

HE-BPR04 STUDENT GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Abbreviations:

AHE	Apex Australia Higher Education
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BoD	Board of Directors
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIP	Critical Incident Procedure
SMS	Student Management System
SSO	Student Services Officer

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to prescribe Apex Australia Higher Education’s (AHE) approach to managing student complaints and appeals to ensure fairness, equity, reasonableness, and transparency and to drive compliance with the requirements of relevant mandated higher education standards.

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy and Procedure applies to persons seeking to enrol as students, staff, and members of decision-making bodies at AHE and includes complaints and appeals for both academic and non-academic matters.

3. Policy Development

3.1 The bases of AHE developing a Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Procedure are to:

- 3.1.1 Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve AHE and how it works.
- 3.1.2 Ensure that any grievances are resolved safely, promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality, and helps AHE to prevent future grievances from recurring.
- 3.1.3 Ensure that AHE is a safe learning and teaching environment for all stakeholders.
- 3.1.4 Ensure that the views of each Complainant and Respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised.
- 3.1.5 Ensure that there is a consistent and effective response to all grievances.

4. Principles

- 4.1 The management of student complaints and appeals is fair, equitable, reasonable, and transparent and accords with the principles of natural justice.
- 4.2 Clear and comprehensive information regarding the student complaints and appeals process is provided to students prior to, and after, commencement of classes and is communicated to all students, and in particular international students, in their pre-arrival information and orientation program.
- 4.3 Student complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, objectively, and sensitively.
- 4.4 The student complaints and appeals process respects confidentiality, subject to relevant legal or regulatory requirements, and in accordance with AHE's Privacy Policy and Procedure.
- 4.5 Outcomes to complaints and appeals are consistent and help AHE to take proactive and pre-emptive action to address systemic issues identified through complaints and appeals data.

5. Policy Statements

5.1 Fairness, Equity, Reasonableness and Transparency

5.1.1 AHE's approach to managing student complaints and appeals exemplifies the values of fairness, equity, reasonableness, and transparency. The process is structured to ensure that it is:

5.1.1.1 Fair to all complainants, appellants, and respondents:

- Making provision for the submission and consideration of all relevant evidence and for the open and honest presentation of the perspectives of all parties to the process.
- Aiming to deliver consistent outcomes, protecting all parties from discrimination and victimisation,
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality subject to relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acting with impartiality; and
- Utilising staff who have the relevant knowledge and training.

5.1.1.2 Equitable:

- Making provision for all students to easily and straightforwardly make complaints and lodge appeals, with no financial cost imposed,
- Providing accurate, clear, and comprehensive information to all students about the details of the process and how to access it, and
- Informing students that they can seek independent professional advice at any time and have a third party communicate on their behalf.

5.1.1.3 Reasonable:

- Aiming to resolve complaints and appeals as promptly, objectively, sensitively, and in as simple a manner as is consistent with the nature of the case and the interests of those involved; and
- Arriving at conclusions based on sound reasoning and all relevant evidence.

5.1.1.4 Transparent:

- Making clear the nature of the process to all involved such as the steps that will be taken,
- How evidence will be considered,
- What the rights of complainants, appellants, and respondents are and who will decide the outcome, and
- Providing regular updates on progress to those involved.

6. General Information

6.1 A grievance can be defined as a person’s dissatisfaction with any aspect of AHE’s services and activities. It includes any complaints that an AHE stakeholder has about another AHE stakeholder including harassment and/or discrimination.

6.2 A grievance may be resolved, or the AHE student may choose not to take the matter further. A grievance becomes a complaint only when a student takes further action in the form of an informal complaint or a formal complaint to AHE. This Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Procedure then commences.

6.3 AHE will respond to any complaint or appeal the overseas student makes involving the dealing or conduct of any of the below:

6.3.1 AHE, including its teachers and other staff.

6.3.2 Any third party providing any Course or Services on behalf of AHE.

6.3.3 AHE’s education agents.

6.3.4 Any student or client of AHE.

6.4 A “Complainant” is a student or potential student of AHE or a person seeking to enroll with AHE, who has a grievance and makes a complaint. All Complainants are entitled to access AHE’s grievance, complaint, and appeal procedures regardless of their place of residence. A “Respondent” is a person the Complainant has a grievance against.

