

Student Complaints Resolution Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This policy provides for the fair and prompt resolution of student complaints about academic, service and administrative matters in a manner that is consistent with the University's values.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This policy applies to:

- a. Students of Victoria University, which, for the purposes of this policy for academic, service and administrative complaints, include persons whose study performance is being or is to be assessed by the University. This policy applies notwithstanding that such a person is not enrolled at the University in a course leading to an award.
- b. This policy and associated procedures may also be used by a person making a complaint regarding an admissions decision, notwithstanding that they are not a student of the University. Complaints regarding admission decisions must be lodged within 6 months of the decision's communication.
- c. Similarly, this policy and its procedures may be used by a person whose enrolment (or provisional enrolment) was completed or terminated no more than 6 months prior to bringing the complaint, provided that the matter to which the complaint relates occurred during the course of their enrolment.
- d. A complaint brought under this policy may relate to the performance of administrative, academic, teaching or research or service functions of the University.
- e. Allegations of discrimination, harassment and bullying are managed under the University's Discrimination & Sexual Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and the University's Bullying Prevention and Management Policy [insert links].

Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Nil

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(4) The University is committed to a culture of continuous improvement, quality assurance, excellence and ongoing process review and values comments from students on their University experience and suggestions for improvement. The University recognises its responsibility to provide an environment in which students and staff are treated fairly and with respect. To this end, the University is committed to maintaining an organisational culture in which a student's right to seek resolution of a complaint is recognised and supported.

(5) Complaints by students will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Good faith: The complaints process assumes and relies upon all parties engaging in good faith, with an open

approach to considering reasonable options.

- b. Procedural fairness: All parties to a complaint will be treated fairly, and in a manner that respects their right to an unbiased, timely and transparent response in process and outcome. The decision-maker will not be biased or appear to be biased nor have a personal interest in the matter of the complaint. Matters that are not relevant will not be taken into account by the decision-maker.
- c. Confidentiality: A complaint will be treated by all parties with appropriate confidentiality. Unless required otherwise by law, information arising in the course of a complaint will be circulated only between the parties and other persons involved on a confidential and need-to-know basis. Such information will only be used for the purpose of resolving the complaint in accordance with this policy, with the proviso that aggregated and de-identified data can be used to support the University's monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement processes with respect to student services. Each complaint resolution process will be conducted by as few people as possible.
- d. Proximity: Every reasonable effort will be made by the parties to the complaint and the decision-maker to resolve the complaint at the level closest to the parties.
- e. Timeliness: All relevant levels of authority within the University will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and in accordance with the timelines set out in the Student Complaints Resolution Procedures. In resolving complaints, University staff will be mindful of internal and/or external timelines, processes and requirements that are relevant to the subject of the complaint (e.g. census date, professional registration).
- f. Advocacy: The University will make available to students VU advocacy services for advice and representation. The University will advertise the availability of these services through appropriate channels.
- g. Recordkeeping: All records related to a complaint resolution process will be retained in accordance with the University's Retention and Disposal Authority, the relevant periods for which are detailed in the Student Complaints Resolution Procedure.
- h. Support: A complainant may nominate their own support person, other than a currently practicing solicitor or barrister (except during an appeal with the prior leave of the Appeals Panel Chair), to support them in the process. If a student does not have a person they wish to nominate, the University will supply at their request an appropriate support person.

(6) No disadvantage: A student making a complaint will not be disadvantaged simply by virtue of having made the complaint, unless the complaint is found to be vexatious. In particular:

- a. The complainant must not be hindered or prevented from continuing to use University facilities and attend lectures, classes, laboratories and tutorials and to submit assessment as required, simply by virtue of having made the complaint.
- b. A student who is also:
 - i. the subject of an action by the University under the Student Misconduct Regulation; or
 - ii. subject to exclusion under the Exclusion for Safety Reasons Regulation; or
 - iii. subject to a cancellation of enrolment due to unpaid fees, where fees are unrelated to the substance of the complaint; or
 - iv. the subject of any relevant court order or action precluding them from attending a campus

may be excluded or prevented from attending classes on that basis, unrelated to their status as a complainant.

(7) Right to be heard: All parties have the right to be heard before decision is made, including the right to respond to statements or evidence that are relied upon in reaching a determination.

(8) Right to withdraw: A student making a complaint has the right to withdraw the complaint at any stage of the process. However, the University retains the right, to address complaint matters, even in cases where a complaint has been withdrawn, in order for the University to meet its obligations.

(9) Right to respond: Where the complaint concerns the actions of an individual or individuals, respondents have the right to be informed of the allegations and the right to respond.

(10) Right to appeal: A student who makes a complaint under this Policy, and is not satisfied with the outcome, has a right to apply for an appeal, the grounds for which are specified under the Student Appeals Regulation of the University. The relevant Appeals Procedure details the process for initiating an appeal. .

(11) Anonymity: Students who have a complaint and wish to remain anonymous may lodge their complaint by writing directly to the Academic Registrar. However, it should be noted that these complaints may be difficult to investigate because of a lack of evidence. The Registrar will progress these matters at her or his discretion. Further, while the University will accept anonymous complaints it does not guarantee the anonymity of complainants.

(12) This policy complies with all requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2007 (the Code). This policy accords with the International Standard: Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations ISO 10002:2004.

Section 5 - Procedures

(13) See [Student Complaint Resolution Procedures](#).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(14) Nil

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	1st October 2014
Review Date	1st June 2017
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	18th September 2014
Expiry Date	20th May 2015
Responsible Officer	Anne Siegers Chief Risk Officer anne.siegers@vu.edu.au
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