

STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

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1. Purpose

1.1 Refer to the Student Grievances and Complaints Policy.

2. Principles

2.1 Refer to the Student Grievances and Complaints Policy.

3. Context

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4. Scope

4.1 Refer to Student Grievances and Complaints Policy.

5. Definitions

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6. Procedures

6.1 Prelude

6.1.1 These procedures are equally applicable to academic and non-academic grievances.

6.1.2 Grievances and complaints may occur at any stage of a student's or prospective student's involvement with MHE from application to graduation. These procedures apply equally at every stage and to every aspect of MHE's service unless a policy or procedure relating to that aspect specifically restricts it.

6.1.3 At every stage of the grievance and complaints handling process, MHE will do its best to ensure that people who raise grievances and people who are the subject of grievances:

- suffer no bullying, victimisation or discrimination
- have an opportunity to present their case, accompanied by a support person of their choosing
- are heard respectfully without interruption while doing so
- have their confidentiality and privacy respected
- receive the decision and a clear reason for the decision in writing
- are charged nothing for internal stages of the process (MHE and the appellant will share any applicable charge for external appeals).

6.1.4 Whenever a decision is in favour of the aggrieved party, MHE will immediately act accordingly by any appropriate combination of:

- correcting an original record
- reversing an earlier decision
- a formal apology from the person(s) responsible for the grievance
- imposing appropriate penalties on the person(s) responsible for the grievance.

6.1.5 As soon as an internal or external appeal is lodged, all disciplinary action imposed as a result of an earlier decision will cease. If the appeal upholds the earlier decision, the disciplinary action will be reinstated immediately.

6.1.6 If the aggrieved party is an international student and the appeal is against a decision to deny or cancel enrolment or a judgement of unsatisfactory course progress, or anything which puts the student's enrolment at risk, MHE will not advise the Department of Home Affairs until either the student has exhausted all avenues of appeal in these procedures without a decision in the student's favour or the student has clearly waived the right to appeal. (Not lodging an appeal within the time frames in the points below will be deemed as waiving the right to appeal.)

6.1.7 These procedures in no way limit any students' or staff members' rights or responsibilities under any other MHE Policy or Procedure, the Higher Education Standards Framework or legal rights under any State or Federal legislation applicable to the nature of their grievance.

6.1.8 MHE will respond to any complaint or appeal an overseas student makes regarding his or her dealings with MHE or MHE's education agents or MHE representatives. All such complaints and appeals will be taken seriously, and all the issues will be resolved under informal and or formal resolution procedure. If the complaint or appeal is not resolved internally or student is not satisfied with the internal appeal outcome, within twenty working days, student has rights to complain under external appeals procedure.

6.2 Informal Resolution

6.2.1 MHE will encourage and assist students to resolve complaints through informal discussion with relevant academic or administrative staff. Staff will be trained in assisting students in this process.

6.2.2 These procedures are broadly the same as those in the Assessment Policy and Procedure and follow the same basic pattern. If the complaint is in regard to an assessment, students must note the specific restriction on appeals in the Assessment Policy and Procedures and follow the process there. This Policy and Procedure in no way alters the restriction in that policy.

6.2.3 A student who cannot resolve a grievance informally through conversation with staff may raise a formal complaint.

6.3 Raising Formal Grievances

6.3.1 A formal grievance may be addressed in writing to the Student Administration Manager or may be raised using the grievance form on the MHE website. Either way, a formal grievance must explain the situation, provide information in support of the student's case and the student's desired outcome. The Student Administration Manager will acknowledge it in writing within ten working days.

6.3.2 The Student Administration Manager or delegate may contact the aggrieved person to clarify aspects of the grievance. If this is done face-to-face, the aggrieved student may be accompanied by a support person.

6.3.3 The Student Administration Manager or delegate will attempt to resolve the grievance by organising a private discussion and conciliation between the student and staff within ten working days. All involved must act respectfully and constructively and attempt in good faith to find a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

6.3.4 If this does not resolve the process satisfactorily, the student will be informed in writing of his or her right to an internal appeal and the process of that appeal.

6.4 Internal Appeals

6.4.1 Academic Grievances

6.4.1.1 The aggrieved student may appeal in writing to the Dean within twenty working days of receiving the Student Administration Manager's written notice. Students are encouraged to seek support from administrative staff or the Student Support Officer in making their appeal.

6.4.1.2 The Dean (or the CEO if the grievance relates to the Dean) will convene an Academic Appeal Committee comprising him/herself and at least two qualified academic staff members not previously involved in the grievance.

