

## Policy Title

### Complaints Policy

#### Preamble

This Policy has been approved by Deakin College's Academic Board of Studies on 19 April, 2018.

This Policy is consistent with:

- The Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003
- The Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 (Threshold Standards) Standard 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints
- The Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS) 2000 and
- 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 affirm Deakin College's commitment to a supportive, fair and equitable learning environment by ensuring that students have access to a complaint process which is independent, free, effective and, resolved in an efficient and timely manner.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all current, former and prospective students at all campuses of Deakin College who has a concern, grievance or complaint in relation to:

- a process, action or service, either academic or administrative in nature, provided or performed by Deakin College or any entity operating on its behalf;
- a conduct of a staff member, another student or other person 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, either academic or non-academic in nature covered by another Deakin College policy are to be dealt with 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 dealt with in a supportive environment and the complainant will not be 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 in accessing Deakin College's internal avenues of complaints or appeals set out in this policy, however, an external agency may choose to 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 a person who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the process;
- 1.11. Complainants have the right to present his or her case and, be accompanied by a support person providing that the person is not a qualified and practising lawyer;
- 1.12. Deakin College's complaint process allows for the outcome 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;
- 2.1. Complaints of a non-academic nature are those related to fees and, a complainant's conduct which may result in perceived victimisation, intimidation, discrimination or harassment;
- 2.2. 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;
- 2.3. Anonymous complaints will be accepted however, investigation may be restricted and remedies limited. This will be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- 2.4. **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.

### 2.5. Formal resolution of student grievances or complaints

- A student whose concern is not resolved during the informal resolution process may lodge a formal complaint to Deakin College Complaints;
- A *Complaint Application* must be submitted via email at [dcol-complaints@deakin.edu.au](mailto:dcol-complaints@deakin.edu.au) to commence the formal complaint process. The grounds for complaint must be stated in the application and, supporting documentation provided;
- The complaint process will commence within ten (10) working days of its lodgement and finalised as soon as practicable. At a minimum, this will comprise of a written acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant with the assignment of a case reference number;
- If a request to present his or her case is received from the complainant, at least five (5) working days' notice regarding the date, time and location of the meeting must be provided;
- A complainant may be accompanied by a support person providing that the person is not a qualified and practising lawyer;
- If a complainant fails to attend the scheduled meeting, the complainant's written submission will be considered by the Senior staff investigating the complaint;
- The formal complaint will be forwarded to a Senior staff member listed in in *Schedule A* for investigation and resolution;
- The outcome of a complaint and reason(s) for the decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing within ten (10) working days from the completion of the investigation;
- The written complaint outcome will be sent by email to the complainant's Deakin College email address and personal email address recorded in the student management system. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his or her correspondence details (postal address, phone/mobile number and personal email address) are provided to Deakin College and updated regularly;
- In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint resolution, the complainant may appeal the outcome to the Deakin College Appeals Committee;
- Deakin College will make all reasonable attempts to advise the outcome of complaints as soon as practicable so not to disadvantage the complainant.

### **3. Appeals**

- 3.1.** An appeal against the outcome of a formal complaint must be submitted within twenty (20) working days from the date the written outcome grievance or complaint outcome to Deakin College Appeals Committee as per the Appeals Policy;

### **4. External Complaints**

- 4.1.** If a complainant is not satisfied with the appeal outcome, the complainant may pursue the matter externally through an independent complaints agency within ten (10) working days following the written notification of the outcome by the Deakin College Appeals Committee. Examples of an external complaints agency include, but are not limited to:

- **Overseas Student Ombudsman**

GPO Box 442

Canberra ACT 2601

Website: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/overseas-students>

- **Victorian Ombudsman**

Level 2, 570 Bourke Street

Melbourne VIC 300

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/Home>

**4.2.** Deakin College students who are on an Australian student visa may contact the Overseas Students Ombudsman. Domestic students or non-student visa holders may contact the Victorian Ombudsman.

**4.3.** If the external complaints agency makes a recommendation in relation to a complaint, Deakin College will ensure that the recommendations are implemented immediately and advise the complainant of the outcome.

## 5. Record Keeping

**5.1.** Deakin College will keep records of a complaint for five (5) years after the complainant ceases to be an accepted student.

### *Schedule A*

| Type of grievance or complaint | Senior Staff                                    | Contact Details               |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Academic                       | Academic Manager (Burwood)                      | deborah.fitton@deakin.edu.au  |
|                                | Academic Manager (Waterfront)                   | jo.w@deakin.edu.au            |
|                                | Academic Manager (Waurin Ponds)                 | andrea.clifford@deakin.edu.au |
|                                | Admissions Manager                              | elisha.rulton@deakin.edu.au   |
|                                | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |
| Fees                           | Academic Director (Burwood)                     | robert.close@deakin.edu.au    |
|                                | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |
| Administrative                 | Student and Academic Services Manager (Burwood) | annie.rapoport@deakin.edu.au  |

|  |   |                               |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Campus Manager(Geelong)                         | liz.hewitt@deakin.edu.au      |
|  | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |
| Student Support                                | Student and Academic Services Manager (Burwood) | annie.rapoport@deakin.edu.au  |
|  | Campus Manager (Geelong)                        | liz.hewitt@deakin.edu.au      |
|  | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |
| Educational Agents                             | Marketing Manager                               | eliza.russell@deakin.edu.au   |
| Conduct of Staff (academic and administrative) | Academic Manager (Burwood)                      | deborah.fitton@deakin.edu.au  |
|  | Academic Manager (Waterfront)                   | jo.w@deakin.edu.au            |
|  | Academic Manager (Waurm Ponds)                  | andrea.clifford@deakin.edu.au |
|  | Admissions Manager                              | elisha.rulton@deakin.edu.au   |
|  | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |
|  | Student and Academic Services Manager (Burwood) | annie.rapoport@deakin.edu.au  |
|  | Quality and Compliance Manager                  | cris.vega@deakin.edu.au       |
| Conduct of Student                             | Student and Academic Services Manager (Burwood) | annie.rapoport@deakin.edu.au  |
|  | Campus Manager (Geelong)                        | liz.hewitt@deakin.edu.au      |
|  | Campus Director (Jakarta)                       | david.bruce@deakin.edu.au     |

## Related Policies

- Equity and Diversity Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Enrolments, Fees and Charges Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Refund Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Student Support 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

|                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Status</b>                 | Current                        |
| <b>Domain</b>                 | Student and Academic Services  |
| <b>Effective date</b>         | 19/04/2018                     |
| <b>Review date</b>            | 29/04/2019                     |
| <b>Approval Authority</b>     | Academic Board of Studies      |
| <b>Implementation Officer</b> | Quality and Compliance Manager |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>      | Robert Close                   |