



Student Grievances and Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

- (a) This Policy sets out principles for the management and resolution of student concerns or dissatisfaction about their experience at UNSW College (College).
- (b) A student grievance or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about College people, activities, services, actions or processes that is contrary to the relevant Code of Conduct. The dissatisfaction could relate to action by the College or others engaged by the College in its operations.
- (c) A student grievance or complaint is distinct from a student request to review or appeal a College decision that, in the student's opinion, relates to a lack of procedural fairness or an inconsistent application of College Policy or Procedure. Student requests to review or appeal a College decision are managed in accordance with the [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#).
- (d) The [Student Grievances and Complaints Procedure](#) supports this Policy and provides specific guidance on how to submit a grievance or complaint.

1.1 Distinction between Grievance and Complaint

- (a) A grievance is the first stage in the complaints resolution process, with the College working with students to initially resolve grievances informally, with the person or service area directly concerned.
- (b) If the grievance remains unresolved or is serious or complex, the student may seek to progress to a formal complaint.
- (c) The various steps to be undertaken are outlined in the [Student Grievances and Complaints Procedure](#).

2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- (a) all College students who are currently enrolled;
- (b) former College students, where the events the subject of the grievance or complaint occurred in the last 12 months and have a connection with the College;
- (c) prospective students, whose grievance or complaint relates to the application process; and
- (d) all College staff.

This Policy does not apply to:

- (a) appeals and reviews of the College's decisions, which are managed under the [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#) and [Student Review and Appeal Procedure](#); or
- (b) complaints alleging misconduct by other students, which are managed under the [Student Misconduct Procedure](#).



3. Policy statement

The College is committed to providing a grievance and complaint process for students to express concerns and resolve issues in a supportive environment. The College will monitor the incidence of grievances and complaints and seek to continuously improve processes, staff training and student support to better manage the scenarios where grievances and complaints typically arise.

4. Policy principles

The following principles apply to grievance and complaint processes at the College:

- (a) In responding to grievances or complaints, the College will apply the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- (b) Complainants should ensure they provide clear and accurate information so grievances and complaints can be resolved as quickly as possible.
- (c) A student making a complaint has the right to a fair and thorough investigation.
- (d) Students may be accompanied by a support person during the process, such as a family member, friend, or counsellor. The College will inform students about services which can provide independent professional advice and advocacy.
- (e) The College will ensure the student has an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
- (f) The grievances and complaints process does not restrict a person's right to pursue other legal remedies or access independent professional advice.
- (g) Staff will use their best endeavours to respond to grievances and complaints within the timeframes set out within the [Student Grievances and Complaints Procedure](#), and otherwise in a timely way.
- (h) For complaints, students will receive a written statement of the outcome, including the reasons for the decision.
- (i) Staff, students and others who are involved in the process must treat grievances and complaints confidentially and respect the privacy of all people concerned.
- (j) If, during any internal or external appeals process, a decision is made to uphold the student complaint, which supports the student, the College will immediately implement the decision and advise the student of the outcome. See [Student Review and Appeal Policy](#).

5. Grievance and complaint process

The College strives to resolve grievances and complaints in a timely way with the people most directly involved. If a grievance or complaint cannot be resolved at a particular stage, there is an escalation process as follows:

Stage	Type	Description
Stage 1	Grievance	Raise directly with the staff member or area or service related to the complaint (local resolution). Appropriate for matters that are less serious in nature, straightforward, or are suitable to be dealt with informally. They are usually resolved easily.
Stage 2	Formal Complaint	Student to submit complaint to complaints@unswcollege.edu.au using the <u>Student Complaint Form</u> . Complaint will be managed by a Case Manager with the oversight of a senior staff member, Manager or similar, if there is no resolution at Stage 1, or the subject matter of the complaint is serious or complex. Appropriate for unresolved grievances, complex complaints or complaints of a serious nature.
Stage 3	Internal Appeal	In the outcome letter for Stage 2, the student is advised as to how to make an internal appeal (including which internal appeal committee will hear the matter - see <u>Student Review and Appeal Policy</u>). An appeal following Stage 2 may only be lodged on the grounds of a lack of procedural fairness.
Stage 4	External review	At any time during the process, a student can take a complaint to a number of external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman or Commonwealth Ombudsman (as applicable), Anti-Discrimination Board or Australian Human Rights Commission (see <u>Student Review and Appeal Policy</u>).

