

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Student Grievance Policy

Designated Officer:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Council Approval:	C01/69, 27 November 2001
Last Amended:	N/A
Related Policies:	Student Conduct and Discipline Policy Sexual and Gender-based Harassment Policy Racial Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Overview

The following policy, together with the related procedure, provides the University community with a mechanism for resolving student grievances.

1. Policy

- 1.1 The University will provide a procedure for the resolution of student grievances in accordance with the principles of natural justice, equity and fair treatment for all parties.
- 1.2 Student grievances will normally be dealt with using an informal procedure at the local level in the first instance and with the minimum number of people involved. A formal procedure will be available when a resolution of the grievance is not achieved at the local level.
- 1.3 A student may appeal against a decision made pursuant to this policy following conduct of the formal procedure, to a Student Grievance Appeals Committee.
- 1.4 Victimisation of any person is unacceptable and may infringe the misconduct provisions of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'Advocate': the person who supports the student complainant and acts on their behalf according to their wishes. The advocate may be a friend, family member or Student Guild representative but shall not include a legal practitioner. Staff of the University will not act as advocates for students.
- 2.2 'Appeal' means a formal request for reconsideration of a decision under this policy and procedure, to the Student Grievance Appeals Committee.
- 2.3 'Complainant/s': the person or persons who make a complaint.

2.4 'Formal Complaint': a written and signed complaint describing the grievance by a student which is referred by that student, a staff member or the Student Guild, to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

2.5 'Grievance' means a complaint arising from:

- Academic programs (content or structure)
- Delivery of a course or whole program
- Alleged action by a University staff member or another student that, in the aggrieved student's opinion, is prejudicial to his or her welfare as a student.
- Administrative action or inaction, policy, procedure or decision
- Research degree supervision matters not provided for under the Rules for Higher Degrees by Research and Professional Doctorates.

This Policy does not apply to grievances arising under the following Academic Rules: Admission Rules, Enrolment Rules, Assessment Rules, Progression Rules, Unsatisfactory Academic Performance and Exclusion Rules and the Rules for Higher Degrees by Research and Professional Doctorates. Separate procedures exist for allegations involving sexual harassment or racial discrimination.

2.6 'Informal Complaint': a verbal complaint describing the grievance to any staff member or Student Guild representative in which a student complainant may or may not wish to be identified.

2.7 'Investigating Officer' shall be a senior member of staff appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to investigate a formal complaint.

2.8 'Mediator': the person who assists the parties named in the complaint to resolve the grievance. The mediator remains neutral and makes no assessment of the facts or rights and wrongs of a case. A number of staff suitable to act as mediators shall be identified by the Deans of Faculties and managers of Administrative Units and shall receive training in mediation skills if required.

2.9 'Natural Justice': the 'fair hearing' rule and the 'no bias' rule: all parties must be given the opportunity to present their case, be fully informed about allegations and decisions made and have the right of representation by another person. A decision-maker in relation to the grievance should have no personal interest in the matter and should be unbiased in their decisions.

2.10 'Respondent/s': the person or persons against whom the complaint is made.

2.11 'Responsible Officer': the Dean, Course or Program Coordinator, Cost Centre Manager or Supervisor of an area.

2.12 'Victimisation': imposing unjust penalties or taking unjust detrimental action against a person.

The University of the Sunshine Coast provides an indemnity to any staff or external member who undertakes a role for or on behalf of the University in relation to the implementation of this Policy. The University accepts full and sole responsibility for all claims including the cost of defending or settling cases where, in the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor, an officer or external member has diligently and conscientiously endeavoured to carry out the duties of a role delegated under this policy and its related procedure.