



WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Document: Academic Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure for Students		
Approved by: Wentworth Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd Academic Board	Version: 1.0	Date: 05.20

1. Overview

Wentworth Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd (“WIN Higher Education”) is committed to providing students with a positive learning environment. It seeks to achieve this goal by putting in place a process through which students can make complaints about any aspect of their academic experience during their studies.

WIN Higher Education aims to ensure that all complaints are dealt with consistently and fairly, and that students will not experience any adverse consequences as a result of making a complaint.

WIN Higher Education aims to:

- Develop a culture that views academic grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- Set in place an academic grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps WIN Higher Education to prevent academic grievances from recurring;
- Ensure that any academic 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 an academic grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised in any of the four stages set out in this policy; and
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to academic grievances.

2. Academic grievance

An academic grievance is defined as a student’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of WIN Higher Education’s services and activities relating to their studies such as:

- The enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- The quality of education provided;
- Academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- The handling of personal information and access to personal records; and
- The amounts of a refund.

These academic grievance procedures are designed to ensure that WIN Higher Education responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

3. What is an academic grievance?

A student may have an academic grievance if they are not happy with their experience while studying with WIN Higher Education or with any of the decisions that WIN Higher Education makes during a student's studies. A student may have an academic grievance about an academic decision made by WIN Higher Education. For example, a student may be unhappy with:

- The assessments that the student is required to complete;
- The way in which a lecturer or tutor has taught a particular course;
- The curriculum for a particular course; or
- The award or grade received by the students at the end of a course.

4. Policy coverage

In relation to an academic grievance, the term "complainant" applies to current and past students of WIN Higher Education as well as to persons seeking to enrol with WIN Higher Education.

A complainant is entitled to access the academic grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of wherever in WIN Higher Education the academic grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

5. How to submit an academic grievance

A complainant can submit an academic grievance by following the steps outlined in the procedure below.

5.1 Stage 1 – prior to formal academic grievance

A complainant is encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve their concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level. A complainant may raise an informal academic grievance by telephoning +61 2 8252 9999 and asking to speak to the Dean.

This arrangement is free of charge.

5.2 Stage 2 - formal academic grievance

If Stage 1 is unsuccessful in resolving the academic grievance, the complainant should either:

- write a letter or send an email to the WIN Higher Education Dean at the following address:
The Dean
Wentworth Institute of Higher Education
302-306 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
or
info@win.edu.au (for the attention of the Dean)
or
- complete an appeals form provided by student administration, which will be forwarded to the Dean or nominee.

This letter, email or appeals form should:

- Identify the issue about which the complainant is unhappy;
- Explain why they are unhappy;
- Identify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve; and
- Attach any relevant documents.

The Dean (or their nominee):

- Will contact the complainant within 10 business days of the date on which the letter is received;
- Will confirm that the letter has been received;
- May ask the complainant questions to clarify any of the details associated with the academic grievance; and
- May request that the complainant attend a meeting at a time convenient to the complainant. If this occurs, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a support person.

Once the Dean or their nominee has clarified the details associated with the academic grievance, they will, within 20 business days of the date on which the complainant's letter was received, write a letter to the complainant informing them of the outcome of their academic grievance.

5.3 Stage 3 - internal review of outcome of academic grievance

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of the formal academic grievance, they should write a letter or send an email to the WIN Higher Education Chief Executive Officer at the following address:

The Chief Executive Officer
Wentworth Institute of Higher Education
302-306 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
or
info@win.edu.au (for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer)

This further letter or email should:

- State that the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the formal academic grievance process;
- Explain why they are unhappy;
- Identify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve; and
- Attach any relevant documents including the complainant's original letter to the Dean and the Dean's letter or email received by the complainant.

The Chief Executive Officer (or a person nominated by them):

- Will contact the complainant within 10 business days of the date on which the letter is received;
- Will confirm that the letter has been received;
- May ask the complainant questions to clarify any of the details associated with the academic grievance ; and
- May request that the complainant attend a meeting at a time convenient to the complainant . If this occurs, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a support person.

