SOUTHERN ACADEMY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Southern Academy of Higher Education (SAHE)

Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure

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1. Policy Statement

The Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') provides a framework to ensure that the Southern Academy of Higher Education ('SAHE' or 'the Academy') has an effective, fair and equitable student grievance management system that is easily accessible to all prospective and current students.

1.1 Definitions

For definitions, please refer to the '*Dictionary of Terms*'

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all prospective and current students of SAHE.

3. Policy Principles

SAHE will ensure that prospective and current students have access to mechanisms that are capable of resolving grievances about any aspect of their experience with the Academy, its agents or related parties in accordance with Higher Education Standard 2.4.1. SAHE aims to:

a. maintain a grievance resolution process that is student-focused;
b. ensure grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity
c. ensure there is a consistent approach to grievances;
d. ensure the views of students are respected;
e. ensure students are supported throughout the grievance process;
f. ensure that any party in a grievance is not discriminated against or victimised;
g. systematically monitor, address and maintain the confidentiality of formal complaints;
h. ensure information systems and records are maintained confidentially and securely to record documented responses to formal complaints and grievances alongside allegations of misconduct, breaches of academic or research integrity and critical incidents that may be the subject of future student grievances; and
i. take all reasonable measures to prevent grievances from reoccurring.

4. Procedures

Students are entitled to lodge a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature at any time during their enrolment at SAHE. Grievances of an academic nature could include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum, and awards in a program of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances about the behaviour of staff and/or other students, discrimination, sexual harassment, or the personal information that SAHE holds in relation to a student.

4.1 Informal Grievance Resolution

a. Students are encouraged to resolve their grievances informally in the first instance by making an initial approach to the relevant staff member or student to discuss the matter.
b. A student wishing to address or lodge a grievance or complaint is encouraged to seek advice from a person independent and knowledgeable of the grievance resolution process such as the Learning Support Manager.

c. The Learning Support Manager will work together with the student to consider the basis of the grievance and determine the appropriate course of action;
d. On the basis of this discussion, the student may:
    i. take no further action; or
    ii. where the matter concerns the actions or decisions of another person, make an informal approach to the person concerned; and/or
    iii. engage with the formal grievance resolution procedure outlined below.

4.2 Formal Grievance Resolution

If a grievance is not resolved informally, the student may lodge a formal grievance.

a. Students are required to submit a formal grievance in writing to the Student Services Manager.
b. All formal grievances must be made within 20 working days of the incident or issue occurring (unless in compassionate or compelling circumstances please refer to the *Dictionary of Terms*) and must include:
    i. a description of the grievance including specific details regarding when and where it happened;
    ii. previous steps taken to resolve the matter where undertaken;
    iii. copies of any relevant documentation or correspondence; and
    iv. what outcome is being sought.
c. The grievance handling process will commence within 5 working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
d. The Student Services Manager may, if necessary, seek further information in writing or request a face-to-face interview with the parties involved in the grievance.
e. Students will have access to an advocate or other cognate support person to accompany them to a face-to-face or online meetings or interviews and to assist and offer any other support during the entire grievance process.
f. Within 20 working days from submission, the Student Services Manager will provide a written report to the student outlining the steps taken to address the grievance, and the reason for the decision.
g. The report will further advise the student on their right to access the internal appeals procedure if they are not satisfied with the formal grievance resolution.

4.3 Internal Appeals

a. A student may appeal the resolution of the formal grievance within 20 days of receiving the report. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean.
b. The Dean may appoint an appropriate and independent member of staff or Grievance Committee to manage the appeal and consult with the student normally within 5 working days of the receipt of the grievance.
c. Where possible consultation will take the form of face-to-face interviews.
d. Within 10 working days following the consultation, the Dean or the appointed staff or Grievance Committee will provide a written report to the student outlining the steps taken to address the appeal, including the reasons for the decision.
e. The student will be advised of the right to access the resolution of an external appeal process if they are not satisfied with the resolution of the internal appeal process.

4.4 External Appeals (Domestic Students)

a. If a domestic student is dissatisfied with the internal appeals resolution, or manner in which the appeal has been handled by the Academy, the student may request the Dean to refer the appeal for independent external review.

b. A request to the Dean for independent external review must be made in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of the decision.

c. At no cost to the student, the Dean will refer the appeal to an external reviewer (Resolution Institute) within 5 working days of receiving the request and will provide the student with notice of the referral.

d. The external reviewer (Resolution Institute) must provide written recommendations in relation to the appeal to the Dean within 20 working days of receipt of the referral. The Dean will provide a copy of these recommendations to the student.

e. The Dean will ensure that a recommendation in favour of a student is implemented immediately.

4.5 External Appeals (International Students)

a. If an international student is dissatisfied with the internal appeals resolution, or manner in which the appeal has been handled by the Academy, the Academy will refer the student to the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) and the external process provided for under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation Amendment Act 2011*.

b. An international student must advise the Dean of their intention to lodge a grievance to the OSO within 10 working days of receiving the decision of the resolution of the internal appeal process.

c. The Student Services Manager will monitor the status of the grievance and any recommendations from the OSO shall be provided to the Dean.

d. The Academy gives due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review. If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, the Dean will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision and advise the international student of that action.