- 6.5 Grievances include both academic and non-academic matters, including:
- 6.5.1 The enrolment, induction/orientation process.
 - 6.5.2 The quality of education provided.
 - 6.5.3 Academic issues, including student progress, marks or grades received for any assessment, curriculum, and awards in a course of study.
 - 6.5.4 Handling of personal information and access to personal records.
 - 6.5.5 The way someone has been treated including harassment or discrimination.
- 6.6 During all stages of a Grievance, Complaint or Appeal, AHE will take all steps to ensure that:
- 6.6.1 The Complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.
 - 6.6.2 The Complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case, and each party to a complaint may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
Note: a support person is defined in the AHE Table of Acronyms and Definitions
 - 6.6.3 A full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if requested by the Complainant or a Respondent.
 - 6.6.4 Where the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the Complainant, AHE will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the Complainant of the outcome.
 - 6.6.5 A Complainant shall have access to the internal appeal of this Procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal (if any) will be shared equally by AHE and the Complainant.
 - 6.6.6 Where a current student chooses to access this Procedure, AHE will maintain that person's enrolment while the process is ongoing.
 - 6.6.7 A written record of all formal complaints handled under this Procedure and their outcomes is recorded in the AHE Student Academic Central Register and shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at:
 - 6.6.7.1 Apex Australia Higher Education, Parramatta Campus, Office 5, 2 Sorrell Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150
 - 6.6.8 All records relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be covered by AHE's Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure.

7. Procedure

7.1 Making a Complaint

- 7.1.1 Complaints should be made within twelve (12) months of the event triggering the complaint unless exceptional circumstances prevented the complainant from taking earlier action.
- 7.1.2 Complaints cannot be made under this Policy and Procedure about:
 - 7.1.2.1 Public interest disclosures made by the institution,
 - 7.1.2.2 Decisions of the board of directors,
 - 7.1.2.3 The content of AHE's formally approved policies and procedures, and
 - 7.1.2.4 Actions taken by the institution to comply with legislation.
- 7.1.3 Where a complaint is found to be frivolous or vexatious, it may be considered to be Serious Misconduct under the Student Code of Conduct and dealt with accordingly.
- 7.1.4 Nothing in this Policy and Procedure limits the rights of students of, or persons seeking to enrol with, AHE to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws; nor replaces nor modifies responsibilities or requirement arising under statute or law; nor limit any right to pursue other legal remedies.

7.2 Informal Resolution

- 7.2.1 A complaint regarding an academic or non-academic matter may sometimes be resolved informally to the complainant's satisfaction without making a formal complaint. AHE encourages this approach, since an informal resolution is likely to be less disruptive for all concerned than a formal process.
- 7.2.2 Informal resolution strategies may include seeking to conciliate, mediate, discuss, or negotiate a complaint with the respondent by:
 - 7.2.2.1 Writing, either by letter or email, to the respondent detailing concerns and asking for the desired resolution,
 - 7.2.2.2 Requesting that a relevant staff member raise the substance of their complaint directly with the respondent, or
 - 7.2.2.3 Requesting a face-to-face conciliation or mediation session.
- 7.2.3 There is no requirement that an informal resolution be pursued prior to making a formal complaint or that informal resolution be continued once commenced.

7.3 Step 1: Informal Complaint (Optional)

7.3.1 A student or potential student is encouraged (but not mandatory) that wherever possible, grievances are resolved informally with the person(s) concerned. In addition, there are staff available to assist the resolution of grievances at this level. Any student or potential student may make an informal complaint by contacting the Student Services Officer (SSO).

7.3.2 Refer to Appendix 1 for contact details for the Student Support Officer (SSO)

7.4 Step 2: Formal Complaint

7.4.1 This can be utilised by Complainants to submit a Formal Complaint of an academic or non-academic nature. Complaints of an academic nature include issues related to any issue related to a student's study or course, including but not limited to student progress, any marks or grades received for assessment, curriculum, and awards in a course of study.

