Standard 8: Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to ensure students have ready access to a fair and inexpensive complaints and appeals process.

SCOPE

The policy and procedure applies to all cases of complaints or appeals and is available to all students enrolled at AIE.

The complaints and appeals process has three separate stages, depending on the nature of the complaint or appeal. These are:

(1) An informal process between the persons involved.
(2) An internal formal process, for matters that have not been able to be resolved informally.
(3) An external process, through ACPET (Domestic Students) and Commonwealth Overseas Ombudsman (International Students), where AIE’s processes have not been able to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the student.

POLICY

1. AIE will encourage all complaints to be resolved informally in the first instance. If the persons involved would like assistance to resolve a matter informally, they are encouraged to speak with the Admin Officer/Training Manager, who may be able to offer assistance at an informal level.

2. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, students should make a formal complaint in writing.

3. Formal complaints must be lodged with the Admin Officer/Training Manager, unless that person is the basis of the complaint, in which case the complaint should be lodged with the Managing Director.

4. The process for resolving a formal written complaint will commence within 10 working days.

5. Resolving the matter will be considered a priority by AIE and every endeavour will be made to resolve the complaint or appeal as quickly as possible.

6. All complaints and appeals will be approached with a fair and transparent manner with the student being provided with information about the status of their complaint and indicative timeframes for resolution as much as possible.

7. The internal formal process will be at no cost to the student.

8. AIE will ensure the matter is handled with the strictest confidentiality.

9. The student shall be given an opportunity to present his/her case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation.

10. Consumer’s Affairs Victoria (Domestic Students) to provide an independent external appeals hearing service in the event that the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily through AIE’s complaints and appeals process.
11. Commonwealth Overseas Ombudsman is an independent external appeals hearing service for international students. Their role is to review the implementation of AIE’s Policies and procedures in the event that an International Student is still dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint or appeal.

12. Each appellant;
   i. Has the opportunity to formally present his/her case
   ii. May have a person in support at their presentation
   iii. Is given a written statement of the outcome including reasons for the decision

13. AIE will immediately undertake the relevant actions required to implement the panel’s decision.

14. The student may continue to attend classes until a decision is made by AIE.

**PROCEDURE**

**Informal process:**
(Informal process only applies to Complaints).

Students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally in the first instance.

Any staff member can attempt to assist the student in resolving informal complaints.

If the matter is resolved informally there is no need for other parties to be involved or for a record to be kept.

If the issue is not resolved the student should proceed to a formal resolution.

**Internal Review**

The formal appeal or complaint must be in writing and submitted to the Admin Officer/Training Manager.

The Admin Officer/Training Manager considers all complaints in the first instance by:

- Reviewing relevant documentation
- Consider any informal decision made to date
- Discuss the matter with the student and any other relevant parties
- Form a recommendation
- Notify the student in writing of the outcome.

The process will commence no later than 10 days from receipt of the formal complaint or appeal.

A satisfactory outcome might be achieved through conciliation.

**Appeal process**

**Internal Appeal**

1. The student can apply in writing directly to the Managing Director to appeal a decision on their academic progress or a decision on an earlier complaint.

2. All relevant documentation should be submitted to the Managing Director with the application.

3. The Managing Director may consider the matter or convene a panel to hear the appeal or complaint.

4. The panel may include but not be limited to:
a. The Managing Director or a person appointed by the Managing Director
b. representative of staff
c. an independent person – preferably a representative of the student body

5. The student shall be given an opportunity to present his/her case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation.

6. The relevant staff member shall be given an opportunity to present his/her case to the panel and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation.

AIE will immediately undertake the relevant actions required to implement the panel’s decision.

7. A written outcome detailing the reasons for the finding will be provided to the student within 5 working of hearing the issue.

8. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review they may initiate an External Review.

**External Appeal and Complaints**

1. The student shall take the complaint and the internal reviews findings to an independent body to hear the complaint.

2. Consumer Affairs Victoria will hear appeals for Domestic Students. Information can be found at their web site.


4. AIE’s Admin Officer/Training Manager can assist the student in accessing this process

5. The student undertakes this action at their own cost.

6. AIE will accept Consumer Affairs Victoria’s decision.

7. Where the decision is in support of the student, AIE will reimburse the Student 100% of reasonable costs of the mediation process and will immediately implement the decision and/or corrective and preventive action required.

8. This complaints and appeals process does not limit the student to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws or through other complaints and appeals mechanisms through government agencies.

9. Commonwealth Overseas Ombudsman (International Students) is an independent external body to hear overseas students’ appeals and complaints.
10. Information about commonwealth overseas ombudsman appeals and complaints procedures can be found on:

http://ombudsman.gov.au

11. AIE’s Admin Officer/Training Manager can assist the student in accessing this process

12. The student undertakes this action at their own cost.

13. AIE will accept ACPET’s decision.

14. Where the decision is in support of the student, AIE will reimburse the Student 100% of reasonable costs of the mediation process and will immediately implement the decision and/or corrective and preventive action required.

15. This complaints and appeals process does not limit the student to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws or through other complaints and appeals mechanisms through government agencies.

Responsibilities

- Managing Director
- Admin Officer
- Training Manager

References

- Application to lodge a complaint or appeal decision