6.4.1.3 The Academic Appeal Committee will invite the aggrieved student, the subject of the grievance and any witnesses to a meeting within twenty working days of lodging the appeal. The aggrieved student and the subject of the grievance may be accompanied by one support person if they choose. The student may also be accompanied by the Student Support Officer to act as an advisor (but not an advocate) through the process and to ensure that the student's treatment is fair and professional.

6.4.1.4 First the aggrieved party and then the subject of the complaint will state their opinion of the situation or incident without interruption. The appeal committee members may ask any clarifying questions.

6.4.1.5 Within ten working days, the Dean will provide both the aggrieved party and the subject of the complaint of their decision and reasons for it, as well as their right to lodge an external appeal and contact details of the appropriate organisation for that appeal. Copies of this notice will be put in the student's and staff members' files.

6.4.1.6 In the specific case of a student whose grievance relates to being accused of academic misconduct, the student must first discuss the issue informally with an academic staff member. If this does not resolve the issue, the student will have the opportunity to defend him or herself through formal a meeting with the Course Coordinator and then with the Dean, followed by external appeals, as explained in the Academic Integrity Procedure.

6.4.1.7 A student deemed, after investigation and a fair hearing, to have breached academic integrity will be subject to penalties, at the discretion of the Course Coordinator and/or Dean. Students will be notified in writing of all penalties which apply to them. The written notice will also explain the avenues for appeal open to the student. A copy of this notice will be included in the student's file.

6.4.1.8 When there is clear proof of academic misconduct, the Course Coordinator will consider the student's academic experience, the severity of the breach and the extent to which it may harm MHE's reputation as a provider of quality education. Based on these considerations, the breach will be classified as either minor, moderate or major.

	Minor	Moderate	Major
Description:	An inadvertent lapse which neither mars the academic work overall nor conveys any will to mislead.	A breach which mars the overall quality of the work and conveys deliberate dishonesty.	A breach which casts serious doubt on the trustworthiness and reliability of the work and/or of the student.
Examples (non-exhaustive):	• Direct quotations written without inverted commas • Source omitted from bibliography • Missing reference or footnote	• Excessive direct quotes, with or without referencing • Basing one's work on another's work • Citing unverified or unsourced research data • "Copying and pasting" large sections of information • Allowing other students to copy their assessments • Continuous repetition of a breach originally considered minor	• Any kind of contract cheating • Any use of generative artificial intelligence • Any kind of cheating in examinations (as described in the Examinations Policy and Procedures) • Submitting another writer's text as if written by oneself • Refusal to acknowledge collaborators • Deliberately misrepresenting, misquoting or falsifying source information • Non-participation in academic integrity training imposed in response to a moderate breach • Refusal of a demand to rewrite or rework a moderate breach
Possible penalty:	• Formal warning and guidance	• Compulsory attendance in extra academic	• Failing a unit

	• Request to edit or rewrite relevant section(s) of an assessment • Reduced marks in an assessment • Resitting the Academic Integrity module	integrity training (conducted by the Academic Skills Advisor) • Failure or a mark of zero in an assessment • Demand for substantial rewrite or reworking	• Expulsion or suspension of a student • Reference to police or relevant authorities (if the issue is a breach of copyright or intellectual property law)
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6.4.2 Non-Academic Grievances

6.4.1.1 The aggrieved student may appeal in writing to the Student Administration Manager within twenty working days of receiving the written notice. Students are encouraged to seek support from administrative staff or the Student Support Officer in making their appeal.

6.4.1.2 The Student Administration Officer (or the CEO if the grievance relates to the Student Administration Officer) will convene a Non-Academic Appeal Committee comprising him/herself and at least two qualified non-academic staff members not previously involved in the grievance.

6.4.1.3 The Non-Academic Appeal Committee will invite the aggrieved student, the subject of the grievance and any witnesses to a meeting within ten working days of lodging the appeal. The aggrieved student and the subject of the grievance may be accompanied by one support person if they choose. The student may also be accompanied by the Student Support Officer to act as an advisor (but not an advocate) through the process and to ensure that the student's treatment is fair and professional.

6.4.1.4 First the aggrieved party and then the subject of the complaint will state their opinion of the situation or incident without interruption. The appeal committee members may ask any clarifying questions.

6.4.1.5 Within ten working days, the Student Administration Officer will provide both the aggrieved party and the subject of the complaint of their decision and reasons for it, as well as their right to lodge an external appeal and contact details of the appropriate organisation for that appeal. Copies of this notice will be put in the student's and staff members' files.