7.4.2 Formal Complaints must be submitted in writing using [Complaints and Appeals Form](#) and submitted to the Registrar in person or emailed to registrar@apexaustralia.edu.au

7.4.3 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within three (3) business days. The complaint handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal complaint and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable or at least within four (4) weeks of receipt of the original complaint unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer. Where additional time is needed, the complainant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

7.4.4 The Registrar, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the Complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the Complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the Complainant or Respondent may ask, if they feel necessary, another person of their choice to accompany or assist them as a support person at any relevant meetings scheduled to resolve the issue. A support person is defined in the AHE Table of Acronyms and Definitions

7.4.5 The Complainant will not be charged any cost.

7.4.6 The Registrar, or their nominee, will then seek to resolve the complaint and will provide a written report to the Complainant on the steps taken to address the complaint, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the Complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their Formal Complaint.

7.5 Step 3: Internal appeal

7.5.1 If a Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their Formal Complaint, they may lodge an appeal with the CEO or the Dean within twenty working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their Formal Complaint.

7.5.2 Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, the CEO or the Dean or delegate will acknowledge receipt of appeal in writing by sending a letter to Complainant within three (3) working days of receipt. The CEO or the Dean or delegate will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the Complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.

7.5.3 Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The Complainant or the Respondent may ask, if they feel necessary, another person of their choice to accompany or assist them as a support person at any relevant meetings scheduled to resolve the issue.

7.5.4 Following the consultation, the CEO or the Dean, or their nominee, will provide a written response to the Complainant advising the further steps taken to address the appeal, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the Complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

7.6 Step 4: External Mediation (optional)

7.6.1 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal, then the student may choose to access an independent mediator to mediate a satisfactory outcome between them and AHE.

7.6.1.1 This may be requested through the [Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme](#)

Contact Details:

Sydney Office Tel: 02 9251 3366 or 1800 651 650

Suite 602, Level 6, Tower B, Zenith Centre

821–843 Pacific Highway, Chatswood NSW 2067

PO Box 440, Chatswood NSW 2057

7.6.2 It is not compulsory that a complainant access this Student Mediation Scheme. The complainant may choose to go straight to Step 5. However, if a student chooses to access this Scheme, all costs incurred by the student and AHE will be paid by AHE.

7.6.3 AHE CEO or the Dean will immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or preventive actions required.

7.6.4 AHE will advise the overseas student in writing of that action and keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student file (where relevant).

7.7 Step 5: External Appeal: For International Students (non-academic matters)

7.7.1 If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are an overseas student, then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

7.7.2 The Commonwealth Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their provider. Refer to:

[Commonwealth Ombudsman Contact Page](#)

Phone: 1300 362 072 for more information.

7.7.3 AHE agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman and the CEO or the Dean will immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or preventive actions required.

7.7.4 AHE will advise the overseas student in writing of that action and keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student file (where relevant).

7.8 Step 6: Further action

7.8.1 If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the Complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency in Australia such as The Anti-Discrimination Board or The Office of Fair Trading or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). The student is first advised to contact the relevant body or agency first to ascertain what matters can be dealt by that body or agency.

7.8.2 The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australian Consumer Law if the Australian Consumer Law applies. Also, these procedures do not restrict an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

7.8.3 AHE will follow the procedures set forth in the Procedure; however, in matters of urgency or where a person's or persons' safety is at stake, AHE may circumvent the Procedures set forth, including acting on advice of external enforcement officials such as the police.

8. Dissemination and training

8.1 This Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with AHE through publication in the Student Handbook and on the AHE website. Students will be informed during their Orientation concerning this Procedure. Refer to Appendix B for additional contact details.

8.2 For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the CEO or the Dean).

8.3 Posters concerning the contents of this procedure will be available on the campus noticeboards to reinforce that AHE respects the right of every AHE stakeholder to the complaints and appeal system.

8.4 Vexatious complaints which are false, malicious, intended to bring harm to the person accused or to AHE will not be afforded the privilege of protection against defamation, and may be subject to AHE's disciplinary procedures.

