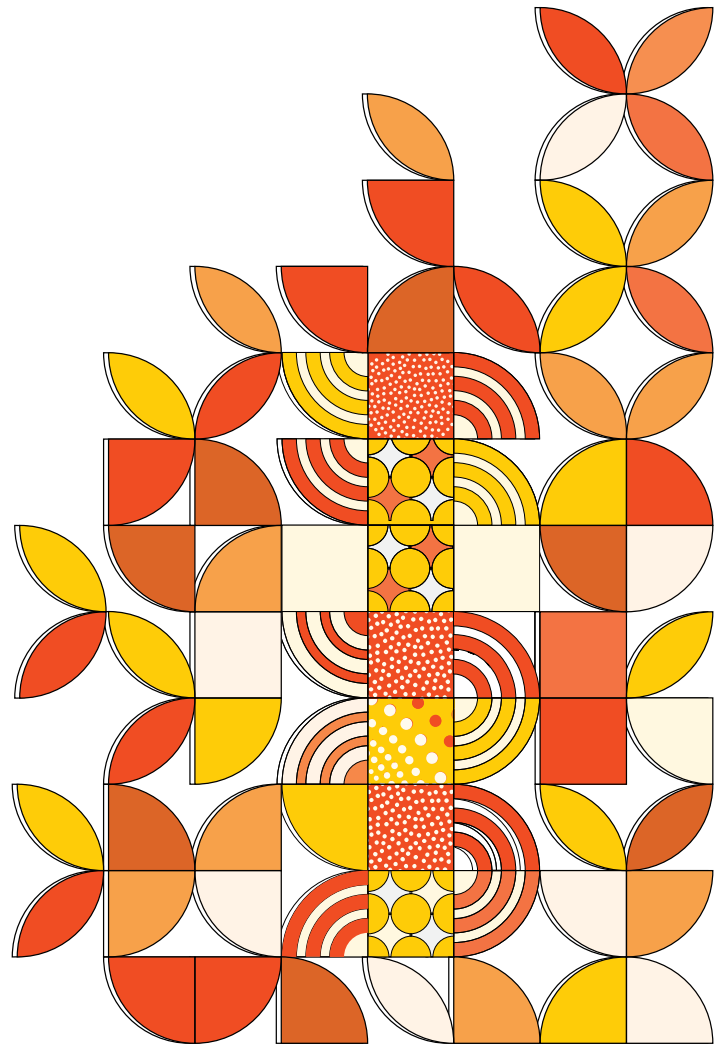


Student Complaints and Appeals Policy



SECTION 1

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy is to ensure that the Institute of Health & Management (IHM) manages and responds to all student complaints, grievances, and appeals in a timely, fair, equitable, and professional manner. This policy aims to provide a clear, structured, and confidential framework for addressing and resolving both academic and non-academic matters affecting students and other relevant stakeholders.
2. IHM is committed to upholding the principles of fairness, accountability, and transparency in handling complaints and appeals, fostering a supportive learning environment that respects the rights and privacy of all parties involved. The policy aligns with the following legislation and regulatory standards and frameworks:
 - a) **Education Services for International Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act)**
 - b) **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:** Standards 2.4 (Student Grievances and Complaints), 6.2 (Corporate Monitoring and Accountability), 7.2 (Information for Prospective and Current Students), and 7.3 (Information Management).
 - c) **National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018:** Standard 10 (Complaints and Appeals)

Scope

3. This policy applies to students enrolled in a course of study at IHM including:
 - a) All onshore international students, to whom the ESOS Act applies.
 - b) All students enrolled in an ongoing course of study that is delivered fully online or through any form of distance education that does not involve students' presence at a designated physical location.
 - c) All domestic students.
 - d) ALL ELICOS students.
4. This policy also applies to staff, members of the IHM Board of Directors and committees, education agents, external consultants, management and corporate governance representatives of IHM.
5. This policy covers issues arising from a student's involvement with IHM that relate to decisions based on academic or general misconduct, academic judgement, unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, or bullying, and/or issues covered by IHM policies and procedures.
6. This policy also covers issues arising from a student's choice not to read and act upon notice or correspondence sent to the student through any official communication channel.
7. This policy is consistent, and seeks to comply, with:
 - a) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.
 - b) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.
 - c) Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) Framework 2021 (HESF).
 - d) ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) Standards 2018.

Definitions

8. Refer to [IHM's Glossary of Terms](#).

Suite Documents

9. This Policy is linked to the following documents:
 - a) Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
 - b) Other documents listed in the 'Related Internal Documents' in Section 3 below.

SECTION 2

Policy Principles

The following principles underpin the complaints and appeals process at IHM:

10. Accessibility

- 10.1 **Transparent Process:** The complaints and appeals process are easily accessible, well-publicized, and free of charge for all students.
- 10.2 **Support:** Students may request assistance throughout the process, including access to a translator or interpreter, and may nominate a support person (e.g., family member, counselor, a friend or advocate) to accompany them at meetings.
- 10.3 **Awareness:** Comprehensive information about the complaints and appeals policy is provided to all students during orientation, in the Student Handbook, and on the IHM website.