6. Declining to hear grievances or complaints

All people involved in the process are expected to act in good faith. The College will consider all grievances and complaints seriously, though it has discretion to refuse to conduct a complaints process, or discontinue one, where it considers the complaint or grievance is:

- (a) unreasonable, not made in good faith or made with the intent to cause harm;
- (b) made without the intent of resolving a genuine issue or raising any significant or serious issues; or
- (c) not capable of proper investigation (for example, because of a lack of detail or because the events occurred too long ago – see Scope for time limits).

The College may also refuse to conduct, or discontinue, a complaints process where the complainant fails to treat those involved in the process with courtesy or respect, or engages in conduct that poses a risk of harm to others.



The College may refer complaints to other organisations or agencies where they fall outside its responsibilities or control, or where it is lawfully required to do so. The College will inform the complainant of any referral.

7. Anonymous complaints

The College respects the wishes of complainants to remain anonymous. However, the College’s ability to investigate an anonymous complaint may be limited.

8. Records

The College will maintain a record of all formal complaints on its complaints management system. Records may also be kept of local level grievances. The content of the complaints management system will comply with all relevant laws regarding records management, including the State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

9. Privacy and confidentiality

9.1 Confidentiality

Information and records collected during the grievances and complaints process will be kept confidential and handled in accordance with the College’s [Privacy Policy](#). Access to information will be restricted to staff of the College or its service providers who are directly involved in the process or for whom access and use is necessary to enable proper investigation and resolution of the matter.

9.2 Disclosure to third parties

The College will not disclose a complainant’s personal information to third parties during the complaints handling process, except in circumstances where the complainant has given their consent, or the College is required or authorised to do so by law. In certain circumstances, UNSW will be under a legal obligation to report information provided by a complainant, or in connection with a complaint, to the police, a government department or other public body.

10. Roles, responsibilities and delegations

Role	Responsibility
Chief Academic Officer	Implementation, dissemination, and review
Quality and Compliance Officer	(a) administration and publication (b) day-to-day implementation (first point of contact for all inquiries) (c) internal reporting on trends and emerging issues to the College Academic Board and other committees as required



College Executives and managers	Assisting implementation of and adherence to policy as part of overall responsibility for identifying, preventing, responding to and redressing problems experienced by students.
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Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents	
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (Cth)</u> • <u>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</u> • <u>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</u> • <u>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</u>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Admissions Policy</u> • <u>Attendance Policy</u> • <u>Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy</u> • <u>Privacy Policy</u> • <u>Progress and Attendance Policy</u> • <u>Student Refund Policy</u> • <u>Student Misconduct Policy</u> • <u>Student Review and Appeal Policy</u>
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Student Grievances and Complaints Procedure</u> • <u>Student Misconduct Procedure</u> • <u>Student Review and Appeal Procedure</u>
Forms and Registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Complaints Register</u> • <u>Student Complaint Form</u> • <u>Student Appeal Form</u>



11. Policy Governance

Student Grievances and Complaints Policy	
Category/Business Group	Legal and Compliance
Published Externally (Yes/No)	Yes
Approver	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Officer	Chief of Staff
Contact Officer	Compliance Manager
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Version	1.0

Revision History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1	Academic Board	08 August 2023	17 August 2023	N/A

Please visit our website to ensure that you have the latest version of this Policy. Policies are available at: unswcollege.edu.au/about/policies