9. Defamation, Victimisation and Vexatious Complaints

- 9.1 Defamation is a public statement that can cause harm to another person's reputation, in the form of slander (non-written statement) or libel (written statement). A complaint by an alleged victim (Complainant) may result in the person accused (Respondent) threatening that the allegation is defamatory. It is not defamatory for a Complainant to make a complaint to AHE or to government authorities, nor is it defamatory for the incident to be investigated or to actions to be taken, all within the privacy and confidentiality of all relevant persons concerned.
- 9.2 Victimisation is any form of threat (real or potential) to prevent the Respondent or any AHE stakeholder or relevant persons (e.g., witnesses) relevant to resolving the incident from telling the truth or coming forward to resolve or assist in the incident. Any form of victimisation is not allowed at AHE, and disciplinary action will be taken against that person.

10. Record keeping & Confidentiality

- 10.1 A written record of all formal complaints handled under this Procedure and their outcomes is recorded in the AHE Student Academic Central Register and shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at:
- 10.2 AHE, Parramatta Campus, Office 5, 2 Sorrell Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150
- 10.3 The AHE Register of Student Matters will be treated as confidential and will be covered by AHE's Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure. The Register will be tabled and reported at the AHE Academic Board at every meeting and any remedial action/ delegated actions, including additional allocation of resources, will be taken. In particular, the Academic Board should be alert to complaints that relate (but not limited to):
- 10.3.1 Student communication and expectations.
 - 10.3.2 Unresolved student dissatisfaction.
 - 10.3.3 Diminished educational achievements.
 - 10.3.4 Avoidable disadvantage to students.
 - 10.3.5 Adverse publicity, actions, and reputational risk.
 - 10.3.6 Resources issues.
 - 10.3.7 Recurrence of preventable issues, especially quality issues.

10.3.8 Reduced performance on national quality indicators e.g., Student experience, graduate satisfaction.

11. Relevant Legislation, Benchmarking Documents and Relevant Websites:

Legislation

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Education Services for International Students Act 2000](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) – Standards 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 (Specifically 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 3.2.5, 5.3.5, 6.1.4, 6.2.1a, e, j, k, 7.2.1, 7.2.2f, 7.3.3c)
- [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to International Students 2018](#) – Standard 6 (specifically 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8, 6.9)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [The Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)

Benchmarking Documents

- [TEQSA Guidance Note: Corporate Governance](#)
- [TEQSA Guidance Note: Grievance and Complaint Handling](#)
- [TEQSA Guidance Note: Wellbeing and Safety](#)
- [TEQSA Good Practice Notes: Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Australian higher education sector](#)

Relevant Websites

- [Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for International Students \(CRICOS\)](#)
- [Department of Home Affairs](#)
- [TEQSA National Register](#)

12. Related Documents

- Diversity, Non-discrimination, and Equity Framework
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- Institutional Quality Assurance Framework
- Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure
- Register of Student Matters
- Risk Management Plan
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Staff Handbook
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Handbook
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedure

13. Definitions

Please refer to:

- Table Acronyms and Definitions

Version Control

Document Name	Student Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure			
Document Code	HE-BPR04			
Department	Executive Management			
Approved By	Board of Directors	Date Approved	27 February 2018	
Revision History				
Version	Date of Changes	Change Summary	Author	Review Due
V1.0	19 February 2018	New Document	CEO / Executive Dean	February 2021
V1.1	27 February 2018	Amended section 2.2.3 to 6 hours. Website link for the Ombudsman updated. Appeal for academic matters checked that academic matters can be referred to the Ombudsman for international students (now also defined).	CEO / Executive Dean	
V1.2	19 September 2018	Amended section 2.2.4 to include COPHE academic external appeal. Approved by Board of Directors (Budgeting)	CEO / Executive Dean	September 2021
V1.3		Clarified the difference between grievance and complaint. Amended document for the roles of the CEO/Executive Dean, SSO, and Registrar. A Flow Chart and poster for students were added to ensure implementation is clear. Approved by Board of Directors (Org Chart)	CEO / Executive Dean	
V1.4	3 December 2018	Reformatted document and checked for all policies and procedures	CEO / Executive Dean	December 2021
V2.0	23 May 2019	Added sections on Defamation, Victimisation and Vexatious Complaints. Added Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure and complaint step, including circumventing steps if necessary. COPHE is now changed to IHEA. Complaints now include harassment and discrimination. Dissemination and training is now more comprehensive. Amended by BOD: updated Resolution Institute; costs may be shared, what is defined as academic matters, inclusion of definitions in acronyms and definitions list, inclusion of National Code 2018. Approved by Board of Directors as amended	CEO / Executive Dean	May 2022
V2.1	21 September 2019	Revised section about recording all formal complaints in the AHE Student Academic Central Register; the domestic student external appeal is revised that students go to the Student Mediation Scheme, where AHE pays for the first 4 hours and also when the student's complaint is upheld. Approved by Board of Directors as amended	CEO / Executive Dean	September 2022

Version	Date of Changes	Change Summary	Author	Review Due
V3.0	11 June 2020	Benchmarked with Waratah Institute AIBIHE; Alphacrucis Institute; looked up IHEA, Resolution Institute and also checked their fees/ membership/ appeal conditions. Steps amended to reflect benchmarking and who can appeal for what. A Poster is developed for students updated with the reviewed information and current institutions/ contact details. Comments from TEQSA reviewers also reflected: no cost to students, mediation is optional. Approved by Board of Directors (minutes 24.06.2020)	CEO / Executive Dean	June 2023
V4.0	26 August 2021	Revised document and Flowchart to ensure compliance with ESOS Act 2000 and National Standards 2018. The Flowchart advising students of this Procedure was also revised accordingly. Documents are also benchmarked with TEQSA Guidance Notes. Approved by Board of Directors	CEO / Executive Dean	August 2024
V5.0	18 January 2022	Included reference to Support Person as defined in the ED4 AHE Table of Acronyms and Definitions as requested by TEQSA on 17 Dec 2021. Also included CRICOS provider Code.	CEO / Executive Dean	January 2025
V6.0	2 November 2023	Updated formatting, reconfigured order of the information, added in SASH information, embedded links, updated external company contact details and updated version control table. Reviewed and noted at BoD meeting – 04.12.2023	Senior Compliance & Risk Manager	November 2026
V6.1	January 2024	Removed reference to IHEA and updated relevant links and email addresses	Senior Compliance & Risk Manager	January 2027
Organisation		Apex Australia Higher Education		
Document Controller		Senior Compliance & Risk Manager		

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Emergency Contacts

CONTACT INFORMATION	
Designated student contact officer	Registrar
Opening Hours	8 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday at Reception.
Additional hours:	Open till 9 pm if evening classes are held; open during the weekend if classes are held.
Phone (during office hours):	02 – 8007 6262
Email:	(24/7 for response within 24 hours): studentsupport1@apexaustralia.edu.au
Emergency Contact:	Dean: 61 410 570 960 CEO: 61 409 368 093
Note:	Contact details are indicative at time of update.

Emergency and Support Services – Sydney

2 Sorrell Street, Parramatta, NSW, 2150

Service	Phone Number	Address
Police	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Fire Brigade	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Ambulance Service	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Local hospitals		
1. Parramatta Medical Centre	9762 1041	Shop 2 Entrada Building, 20 Victoria Road, Parramatta NSW 2150 (Cnr Victoria Rd & Church St) opposite McDonalds.
2. Westmead Hospital Emergency Room	8890 5555	Hawkesbury Road and Darcy Road, Westmead NSW
Other relevant numbers		
State Emergency Service	132 500	
Nearest Police Station	9633 0799	Parramatta Police Station 95 Marsden St, Parramatta NSW 2150
Plumber	TBA	
Electrician	TBA	

Emergency and Support Services – Melbourne

Level 7, 123 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Service	Phone Number	Address
Police	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Fire Brigade	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Ambulance Service	000 or 112 from a mobile	
Local hospitals		
1. St Vincents Hospital Melbourne	9231 2211	41 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy VIC 3065
2. The Royal Melbourne Hospital	9342 7000	300 Grattan St, Parkville VIC 3052
Other relevant numbers		
Victoria State Emergency Service	132 500	
Nearest Police Station	8628 3270	Melbourne Police Station 456 Lonsdale St, Melbourne VIC 3000
Plumber	TBA	
Electrician	TBA	

Appendix B:

Flowchart of the AHE Student Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Process