11. Fairness and Impartiality

- 11.1 **Natural Justice:** All complaints and appeals are handled objectively, without bias or prejudice, ensuring procedural fairness to all parties involved.
- 11.2 **No punitive action without hearing:** No punitive action or an action affecting the interest of the student making a complaint or an appeal will be taken without hearing the student.
- 11.3 **Neutral Investigation:** All staff members, including an external member, involved in the complaints resolution and appeal processes will act independently and must not have prior involvement in the issue being reviewed.
- 11.4 **Right to Appeal:** Complainants have the right to appeal if they believe the process or decision was inadequate or unfair.
- 11.5 **Right to Avail of External Remedies:** Complainants will have a choice to avail of external resources if they are not happy with the IHM internal resolution decisions or if the internal process does not resolve the issue. Students will be informed of their right to access an external independent review such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman or the Resolution Institute.

12. Confidentiality and Privacy

- 12.1 **Strict Confidentiality:** All complaints and appeals as well as personal information of the complainants and others involved are treated as confidential. Details will be shared only as necessary for the resolution process and in compliance with relevant privacy laws.
- 12.2 **Secure Records:** Documentation of complaints, investigations, and outcomes is securely stored in accordance with Records Management Policy and Records Management Procedure as well as applicable external rules and regulations.

13. Professionalism and Respect

- 13.1 **Protection and Non-Discrimination:** Complainants and respondents will not be victimized, retaliated against, or discriminated against in any manner due to their participation in the complaints or/and appeals processes.
- 13.2 **Respectful Engagement:** All parties involved in the process will be treated with dignity and respect. IHM will actively engage with students and staff to ensure a collaborative resolution where possible.

14. **Timeliness and Efficiency**

- 14.1 **Prompt Resolution:** Complaints and appeals are addressed promptly. Assessment of a complaint or appeal will begin within 10 working days from the day of complaint or appeal, as the case be, and the processes will be concluded within 20 working days.
- 14.2 **Acknowledgement:** An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant upon receipt of their complaint or appeal, and they will be provided with the information about the next course of the process.
- 14.3 **Continuous Updates:** If resolution requires more than 20 working days, the complainant will be informed in writing, with reasons provided for the delay.

15. **Transparency and Accountability**

- 15.1 **Written Outcomes:** Complainants will receive a written statement of the outcome, including detailed reasons for decisions made.
- 15.2 **Student Visa Compliance:** For overseas students, complaints related to visa compliance (e.g., course progress, attendance) will follow all legislative requirements, including notification of potential reporting to the Department of Home Affairs. Students will be provided with 20 working days to access the appeals process before reporting.

16. **Nature of complaints**

- 16.1 Students may raise complaints in relation to academic and non-academic matters and administrative decisions, including, but not limited to:
- student academic progress, curriculum, quality of course delivery, academic achievement in a course and awards in a course,
 - decisions by administrative staff affecting an individual student or a groups of students,
 - administration of policies, procedures and IHM rules,
 - standard of service received from IHM,
 - access to resources or facilities,
 - application and enrolment process including marketing information,
 - misconduct by an IHM staff member or a fellow student,
 - concerns relating to course delivery and assessment, or
 - complaints about the quality of teaching, learning resources, academic support, student amenities, discrimination, sexual harassment and/or other related matters.

17. **Grounds for complaints**

- 17.1 Grounds for complaints include, but are not limited to:
- a student being affected by a decision made without sufficient consideration of the facts, evidence, or circumstances,
 - a penalty or a direction applied to the student being unduly harsh or inappropriate,
 - a student being affected by improper or negligent conduct by another student or a staff member, or
 - a student being affected by unfair treatment, prejudice, or bias, or
 - a breach of the student's privacy or personal information.

18. Informal Complaints

- 18.1 Students are encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have informally by communicating with the Course Coordinator, Lecturer, Student Support Officer or the respective staff member.
- 18.2 Informal complaints are not mandatory, and a student can proceed directly to making a formal complaint if they so wish.
- 18.3 Students can raise an informal complaint through email or post, or by speaking to the respective person.
- 18.4 Alternatively, the student can also speak with one of the IHM administration and student support officers at **(+61) 3 9455 4400, (+61) 1800 763 757** (Toll-free).
- 18.5 In case of an unsatisfactory outcome from the informal complaint process, students have the option to submit a formal complaint under provisions described below.

19. Formal Complaints

- 19.1 Students are required to submit all formal complaints within 10 working days of the incident. In exceptional circumstances, IHM may accept complaints submitted beyond this timeframe, particularly when special circumstances require reasonable adjustments.
- 19.2 Students can submit formal complaint in writing via an email or by filling out the complaints form available in the [IHM website](#).
- 19.3 Students may lodge complaints by emailing the relevant staff member directly or by sending their concerns to the general support email address: studentsupport@ihm.edu.au.

