



Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure

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A. Overview

- i. The Lead Institute of Higher Education ('the Institute' or 'LIHE') Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') outlines the process for the management of student complaints and appeals. LIHE is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair, equitable and comprehensive grievance management system, which is easily accessible to all students.
- ii. Definitions

For definitions, please refer to the 'Dictionary of Terms'.

B. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and staff at LIHE.

C. Policy Principles

This Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- i. LIHE considers all reported grievances and complaints seriously;
- ii. LIHE grievance handling procedures are free of charge, consistent, fair and equitable, appropriately confidential, consistently managed and properly documented;
- iii. Natural justice and best practice are followed to achieve educationally constructive and operationally fair, reasonable outcomes;
- iv. Most disputes/disagreements should be satisfactorily resolved informally by talking with the complainant to quickly help resolve concerns and remove any barriers to good working/teaching/learning relationships;
- v. All prospective, enrolled and past students are entitled to access this Policy, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance or complaint has arisen or their place of residence;
- vi. No grievant or respondent will be victimised or discriminated against in any of the stages set out in this Policy;
- vii. Any dispute not satisfactorily resolved at LIHE internally will be referred to external arbitration.

D. Grounds for Grievance

A grievance or complaint may be made against any of LIHE decisions, actions or processes that may include (but are not limited to) concerns over such matters as:

- i. Application procedures, including matters related to education agents;
- ii. Student eligibility for entry to specific courses of study;
- iii. Advanced standing involving unit exemptions;
- iv. Discrimination;
- v. Exclusion from events and facilities;
- vi. Financial matters;
- vii. Fines and payments;
- viii. Harassment;
- ix. Health and safety management;

- x. Management of personal information;
- xi. Student progress decisions involving deferral, suspension or cancellation of enrolment;
- xii. Completion of designated awards in a course of study;
- xiii. Any academic decision made by an academic staff that is seen to unfairly privilege or compromise, or adversely affect the learning opportunity or achievement of outcomes for an individual student or group of students;
- xiv. The nature of teaching delivery, learning resources or student support;
- xv. The content, structure or status of a unit or course.

E. Grievance Management Procedure

- i. Stage 1: Informal discussion/negotiation
 - a. Where grievances and complaints are first addressed internally, it would be expected that most matters can be resolved informally by talking with the individuals concerned. Constructive and open dialogue about an issue between student and staff is normally the most effective way to resolve grievances and complaints.
 - b. If a resolution is not possible informally at Stage 1, Stages 2 – 4 provide formal mechanisms for dealing with the matter by internal review, appeal and ultimately and external arbitration.
- ii. Stage 2: Formal grievance application
 - a. If dissatisfied with the response to the grievance or complaint, or the time taken to resolve the matter under Stage 1, the student may lodge a formal internal grievance or complaint by completing the *Grievance Application Form* and submitting the form to the Student Support Manager with relevant supporting documents.
 - b. The Student Support Manager will check the form for completeness to ensure all relevant supporting materials have been attached, including details of the outcomes of Stage 1 of the complaints and grievance process, before forwarding to the Dean.
 - c. The Dean will investigate the grievance and complaint with procedural fairness. This includes consulting with relevant academic and administrative staff and reviewing the student record as appropriate.
 - d. The written grievance and complaint will be dealt within a reasonable time, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the student submitting the *Grievance Application Form* for formal consideration.
 - e. If the student is satisfied with the response at this stage, no further action is required.
 - f. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, outcome or the time taken to resolve the matter, they can proceed to Stage 3.
- iii. Stage 3: Internal review
 - a. All internal appeals will be considered by the Grievance Committee ('the Committee'). This Committee will normally comprise the relevant Course Director, Student Support Manager and a member of academic staff nominated by the Dean. The Dean will appoint an alternative impartial member from the Institute's staff where the grievance relates to either the Course Director or Student Support Manager or a previous decision in which the Course Director or Student Support Manager have participated in its determination.
 - b. The student must submit his or her grievance and complaint with any further substantiation or evidence relating to their complaint to the Committee through Dean.

The Dean will assess the information for completeness to ensure all relevant supporting materials have been attached, and that Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the grievance and complaints process has taken place. The complaint should:

1. clearly outline the nature and further grounds in support of student grievance and complaint;
 2. provide the dates and information relating to the Stage 1 and 2 decisions and attach copies of any written communication between the student and the staff member that took place at Stage 1 and Stage 2;
 3. justify why a reconsideration is being requested;
 4. clarify the expected outcome they are seeking;
 5. attach any further substantive evidence not previously provided that supports their grievance and complaint, where available.
- c. The student will be advised of the outcome of the Committee recommendations, in writing via email within 10 working days of the meeting of the Committee.
- d. If the student is satisfied with the response at this stage, no further action is required.
- e. If the student is dissatisfied with outcome of the Committee's decision, the student will be advised he or she can take the matter to external arbitration, which is Stage 4 of the process.

iv. Stage 4: External/independent arbitration

- a. If the aggrieved student does not accept the outcome of the internal grievance and complaint process, they can elect to seek resolution via external independent arbitration to receive a final decision. The Institute will cover any fees charged by the External Mediator.

b. Domestic Students

If not satisfied with the Stage 3 decision, either the domestic student or the Institute may request that the matter be dealt with through an external independent dispute resolution process. A service for this purpose is provided through the Student Mediation Scheme by the Resolution Institute. LIHE covers all fees charged by the Resolution Institute.

c. International Students

If not satisfied with the decision in Stage 3, the international student or Institute may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process via the Overseas Students Ombudsman. The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a grievance or complaint against a provider or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by the Institute. The Overseas Students Ombudsman will schedule and investigate disputed matters raised with them following their own external protocols at no cost to the student or the institute.

d. External dispute resolution contact details

Domestic Students	International Students
Student Mediation Scheme	Overseas Students Ombudsman

Resolution Institute Suite 602, Level 6, Tower B, Zenith Centre 821– 843 Pacific Highway CHATSWOOD NSW 2067 02 9251 3366 https://www.resolution.institute/membership-information/student-mediation-scheme	(OSO) GPO Box 442 CANBERRA ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA 1300 362 072 https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students
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F. Withdrawal

A complainant may, at any time in the process, withdraw the complaint or associated appeal. The withdrawal must be submitted in writing, except when withdrawing an informal complaint. It is not necessary for a complainant to provide any reason for withdrawal.