6.5 External Appeals

6.5.1 International Students

6.5.1.1 If the aggrieved party is an international student and he or she is not satisfied, he or she may appeal within twenty working days to the Overseas Student Ombudsman. The Overseas Student Ombudsman may be contacted on 1300 362 072 or online at [Web Form Submission \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](http://Web_Form_Submission(ombudsman.gov.au)). The Overseas Student Ombudsman offers free, independent investigations of higher education providers relating to:

- course fees, payments and due dates
- enrolments being cancelled
- false advice or information from education agents
- jobs or residences arranged by a higher education provider
- non-delivery of services promised in written agreements
- non-satisfaction of progress requirements
- refusal of admission to a course
- transfers between courses or providers
- undue delays in providing results.

6.5.1.2 MHE will comply fully with all requests, instructions and decisions from the Overseas Student Ombudsman during their investigation and act on their recommendations as soon as is practicable.

6.5.1.3 Copies of the Ombudsman's report will be put in all interested parties' students' and staff members' files.

6.5.2 Domestic Students and International Students with Other Issues

6.5.2.1 If a domestic student is still dissatisfied after internal appeal, or an international student is dissatisfied after an internal appeal not related to the issues in point 6.4.1.1 above, they may appeal to Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA). IHEA may be contacted on (03) 9642 5212 or online at [Contact IHEA](#). IHEA will appoint an appropriately qualified external independent adjudicator.

6.5.2.2 MHE will tell the aggrieved party the cost of the external appeals process, if any. MHE and the aggrieved party will each pay 50% of this cost.

6.5.2.3 MHE will address a written submission to IHEA which will explain the issue, the entire internal process of attempting to resolve the issue, the reasons for MHE's decision and the grounds for an appeal.

6.5.2.4 The IHEA adjudicator will advise MHE's management, IHEA's management and the aggrieved party in writing of their decision and the reasons for their decision within thirty days, as well as any action ordered. MHE will render all assistance requested by IHEA during its investigation and fully comply with every order or recommendation in the adjudicator's judgement as soon as is practicable.

6.5.2.5 Copies of the IHEA adjudicator's report will be put in all interested parties' students' and staff members' files.

6.5.2.6 MHE must not finalise any required changes to a student's status in PRISMS until:

- the appeal finds in favour of MHE, or
- the overseas student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the twenty-working-day period, or
- the overseas student withdraws from the process.

6.5.2.7 Any student may withdraw from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying MHE in writing at any time. When a student informs MHE in writing of their intention to withdraw from the appeals process, MHE will update the student's status in PRISMS and the original decision against the student will be enacted effective immediately.

6.6 Continuous Improvement

6.6.1 Academic staff will maintain a record of all complaints and grievances and outcomes of internal and external appeals, as well as of instances of academic misconduct. All documents will be stored confidentially and securely for a minimum of five years after the date of the decision.

6.6.2 The Student Administration Manager will monitor these records regularly. If the Student Administration Manager finds a series of grievances related to a particular area of MHE's operations, the Student Administration Manager will report this to the Academic Board if it relates to academic grievances or else to the Board of Directors.

6.6.3 Records of grievances relating to any course or unit will be sent to the Academic Board when that course undergoes its next Course Review as per the Course Review and Continuous Development Framework.

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
Commencement date	15 th August 2022
Review date	Three years
Version	1.3
Related documents	Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure Academic Misconduct Flowchart Student Grievance and Complaints Policy Course Review and Continual Development Framework Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure Assessment Policy and Procedures 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	
1.2	15 th August 2023	Board of Directors	Change Student Support Officer to Student Administration Manager
1.3	13 th February 2024	Dean and CEO	Add references to academic misconduct, including academic penalties Created separate Academic Misconduct flowchart.

10. Reference / Benchmark

- Australian Institute of Business
[Student Grievance Handling Procedure \(aib.edu.au\)](http://aib.edu.au)
- Australian Institute of Higher Education
[ACAHE03-Student-Complaint-and-Appeal-Procedure-2022.1.pdf \(aih.nsw.edu.au\)](http://aih.nsw.edu.au)

- Kaplan Professional
[Kaplan-Academic-Integrity-and-Conduct-Policy-March-2023-FINAL.pdf \(kaplanprofessional.edu.au\)](#)
- Kings Own Institute
[KOI_StudentAcademicIntegrityPolicy_3November.pdf](#)
- Ozford Institute of Higher Education
[Student-Grievances-and-Appeals-Procedure-EMT-Final-May-2019.pdf \(ozford.edu.au\)](#)
- Polytechnic Institute Australia
[Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure \(pia.edu.au\)](#)
- The Institute of International Studies
[Policy-A11-Student-Academic-Integrity-Honesty.pdf \(tiis.edu.au\)](#)

11. Student Complaints and Appeals Process Flowchart



