practicable, by ABS within twenty-one (21) business days of the resolution/decision. ABS will advise the student of that action.
- e. All students shall be referred to appropriate external support groups for assistance as needed to help them cope with their studies or work commitments.

### 3.7 Review and Assurance

- a. Issues identified during investigations and resolution processes that warrant improvement by ABS. Those issues (and any recommendations or actions) are incorporated into the ABS Quality Improvement Register (on an anonymized basis) to inform continuous improvement. The Quality and Compliance Risk Management Committee (QCRMC) is responsible for maintaining the ABS Quality Improvement Register.
- b. The QCRMC provides a report on the student Complaints and Appeals Register to the Academic Board and Audit and Risk. Reports on emerging risks related to complaints are provided to the Corporate Board.
- c. If the internal or external complaints handling or appeals process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, ABS will implement the decision or recommendation and/or take preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the student of that action. ABS will endeavour to take any such remedial action immediately where practicable.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Appeal** - A formal application in writing to a higher authoritative figure or body to have a decision reversed.
- **Arbitration / Mediation** - The intervention of a third party in a dispute in order to resolve it in a fair and equitable manner.
- **Complaint** - the term complaint refers to an expression of dissatisfaction about ABS that requires review, investigation and/or action, and that is drawn to 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 or conditions.
- **Complaints Register** is the register of all formal complaints and appeals
- **Formal Complaints** is a complaint that is recorded in the Complaints Form.
- **Independent review** is when a Complainant has exhausted the internal complaint and review processes 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

- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Assessment and Examination (including Reassessment) Procedure
- Complaints Form
- Complaints and Appeals Register
- 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/PROCEDURE 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-P3.0	10 July 2017	Head of Compliance / Executive Director	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
S3.1-P3.1	10 March 2020	Academic Board	General review
S3.2-P3.2	18 January 2021	Academic Board	Differentiating between Grievances and Remissions, process for managing complaints and remissions, addition of independent advice at no cost to the student, review process to inform changes and continuous improvement.
S3.3-P3.3	22 January 2021	Academic Board	Further changes to Grievances and Remissions Procedure. Change of name to Grievances and Complaints.
S3.4-P3.4	14 September 2021	Academic Board	'Student' added to title which is now Student Grievances and Complaints. Definitions of Grievance and Complaint clarified.
S3.4-P3.5	06 December 2022	Head of Compliance	Updates to the Lodging a Complaint, Investigation Process, Internal Appeals Procedure, Review, and References. Update to Staff titles.
S3.5- P3.6	10 March 2023	Executive Director	Minor administrative change: update to staffing titles. Addition of Schedule 1.
S3.5- P3.7	30 May 2023	Head of Compliance	Minor administrative change: Removal of reference to State Ombudsman replaced with external Legal Service.
S3.6-P3.8	25 June 2024	Executive Director	Reference to behavioural expectations, information provided to student, continuous improvement and conflict of interest.
S3.7-P3.9	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> </ul>



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Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
			Minor administrative change <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update to staff titles</li><li>• Template slightly revised following benchmarking</li></ul>

## Schedule 1: ABS Nominated Staff for investigation of informal and formal complaints and appeals

### 1. Academic Appeals and Complaints

Includes progress, assessment, marking, academic misconduct, curriculum, results, facilitators/Academic coaches.

Stage	Staff/Panel Responsible
Informal	Facilitator/ Academic Coaches
Formal	Program Manager
Internal Appeal	Student Complaints and Appeals Panel

### 2. Non-Academic Appeals and Complaints

Includes personal information (records), awards, admin matters, fees etc.

Stage	Staff/Panel Responsible
Informal	Student Support
Formal	Registrar Senior Manager Compliance Higher Education
Internal Appeal	Remissions Committee (refund/ fee related only) Student Complaints and Appeals Panel

### 3. Student/ Non-Academic Staff or Student/Student Complaints

Stage	Staff/Panel Responsible
Informal	Resolve directly with person involved
Formal	Student to Student: Student Support Team Leader Student to Staff: Refer to Manager of staff member
Internal Appeal	Student to Student: Student Complaints and Appeals Panel Student to Staff: Chief People Officer