Once the Chief Executive Officer or their nominee has clarified the details associated with the application for an internal review, the Chief Executive Officer or their nominee:

- Will make a fresh decision based on the merits of the initial academic grievance; and
- Will, within 20 business days of the receipt of the letter requesting the internal review, write a letter to the complainant:
 - informing them of the outcome of the internal review; and
 - explaining the reasons for their decision.

5.4 Stage 4 - external review of outcome of academic grievance

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their application for internal review, they should write a letter or send an email to the Chair of the Board of WIN Higher Education at the following address:

Chair of the Board
Wentworth Institute of Higher Education
302-306 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
or
info@win.edu.au (for the attention of the Chair of the Board)

This letter or email should:

- State that the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the internal review;
- Explain why they are unhappy;
- Identify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve; and
- Attach any relevant documents including the complainant's original letter sent to the Chief Executive Officer and the letter or email received from the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chair of the Board will then appoint an Independent Third Party to review the decision made by the Chief Executive Officer or their nominee.

The Independent Third Party:

- Will contact the complainant within 10 business days of the date on which the letter is received;
- Will confirm that the letter has been received;
- May ask the complainant questions to clarify any of the details associated with the academic grievance; and
- May request that the complainant attend a meeting at a time convenient to the complainant. If this occurs, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a support person.

Once the Independent Third Party has clarified the details associated with the application for an internal review, the Independent Third Party:

- Will make a fresh decision based on the merits of the complainant's initial academic grievance; and
- Will, within 20 business days of the receipt of the letter requesting the external review, write a letter to the Chair of the Board informing them of the outcome of the external review and explaining the reasons for their decision.

The Chair of the Board will then, within 20 business days of the date of receipt of the Independent Third Party's letter, send a copy of the Independent Third Party's letter to the complainant.

5.5 Stage 5 – further review

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their application for external review, they may be able to make an application to an external body such as a court, tribunal or public authority. These agencies include:

- The New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which can hear claims concerning the *Australian Consumer Law*;
- The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board, which can deal with claims concerning the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW);
- The New South Wales Office of Fair Trading <http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au>;
- The Australian Human Rights Commission, which can deal with claims made under a variety of human rights and anti-discrimination laws; or
- The Overseas Student Ombudsman, which can deal with complaints made by international students about education providers.

6. Protection during academic grievance process

WIN Higher Education will make sure that:

- A complainant is able to withdraw a formal academic grievance, or an application for internal or external review, without incurring any costs for doing so;
- All formal academic grievances, or applications for internal or external review, will be dealt with fairly and consistently;
- A complainant is able to be accompanied by a support person at any meeting convened for the purpose of resolving a formal academic grievance, or an application for internal or external review;
- All letters or emails sent by a complainant to WIN Higher Education and sent by WIN Higher Education to the complainant, as well as anything that is said at any meeting, will be kept strictly private and confidential and will not be accessible by any person without the authority of the Dean;
- The Dean or Chief Executive Officer will not choose a nominee to be involved in the handling of any aspect of this process if such a person was involved in the circumstances which led to the making of the academic grievance; and
- The complainant will not be subject to any adverse repercussions or reprisals as a result of their decision to lodge a formal academic grievance or to apply for an internal or external review.

7. Assistance during academic grievance process

The WIN Higher Education Student Success and Wellbeing Centre is available to help a complainant with:

- Writing a letter to lodge a formal academic grievance, or apply for internal or external review;
- Determining what outcomes might be available to a complainant if their formal academic grievance is successful;
- Accessing affordable independent professional advice for the complainant, including legal advice from a community legal centre;
- Preparing the complainant for a meeting held for the purposes of resolving a formal academic grievance, or an application for internal or external review; and
- Finding an appropriate support person.

8. Cost

A complainant does not have to pay anything to lodge a formal academic grievance or apply for internal or external review. The process is free.

However, a complainant needs to be aware that external authorities such as the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board and the Australian Human Rights Commission may ask complainants to pay a fee if an application is made to them.

9. Questions about procedure

For any questions about any procedure, please contact the WIN Higher Education Student Success and Wellbeing Centre.

10. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this procedure, WIN Higher Education will maintain the students enrolment while the academic grievance handling process is ongoing.

11. Record keeping and confidentiality

A written record of every academic grievance handled under this procedure and their outcomes will be maintained for a period of at least 5 years to allow all parties to the academic grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar.