



STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE

Governing Policy

[Student Grievance Handling Policy](#)

Purpose

This procedure explains how students may seek to raise their Grievance to the attention of AIB, and the process for AIB to follow in resolving them.

Definitions

Unless otherwise defined in this document, all capitalised terms are defined in the [glossary](#).

Written Response is as defined in section 3.5 below

Internal Appeal Report is as defined in section 4.5 below

Complainant is any prospective or current student of AIB who has an academic or non-academic grievance.

Complaint is feedback or matter that can be resolved informally by an AIB staff member through standard procedures and operations.

Grievance can be defined as a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of AIB's (or related parties') services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters with the exclusion of FEE HELP debt matters¹, such as:

- (a) the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- (b) the quality of education provided;
- (c) academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- (d) handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- (e) the way someone has been treated, including allegations of bullying, assault or sexual harassment.

Procedure

1. Procedure Overview

This procedure can be utilised by Complainants to submit a Grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Grievances of a non-

¹ Please note that any complaints or grievances relating to re-crediting Fee HELP debt should be referred to [Student Review Procedures for Re-Crediting a FEE-HELP Balance and Refund of Fees](#).

academic nature cover all other matters including sexual harassment, cyberbullying and Grievances in relation to personal information that AIB holds about an individual. As per the definition of Complaint, students may at times seek prompt and informal resolution to minor matters; this policy and procedure relates to formal Grievances that normally require escalation and are outside of standard and daily procedures.

If any complaint or Grievance relates to:

- i. harassment or bullying, refer to Stage One – Formal Grievance (section 3 of this procedure);
- ii. whistleblowing disclosures, refer to separate Whistleblower Policy and Procedure available on [AIB website](#).

Any complaint or Grievance evidenced as frivolous and vexatious will be dealt with as per the [Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure](#).

- 1.1. The review process will have regard to both policies and equitable outcomes for students.
- 1.2. During all stages of this procedure:
 - (a) the Complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;
 - (b) the Complainant will have an opportunity to formally present their case;
 - (c) each party to a Grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings; support person is usually a family member or a friend in a capacity of an observer and support;
 - (d) a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the formal process will be provided by AIB to the Complainant;
 - (e) where the internal or external Grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the Complainant, AIB will promptly implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action, including remedy where applicable, required and advise the Complainant of the outcome;
 - (f) where required, a Complainant may seek an appointment with the Academic Dean or nominee so that relevant policy and procedures may be explained.
- 1.3. A flowchart outlining stages for student Grievance handling within this procedure is presented in [Appendix A](#).

2. Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance – Informal Resolution Opportunities

- 2.1. Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned as soon as possible or by emailing Student Central at studentcentral@aib.edu.au or by calling (08) 8212 8111. Contact should be no later than 10 working days after the event or a relevant dated written AIB correspondence.
- 2.2. AIB acknowledges that there may be some complaints of a welfare, safety, harassment or other serious nature of where it is inappropriate for complainants to contact the person(s) concerned to resolve the matter; such situations may be referred to an AIB Executive or senior manager or, if unsatisfied or deemed necessary and appropriate, to appropriate external authorities such as police, and/or other regulatory agency.

- 2.3. If the issue relates to a student's dissatisfaction with an assessment or subject mark/grade, the student must refer in the first instance to section 10.3 of the [Assessment Procedure](#) which relates to re-marking assessments.

3. Stage One – Formal Grievance

- 3.1. After following the process referred to in section 2 above, Complainants may submit a formal Grievance in relation to academic and non-academic issues.
- 3.2. Formal Grievances must be submitted in writing using the Formal Grievance Form (together with details and documentary evidence) marked to the attention of the Academic Dean and emailed to quality@aib.edu.au. Submission should normally occur within 2 calendar months after completion of the informal process described in section 2 or the date of the event / the date of AIB's written correspondence of which the formal grievance is based.
- 3.3. Receipt of the Grievance will be acknowledged in writing via email by the designated administrator. The Grievance handling process will commence within 10 working days of the receipt of the formal Grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable, usually within 1 calendar month of receipt of the formal Grievance.
- 3.4. The Academic Dean or nominee, will if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the Complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the Complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the Complainant or respondent may ask another support person to accompany them.
- 3.5. The Academic Dean or nominee will then endeavour to resolve the Grievance and will provide a written response ("Written Response") to the Complainant as soon as practicable, usually within 10 working days from the resolution date. The Written Response will include details on the steps taken to address the Grievance, the outcome, the reasons for the decision and further avenues of appeal.
- 3.6. Generally, in terms of actioning the process referred to in this section 3:
 - (a) if the Grievance relates to an academic issue, the Director of Academic Operations will action the process; and
 - (b) if the Grievance relates to a non-academic issue, the Director of Academic Operations will nominate the head of the relevant department (or suitable alternative) to action the process.

