



Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure

Policy

Carrick Higher Education (“the Institute”) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system, which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge.

The Institute aims to:

- develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps the Institute to prevent grievances from recurring;
- ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised and;
- ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

A grievance can be defined as a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the Institute’s services and activities.

A grievance may be an expression of dissatisfaction with:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic matters including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- access to personal records and;
- the way someone has been treated.

This *Grievance Handling Resolution Policy and Procedure (Students)* is designed to ensure that the Institute responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

1.0 Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance

Students (or persons seeking to enrol with the Institute) are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. There are Student Counsellors available to assist students to resolve their issues at this level.

2.0 Procedure

- 2.1. This procedure can be utilised by students and those seeking to enrol in a course of study with the Institute to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature.
 - 2.1.1. Grievances of an academic nature include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study.
 - 2.1.2. Grievances of a non-academic nature include all other matters.
- 2.2. During all stages of the *Grievance Handling and Resolution Procedure* the Institute will take all steps to ensure that the complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.
- 2.3. Implementation of the procedure will be done without prejudice to either party.
- 2.4. At all stages of this procedure a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or the respondent.
- 2.5. There is no cost to the complainant for utilising this grievance and appeals process.

3.0 Stage One

- 3.1. Formal grievances must be submitted in writing to the Course Coordinator. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five working days.
- 3.2. The Course Coordinator, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.
 - 3.2.1. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant.
 - 3.2.2. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person, not of legal representation, to accompany them.
- 3.3. The Course Coordinator will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance within ten working days of receiving the formal grievance.

4.0 Stage Two

- 4.1. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may lodge an appeal with the Academic Director.

- 4.2. The Academic Director, or nominee, will consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days of receiving the appeal.
 - 4.2.1. Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews.
 - 4.2.2. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them (the person is not to be of legal representation) to these interviews.
- 4.3. Following the consultation, the Academic Director, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance within ten working days.

5.0 Stage Three

- 5.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may take their appeal through an external dispute resolution process facilitated by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).
- 5.2. The cost of lodging an external appeal is \$400, with 50% paid by the complainant (\$200) and 50% paid by the Institute.
- 5.3. The complainant must lodge an appeal to ACPET via email and is required to complete the appeals form which includes payment details.
 - 5.3.1. The form is available from the ACPET website:
http://www.acpet.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4947&Itemid=348
 - 5.3.2. The form is also available from the Student Services Department.
- 5.4. Contact for ACPET:
Student.appeals@acpet.edu.au
- 5.5. The complainant should not phone or go into an ACPET office under any circumstance.
- 5.6. Once ACPET has received the appeals form, they will contact the complainant and the Institute to request all documentation.
- 5.7. ACPET will then send all documents to an external reviewer.
- 5.8. The external reviewer will make the decision based on the documentation and forward the decision to ACPET.
- 5.9. ACPET will notify the complainant and the Institute of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 1 month of receiving the form.
- 5.10. The Institute agrees to be bound by the independent mediator's recommendations and the Academic Director, or their nominee, will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within thirty days of receipt of the mediator's report.

- 5.11. If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as The Anti-Discrimination Board or The Office of Fair Trading.

6.0 Record Keeping & Confidentiality

- 6.1. Records of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Academic Director.
- 6.2. These records will be maintained at 370 Docklands Drive, Docklands, Victoria.
- 6.3. All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the Institute's Privacy Policy.