THE AHE STUDENT GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL PROCESS			
<p>Do you have a problem, complaint, or grievance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please follow the steps below if your issue is not resolved. • AHE ensures students that any problems, complaints, or grievances are resolved safely, promptly, and in complete confidentiality. 			
<p>Please refer to the full AHE STUDENT GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL PROCESS for all details, in the Student Handbook or the AHE website.</p>			
Informal Complaint			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 1	Optional Informal Complaint	<p>An AHE student or potential AHE student may raise an informal complaint by contacting the Student Services Officer.</p> <p>Student Services Officer (SSO): 9 am – 5 pm Mondays to Fridays at Reception; Phone: 02 – 8007 6262; Email (24/7 for response within 24 hours): studentsupport1@apexaustralia.edu.au (TBA – contact details are indicative only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic or Non-Academic Issues
Formal Complaint			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 2	Formal Complaint	<p>Formal Complaints must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Registrar as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Complaints submitted in writing using <i>Complaints and Appeals Form</i>, to the Registrar in person or emailed to registrar@apexaustralia.edu.au Receipt of the complaint acknowledged within three (3) business days. The complaint handling process will commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal complaint. Process hoped to be finalised within four (4) weeks of receipt of the original complaint. The Registrar will seek to clarify the outcome that the Complainant hopes to achieve, using written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview. In a face-to-face interview the Complainant or Respondent may ask, if they feel necessary, another person of their choice to accompany or assist them as a support person at any relevant meetings scheduled to resolve the issue. There is no cost to the Complainant. The Registrar will seek to resolve the complaint, provide a written report to the Complainant on the steps taken and reasons to address the complaint within ten working days. The report will include access to the internal appeals process if Complainant not satisfied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic or Non-Academic Issues

Internal Appeal			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 3	Internal Appeal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If a Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their Formal Complaint, they may lodge an appeal with the CEO or the Dean within twenty (20) working days of receiving their Formal Complaint. Upon receipt of the request for an appeal, the CEO or the Dean or delegate will acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing within three (3) working days of receipt. Appropriate person or committee appointed to consult with the Complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days. Face-to-face interviews to be held. The Complainant or the Respondent may ask, if they feel necessary, another person of their choice to accompany or assist them as a support person at any relevant meetings scheduled to resolve the issue. The CEO or the Dean, or their nominee, will provide a written response to the Complainant advising the further steps taken to address the appeal, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. Report will further advise on Complainant's to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic or Non-Academic Issues
External Mediation		Optional	Notes to Assist the Student
Step 4	External Mediation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal, then the student may choose to access an independent mediator to mediate a satisfactory outcome between them and AHE. This is at no cost to the student. This may be requested through the Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme AHE CEO or the Dean will immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or preventive actions required. AHE will advise all students in writing of that action and keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Step is Optional Academic or Non-Academic Issues
External Appeal			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 5	External Appeal	<p>AHE students can access IHEA's appeal mechanism free of charge. IHEA Tel: 03 9642 5212 Contact@ihea.edu.au</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic students (academic and non-academic matter) Overseas Students (academic matters only)

External Appeal			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 6	External Appeal	<p>If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are an overseas student, then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Commonwealth Ombudsman Phone: 1300 362 072 for more information</p> <p>AHE agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the CEO or the Dean will immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or preventive actions required.</p> <p>AHE will advise the overseas student in writing of that action and keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student file (where relevant).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overseas Students (non-academic matters only)
Further Action			Notes to Assist the Student
Step 7	External Appeal / Further Actions	<p>If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the Complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency in Australia such as The Anti-Discrimination Board NSW, Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission or The Office of Fair Trading NSW, Consumer Affairs Victoria, or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).</p>	<p>The student is first advised to contact the relevant body or agency to ascertain what matters can be dealt by that body or agency.</p>

Note:

Procedures set out do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under *Australian Consumer Law* if the *Australian Consumer Law* applies. Also, these procedures do not restrict an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

AHE will follow the procedures set forth in the Procedure; however, in matters of urgency or where a person's or persons' safety is at stake, AHE may circumvent the Procedures set forth, including acting on advice of external enforcement officials such as the police.