Investigation and Resolution Panel

- 19.4 IHM will thoroughly examine the complaint, and if necessary, will require a formal investigation.
- 19.5 Investigation and Resolution of Complaints will be in accordance with the IHM Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

20. Appeals

- 20.1 Students who believe a decision on their complaint warrants reconsideration have the right to appeal the decision.
- 20.2 A student wishing to appeal a determination on their complaint must lodge an appeal in writing in accordance with the IHM Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
- 20.3 All appeals will be disposed of by the IHM Appeals Committee in accordance with the IHM Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

21. Complaints valued as a contribution to continuous improvement

- 21.1 In seeking excellence as an institution, IHM acknowledges the valuable contribution students make by raising complaints and grievances.
- 21.2 Where a problem or issue exists, it is only through awareness and acknowledgement that IHM may begin to address it.
- 21.3 Any problem that affects a student adversely may be detrimental to IHM's reputation and the ability to maintain IHM's goals as a provider of high-quality higher education.
- 21.4 Though IHM at every opportunity seeks to identify, pre-empt, and address such issues, complaints and grievances are regarded as an invaluable secondary means through which IHM receives feedback for continuous improvement.

22. Confidentiality

- 22.1 Students who raise complaints and grievances have the right to do so in the knowledge that confidentiality will be maintained. Information about matters raised may be shared internally only with the prior consent of the complainant or only in accordance with the privacy laws.
- 22.2 In cases where it is necessary to escalate the complaint beyond the person who initially addressed the complaint, the complainant will be informed. The student has the right to decide whether to proceed.
- 22.3 Where a complaint is escalated to a panel, committee or board, it will be tabled as a confidential item, to be disclosed only to the members of that Panel, Committee or Board.
- 22.4 If the complainant remains unidentified or submits a complaint anonymously, this complaint will be investigated and acted upon at IHM’s discretion, but the same rules of confidentiality will apply.

23. Managing and Recording Complaints and Appeals

- 23.1 IHM will keep a record, within the IHM information system (such as Knowledge Hub), of all complaints, appeals, external review procedures followed, recommendations arising from the resolution processes, and outcomes of the complaints or appeals resolution for 7 years.
- 23.2 All the documents used for decision-making, the communications sent out to the complainant, and the documents relating to outcomes will be recorded in the IHM information system (such as the Student Hub) and will be accessible to the student from their student profile under the documents tab.

24. Information and Awareness-Raising

- 24.1 IHM will provide all students with comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about the complaints and appeals process and policy and procedure.
- 24.2 IHM will raise awareness programs during the students’ orientation sessions as well as through other means about this Policy and the Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

SECTION 3

Associated Information

Related Internal Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure • Bullying and Harassment Policy • Bullying and Harassment Procedure • Complaints and Appeal Forms • Complaints and Appeals Outcome Letter • Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy • Fees, Charges and Refunds Procedure • International Students Transfer Request Assessment Policy • International Students Transfer Request Assessment Procedure • Records Management Policy • Records Management Procedure • Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy • Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure • Student Academic Progression Policy • Student Academic Progression Procedure • Student Assessment and Examination Policy • Student Assessment and Examination Procedure • Student Code of Conduct
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Code of Conduct Implementation Guidelines • Student Misconduct Policy • Student Misconduct Procedure
Related Legislation, Standards, and Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESOS Act 2020 (Cth). ESOS legislative framework • National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) • National Code, Standard 6: Student Support Services • National Code, Standard 8: Overseas student visa requirements • National Code, Standard 9: Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of a Student's Enrolment • National Code, Standard 10: Complaints and appeals • TEQSA Act 2011 (Cth) • HESF 2021: Higher Education Standard Framework (Domain 1: Student participation and attainment, and Domain 6: Governance and accountability)
Date Approved	24.11.2023
Date of Effect	27.11.2023
Date of Next Review	01.11.2026
Approval Authority	Academic Board endorsed by Board of Directors
Responsibility for implementation	Learning and Teaching Committee
Document Custodian	Registrar
Additional changes	27/11/2024
Additional changes approved by	Chief Executive Officer In exercise of power delegated to him under paragraph 3.4 of Schedule 1 to the <i>Delegation Framework</i> for "Board of Directors powers in urgent and unforeseen circumstances".
IHM Doc ID	IHM-SCAP1-3.3

Change History

Version Control		
Change Summary	Date	Short description of change, incl version number, changes, who considered, approved etc
Version 3.0	30/01/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Procedure are separated into two documents • Added version number • Added definitions • Minor editorial changes
Version 3.1	26/07/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor editorial changes and updated HESF reference to 2021 from 2015
Version 3.2	27/11/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer into new template • Definitions linked to Glossary of Terms • Feedback from Wells Advisory was updated • Minor editorial changes have been made

Version 3.3	25/11/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes to Policy further to align with National Code 2018 and HESF 2021 based on feedback from TEQSA CRICOS review in October 2024
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