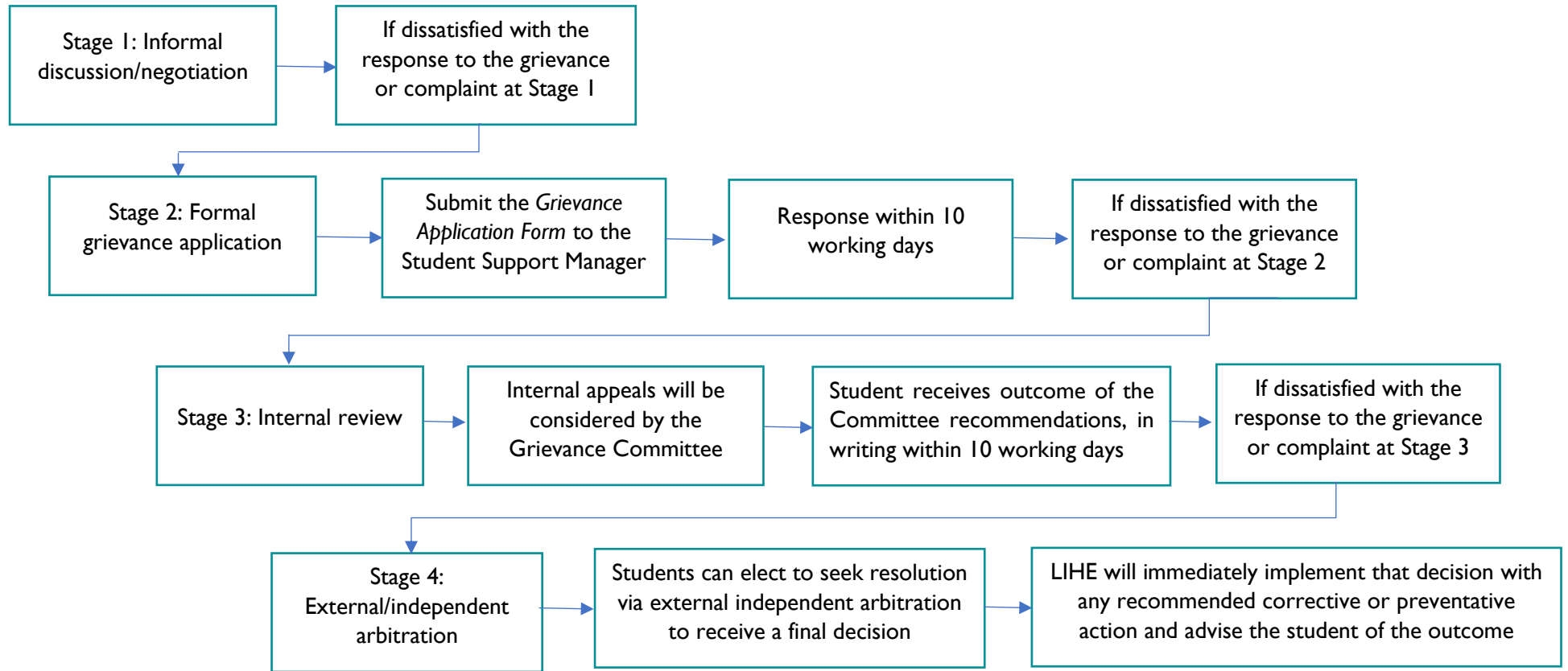
G. Implementation and Record Keeping

- i. If the internal or external grievances or complaints resolution process at any stage results in a decision that supports the student, LIHE will immediately implement that decision with any recommended corrective or preventative action and advise the student of the outcome.
- ii. At all stages of the grievances and complaints resolution process, reasons and a full explanation will be given in writing for decisions and actions taken.
- iii. Records of all grievances and complaints, applications for review of decisions and outcomes of external independent arbitration will be kept as per the *Records Management Policy*. These records will be strictly confidential and stored securely by LIHE.
- iv. Supervised access by the parties to the grievances or complaints to view these records will be permitted and granted upon written request.

H. Review and Monitoring

LIHE is committed to ensuring an effective, transparent, and fair process is used for grievance management. LIHE encourages feedback and comments on its grievance handling process from all parties involved during the investigation. The Executive Management Team will monitor the ongoing effectiveness of LIHE's grievance management processes by reviewing trends or deficiencies occurring throughout the process and provide any recommendations for improvements to the Dean. The Dean will report annually to the Academic Board in relation to student grievance management process.

Appendix I: Student Grievance Process



Version	Approved by	Approval Date
2	Academic Board	27 October 2023
Next Review	Custodian	Effective Date
Refer to the <i>Policy Documents Review Schedule</i>	Dean	27 October 2023
Related Documents	Dictionary of Terms Academic Integrity Policy Records Management Policy Student Selection and Admission Policy and Procedure Student Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Stakeholder Feedback Policy	
References and Legislations	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	