

STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. Purpose

1.1 Monaro Higher Education (MHE) wants to establish and maintain an approachable, efficient, impartial and prompt mechanism for hearing and resolving grievances that upholds students' and staff members' rights and MHE's reputation.

2. Principles

2.1 Student grievances and complaints may apply to every aspect of MHE's operations. MHE intends to view any grievance as a chance to enhance MHE's operations. Attention to a complainant and taking their opinion seriously will teach MHE how to prevent further grievances and improve service.

2.2 MHE will be sensitive and respectful to all parties in a grievance. Responses to grievances will be consistent, sensitive, objective and confidential and will never open complainants to negative consequences.

3. Context

3.1 This policy is aligned with applicable Australian Government legislation including the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021*, particularly sections 2.4 and 6.2.1j.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors and stakeholders of MHE.

5. Definitions

Academic Grievance – Grievance related to any aspect of a student's progression, assessment, curriculum or awards in a course or unit.

Complaint – negative feedback that may be resolved informally through standard MHE processes.

Grievance – formal statement of discontent at any part of MHE's conduct or services, either academic or non-academic.

Non-academic grievance – Grievance about any aspect of MHE's operation not directly related to academic matters.

6. Policy Details

6.1 Due Process

6.1.1 Prospective students will be informed as early as possible in their contact with MHE of any information required to assist in resolving grievances, including but not limited to:

- their right to raise a complaint or appeal a decision
- an explanation of MHE's processes for receiving and resolving grievances and complaints
- the availability of internal and external appeals
- sources of assistance including advocacy
- their right to withdraw from an appeals process.

6.1.2 There will be no cost, financial or otherwise, in airing or responding to a grievance. While a grievance or appeal is being handled, the student's enrolment will not be at risk and the fact of the grievance or appeal must have no influence on that student's grades or assessment marks. There must be no suggestion of victimisation, bullying, reprisal or discrimination against any person involved, at least until a formal written decision states that that person is in the wrong.

6.1.3 Both the complainant and any person who is the subject of a grievance will have the right to speak freely without interruption and be heard respectfully. Responses to all people involved will be impartial, objective and fair. The decision will be made by someone independent to the case.

6.1.4 Any aggrieved person, or any person who is the subject of a formal complaint, may have a support person present during any part of the grievance handling process.

6.1.5 If the outcome of a formal complaint or an internal or external appeal is in favour of the student, MHE will immediately initiate action to correct the student's situation and impose appropriate disciplinary action on staff responsible.

6.1.6 If an internal decision is against a student, the written decision given to the student will explain the appropriate method for appeal.

6.1.7 A complaints form will be available on the MHE website.

6.2 Process of Handling Grievances

Internal Resolution

6.2.1 Students (including prospective students) may notify MHE of a complaint, grievance or appeal over any decision or action from MHE, unless a policy or procedure relating to the context of that decision or action limits it.

6.2.2 MHE encourages students to discuss issues informally with appropriate academic or administrative staff and attempt to resolve them informally before raising a formal grievance.

6.2.3 MHE will respond to grievances respectfully, thoughtfully and professionally, first of all by encouraging people involved to resolve the issue through informal conciliation.

Internal Appeals

6.2.4 If informal conciliation does not resolve the issue, the student may appeal. MHE's response will be prompt and fair. Appeals will be heard by people not previously involved in the issue.

6.2.5 Throughout every stage of this process, both the aggrieved student and the subject of their complaint are entitled to be accompanied by an emotional support person. Students will also be entitled to unbiased advice on relevant procedural matters from the Student Support Officer.

6.2.6 The result of a formal complaint and a clear, objective statement of the reasons for the result will be made known to all involved in writing within a reasonable time.

External Appeals

6.2.7 The result of any formal complaint handling process may be appealed first internally and then externally to an appropriate independent organisation. If the decision is against the aggrieved student, the statement will be accompanied by the names and contact details of people and/or organisations to whom appeals can be addressed.

6.3 Preventing Recurrence of Grievances

6.3.1 MHE will keep secure, confidential records of the nature of all grievances and appeals and their outcomes.

6.3.2 If a grievance reveals a systemic issue:

- for academic grievances, this issue will be noted and raised during the course review process as described in the Course Review and Continual Development Framework
- for non-academic grievances, it will be noted at the next meeting of the Board of Directors or its appropriate delegate.

6.3.3 MHE will monitor the nature, frequency, results and causes of formal complaints and grievances and misconduct allegations and act to address all underlying causes.

6.3.4 Records of grievances will be made available to appropriate external reviews and audits, subject to privacy legislation.

7. Relevant Legislation

MHE acknowledges its legal and regulatory obligations under the following frameworks:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework 2013
- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

8. Policy Administration

Policy category	Governance
Policy owner	Board of Directors
Responsible officer	CEO
Approving authority	Board of Directors
Contact officer	CEO
Approval date	15 th August 2022
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Review date	Three years

Version	1.1
Related documents	Grievance Procedure Course Review and Continual Development Framework Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure Equity and Diversity Policy

9. Version control and change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.1	15 th August 2022	Board of Directors	

10. Reference / Benchmark

- Australian Institute of Business
[Student Grievance Handling Policy \(aib.edu.au\)](http://aib.edu.au)
- Australian Institute of Higher Education
[ACAHE03-Student-Complaint-and-Appeal-Policy-2022.1.pdf \(aih.nsw.edu.au\)](http://aih.nsw.edu.au)
- Ozford Institute of Higher Education
[Microsoft Word - Student Grievances and Appeals Policy AB Final May 2019 \(ozford.edu.au\)](http://ozford.edu.au)
- Polytechnic Institute Australia
[Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure \(pia.edu.au\)](http://pia.edu.au)