4. Stage Two – Internal Appeal

- 4.1. The Complainant may lodge a written appeal using the Internal Appeal Form (together with new details and documentary evidence) only when they think that the applicable policy/procedure was not followed and/or natural justice had not been applied. The internal appeal must be marked to the attention of Student Appeals Committee and emailed to quality@aib.edu.au within 10 working days of the date of the Written Response. If it is not lodged within this timeframe, the outcome of the Written Response will stand.

- 4.2. Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email by the designated administrator who will convene the Students Appeals Committee. The appeal process will commence within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the appeal process as soon as practicable, usually within 1 calendar month.
- 4.3. The Student Appeals Committee will consist of the following members who will be appointed by the CEO:
 - (a) An external member of the Academic Board (as Chair); and
 - (b) 1-3 academic staff members; and
 - (c) 1-3 professional staff members; and
 - (d) either the Diversity Equity Officer or a Student Central representative.

The members of the Student Appeals Committee will be independent from the original decision made in Stage One.

- 4.4. The Student Appeals Committee may at their discretion consult with the Complainant and other relevant parties. Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face meetings. The Complainant or the respondent may ask another support person to accompany them to these discussions.
- 4.5. As soon as practicable, the Student Appeals Committee will provide a written report (“Internal Appeal Report”) to the Complainant usually within 10 working days from the sitting of the committee. The Internal Appeal Report will contain information about the additional steps taken to address the Grievance, including the outcome, the reasons for the decision, and further avenues of appeal.

5. Stage Three – Independent Review

- 5.1. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal and have exhausted all internal avenues of dispute resolution, they can:
 - (a) lodge a request for independent external review to the Independent Higher Education Australia (“IHEA”) within 10 working days of the date of the Internal Appeal Report (see section 5A below). External appeals lodged after the timeframes stipulated above may not be considered; or
 - (b) request independent mediation for the purposes of resolution (refer to section 5B below).

5A. External Appeal

- 5.2. The external appeal is handled by the Independent Higher Education Australia and the contact details are:

Address: Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA)
Suite 612, Level 6, 198 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands VIC 3008
Telephone: +64 (0) 39642 5212
Email: info@ihea.edu.au
Website: <https://ihea.edu.au/>

- 5.3. The purpose of an external appeal is to evaluate if AIB has complied with its own policies and procedures. In investigating a Complainant’s case, the IHEA may make recommendations for AIB or for the Complainant to take corrective action. IHEA may determine that the original decision of AIB’s Student Appeal Committee should be

upheld, or may recommend that the decision should be overturned or amended, with further actions to be undertaken by AIB and/or the Complainant.

- 5.4. The services of the Independent Higher Education Australia are provided free of charge to students. Any associated costs will be covered by AIB.

5B. Independent Mediation

- 5.5. If a student requests independent mediation, AIB will arrange for the appointment of an independent mediator. The student may propose an alternative mediator if they can show grounds that the AIB-appointed mediator is not independent.
- 5.6. Any appointed mediator must be an accredited member of a nationally recognised mediator accreditation body.
- 5.7. The purpose of mediation is not to review the process or for the mediator to reach a determination but to provide an open forum in order for both parties to:
- (a) Talk about the complaint and seek ways to resolve it, in good faith;
 - (b) Discuss issues openly, confidentially and without prejudice;
 - (c) Reach an agreement without admission of fault or liability.
- 5.8. The request for mediation should normally be made within 10 working days from the outcome of the Stage Two – Internal Appeal.
- 5.9. The cost of the mediator (if any) will be shared equally by AIB and the student.

6. Further Action

- 6.1. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under relevant Australian Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies. Where appropriate, required by law or requested by the student, some internal Grievances may need to be referred externally.

7. Record Keeping & Confidentiality

- 7.1. A written record of all Grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least seven years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Academic Dean. These records will be maintained at AIB office.
- 7.2. All records relating to Grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by AIB's [Privacy Policy](#). In exceptional circumstances AIB may be legally obliged to report concerns for safety and/ welfare of its students, staff and property.

8. Reporting to Governance Body

- 8.1. A summary report of all Grievances handled under this procedure, their outcomes and details of suitable improvements as appropriate shall be reported regularly to the Teaching & Learning Committee and the Academic Board who will raise any issues and/or observations to the attention of the Board of Directors.

9. Publication and Training

- 9.1. This procedure and its governing policy will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with AIB through reference in the Student Handbook and on AIB's website (www.aib.edu.au). For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this procedure will be referenced in staff training.

Related Forms:

Formal Grievance Form
Internal Appeal Form

Responsibility:

Chief Executive Officer

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Appendix A: Flowchart of Stages for Student Grievance Handling Procedure