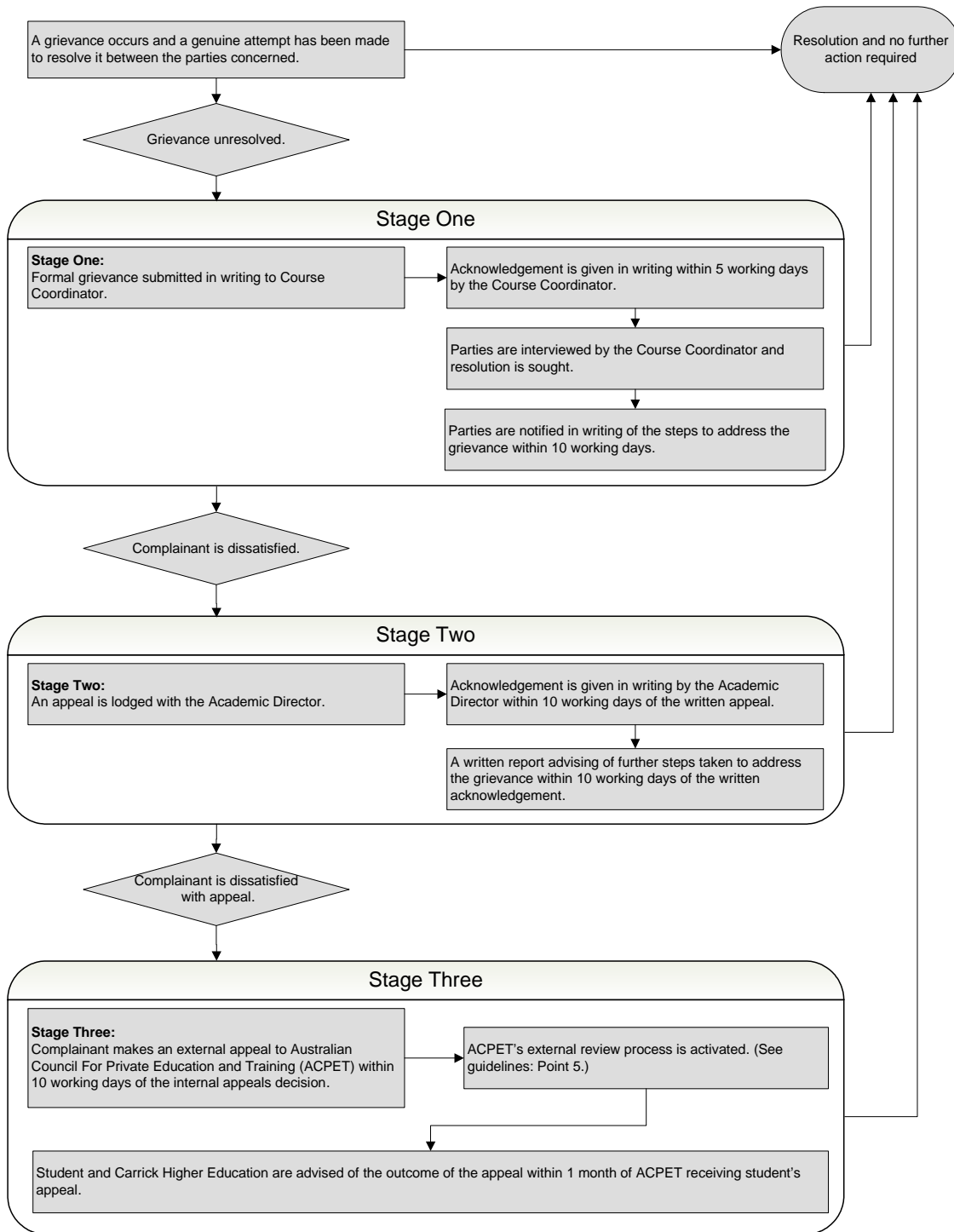
7.0 Improvement from Grievance Outcomes

- 7.1. Where systemic problems and issues have been identified from the outcomes at any of the stages of grievance handling the issue is to be reported to the appropriate person and/or department for appropriate action.
- 7.2. In communicating the issue confidentiality and privacy must be maintained for the parties concerned.

8.0 Additional Information

This procedure will be made available to students, or those seeking to enrol in a course of study with the Institute, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

9.0 Flow Diagram of the Grievance Process



10.0 Publication

- 10.1. The Policy and Procedure was agreed on and ratified by the Carrick Higher Education Academic Advisory Board, which is responsible for the overall academic governance of the Institute, on 6th August 2007.
- 10.2. This Policy and Procedure will be made public by publication on the Institute's website (www.carrickeducation.edu.au).
- 10.3. For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will form part of the induction process and will be published in the Employee Handbook and the Policies & Forms Index.

Nothing in this *Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure* limits the rights of students or persons seeking to enrol with the Institute to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law. Also, these dispute resolution procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Related Policy

SMP 5 Student Privacy and Personal Information

Related Form

SMF 15 Request Complaint Appeal Form (electronic)
Student External Appeal Form

Policy Locations

P: Drive
MyCarrick
Website