

Grievance Policy

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Document Location:	QMS
Document Name:	Grievance Policy

Purpose

To ensure fair and equitable management of grievances and complaints within the Open Colleges learning community by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving grievances and complaints, in conformity with the academic standards, integrity and other policies of Open Colleges.

Scope

This policy articulates the general approach of Open Colleges (OC) in resolving complaints relating to decisions, acts or omissions of OC academic or non-academic staff or committees which may adversely affect the academic or non-academic well-being of staff or students, and the informal and formal procedures that should follow in pursuing grievances regarding their well-being.

Staff and students will be able to view this policy prior to employment or enrolment and will be advised to read it at the commencement of a course or employment with OC.

Anyone is entitled to access the grievance and complaint policy and related procedures regardless of the location at which a grievance may have arisen, or the place of residence, their mode of study or position they hold with OC.

Grievances may be about the decisions or actions of staff or committees at OC. They may not be about the policies, procedures or academic standards of OC. A grievance may be about the manner in which someone has interpreted or implemented a policy or procedure, but it cannot be about the policy or procedure itself.

Definitions

Grievance	Any perceived ground for complaint by a student, prospective student or client, concerning a decision, act or omission of an OC staff member or committee that may adversely affect a student's academic or non-academic well-being.
Complaint	The assertion of a grievance (either formally or informally).

Policy Provisions

OC must develop procedures for handling grievances and complaints relating to academic and non-academic matters that are complete, unambiguous, easily accessible by and at no or reasonable cost to the complainant and that result in a timely resolution. A mechanism must also exist to implement and ensure compliance with these procedures.

Complaints that remain unresolved must be reviewed internally by an independent and impartial senior officer that is on staff or nominated by OC or a dedicated complaints committee established by OC. The internal review procedure should include details regarding who the independent person or body is.

An independent person or body must be established or nominated by OC as a provision for external review of decisions made by the senior officer or complaints committee. This external review procedure must provide details of who the person or body conducting the external review is.

A procedure should be in place for implementation of decisions or recommendations resulting from internal or external review of a grievance or complaint.

In addition, OC is committed to:

- Ensuring a complainant or respondent is not victimised or discriminated against
- Conducting complaints processes in accordance with the principles of natural justice
- Considering complaints in a consistent, transparent, objective and unbiased manner
- Making all details of the procedures publicly available
- Communicating the procedures in writing to all staff and ensure comprehensive training regarding comprehension and implementation of the policy's procedures and that amendments and their implications are understood
- Informing students of the policy during their course orientation and advising students to read it at the commencement of a course
- Specifying reasonable timelines for responses to each stage of the process and monitoring of these timelines
- Allowing the complainant and / or respondent to be accompanied and / or assisted by a third party if desired

- Providing reasons and full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures, if requested by the complainant and / or respondent
- Keeping appropriate records of grievances for at least five years, and allowing parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records
- Ensuring that such records are treated as confidential
- Reviewing the complaints-handling process regularly.

Related Documents

Complaint Procedures
Student Guide

Related Legislation/Guidelines

Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations
NSW Department of Education and Training (DET NSW)
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Revision & Authorisation History

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1	Registrar	20110603	20111004	