

## **Policy Title**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **Preamble**

This Policy is consistent with:

- The Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003
- The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standard 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints
- The Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS) 2000
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)

#### **Purpose**

This Policy has been developed to reaffirm Deakin College's commitment to a supportive, fair and equitable learning environment by providing students with access to an independent, cost-free, and effective complaint resolution process that is handled efficiently and in a timely manner.

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all current, former and prospective students across all Deakin College campuses who has a concern, grievance or complaint related to:

- a process, action or service, whether academic or administrative, provided or performed by Deakin College or any entity acting on its behalf;
- the conduct of a staff member, student, or any individual acting or operating on behalf of Deakin College.

This Policy also applies to grievances or complaints received from the parents, education agents and the general public.

Matters, whether academic or non-academic in nature, that are covered by another Deakin College policy, will be addressed in accordance with that policy.

#### **Policy**

1. This Policy is underpinned by the following principles:
  - 1.1. Deakin College recognises the right of students to express their concerns, grievances or complaints and, is committed to resolving complaints in an equitable and efficient way which reaffirms its commitment to the provision of a supportive and positive learning environment and student experience;
  - 1.2. All complaints are taken seriously and treated objectively, with courtesy, sensitivity and with an open mind;

- 1.3. All complaints will be considered and dealt with according to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness;
- 1.4. All complaints will be addressed in a supportive environment, ensuring that the complainant is not subjected to victimisation, intimidation, discrimination or harassment;
- 1.5. All complaints will be resolved as close to the source as possible;
- 1.6. There is no cost to the complainant for accessing Deakin College's internal complaints or appeals processes as outlined in this policy; however, external agencies may charge a fee for their services;
- 1.7. Students are encouraged in the first instance to access Deakin College's informal grievance or complaints processes prior to lodging a formal complaint;
- 1.8. A complaint does not restrict a student's right to access Australia's consumer protection laws or to pursue other legal remedies;
- 1.9. All complaints will be submitted, assessed and resolved within the time-frames specified in this policy and its associated procedures;
- 1.10. Deakin College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that information and communication regarding any complaints remain confidential and will only be disclosed to individuals who have a legitimate right to the information due to their role in the process;
- 1.11. Complainants have the right to present their case and to be accompanied by a support person, provided the person is not a qualified and practising lawyer;
- 1.12. Deakin College's complaint process allows for the resolution of only one external complaint.

## **2. Complaints**

- 2.1. Complaints of an academic nature are those related to admissions, assessment, enrolment, attendance and academic progress;
- 2.2. Complaints of a non-academic nature are all other matters and include behaviour that the complainant perceives as victimisation, intimidation, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying, or complaints about Deakin College's services and support;
- 2.3. Complaints must be lodged as soon as practicable, at the very least, as soon as the complainant becomes aware of the matter which forms the basis of the grievance or complaint;
- 2.4. Anonymous complaints will be accepted however, investigation may be restricted and remedies limited.
- 2.5. **Informal resolution of student grievances or complaints**
  - In the first instance, students are encouraged to raise and discuss their concern directly with the person(s) or area whose action or decision caused the concern and attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution;

- If the student's concern is informally resolved and, the student is satisfied with the resolution and any actions or decisions resulting from this process, the matter is considered closed and will not be recorded in Deakin College's Complaint Register;
- If the student's concern is not resolved or the student is not satisfied with the resolution or outcome, the student may lodge a formal complaint to Deakin College Complaints.

## **2.6. Formal resolution of student grievances or complaints**

- To initiate the formal complaint process, a *Complaint Application* must be submitted online via the form at: <https://app.pipefy.com/public/form/jjFCUdSw>. Refer to the *Complaints Procedure* for details. A link to the online form is also available from the Student Hub in the Student Portal;
- The written outcome of the complaint will be sent via email to the complainant's Deakin College email address and personal email address, as recorded in the student management system. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their contact details (postal address, phone/mobile number and personal email address) are provided to Deakin College and kept up to date;
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint resolution, they may appeal the decision internally to the Deakin College Appeals Committee;
- Deakin College will make all reasonable efforts to communicate the outcome of complaints as promptly as possible to avoid disadvantaging the complainant.

## **3. Internal Appeal**

- 3.1.** An appeal against the outcome of a formal complaint must be submitted to the Deakin College Appeals Committee within twenty (20) working days from the date the written grievance or complaint outcome is provided, in accordance with the *Appeals Policy* and *Appeals Procedure*.

## **4. External Appeal**

- 4.1.** If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal, they may request an external review by an independent agency within ten (10) working days following the written notification of the outcome by the Deakin College Appeals Committee. For contact details of external agencies, refer to the *Appeals Procedure*.
- 4.2.** If an external agency issues a recommendation regarding a complaint, Deakin College will promptly act on the recommendation and notify the complainant of the outcome.

## **5. Record Keeping**

- 5.1.** Deakin College will retain records of a complaint for five (5) years after the complainant is no longer an accepted student.

### **Related Policies**

Equity and Diversity Policy  
Admissions Policy  
Appeals Policy  
Assessment Policy

Privacy Policy  
Refund Policy  
Student Code of Conduct Policy  
Student Support Policy

## Enrolments, Fees and Charges Policy

### Procedure

Complaints Procedure

Appeals Procedure

### Definitions

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
Complaint	A formal process to request for an action or grievance to be investigated.
Complainant	A student who submits a complaint.
Course	A program of instruction that leads to an award of the institution.
Overseas Student	A student who holds an Australian student visa.
Student Portal	Deakin College Intranet providing academic and administrative information and internal communication.
Working Day	Excludes Victorian and Australian public holidays and weekends.

### Status and Details

Identification	Complaints Policy
Initial Issue Date	19/04/2018
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Domain	Student and Academic Services
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Approval Authority	Senior Management Group
Implementation Officer	Director Quality & Student Services
Enquiries Contact	Robert Close