5. Monitoring and Compliance

a. SAHE will record all grievances and complaints in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Threshold Standards 2021 and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

b. A report will be produced each semester by the Executive Management Team for submission to the Risk Management Committee and the Academic Board. The report will include:

i. a summary of de-identified formal complaints received during the previous semester and an analysis of trends;

ii. information on the quality and timeliness of complaint handling;

iii. identification of serious complaints and systemic issues;

iv. information concerning procedural or other changes that may have been made in response to complaints.

c. The Risk Management Committee will review the report submitted by the Executive Management Team in a timely manner to investigate the complaints, identify any contributing factors or cause, and develop recommendations to prevent a recurrence.
d. The Risk Management Committee report will be presented to Academic Board for review and comment then report will be submitted to the Governing Council.
e. The Governing Council will monitor and oversee the implementation of any mitigation actions outlines in the report by the Risk Management Committee.
f. The Governing Council will determine the need for a review of the relevant policies, plans and procedures.
g. The Governing Council will review this Policy in accordance with the Policy Documents Review Schedule, and/or following the receipt of a Report, or at any other time as it deems necessary.

6. Record Keeping

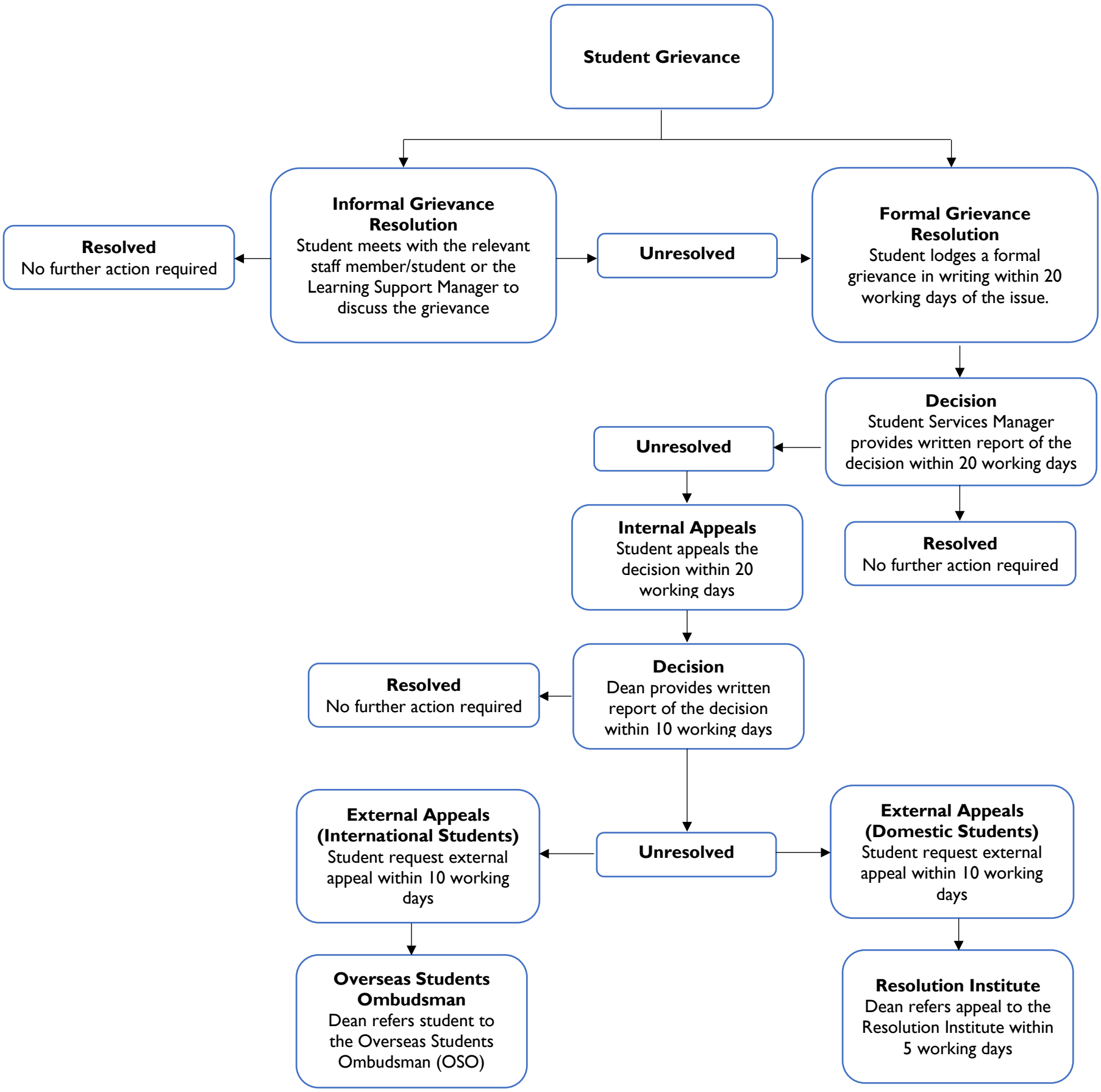
A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy*.

Appendix 1: External Agencies for Dispute Resolution

Students are advised that a number of external agencies may be able to assist them in the resolution of a dispute should they find that the above procedures do not address their concerns. Some of these agencies are as follows:

External Agency	Address/Contact Information
a. Resolution Institute https://www.resolution.institute/contact-us	• Address: Suite 602, Level 6 Tower B, Zenith Centre 821–843 Pacific Highway Chatswood 2067 • Phone: 1800 651 650 • Email: infoaus@resolution.institute
b. Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb	• Address: Level 7/10 Valentine Ave, Parramatta NSW 2150 • Phone: 1800 670 812 • Email: complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au
c. Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission http://www.hreoc.gov.au	• Postal Address: GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001 • Phone: 1300 369 711 • Email: infoservice@humanrights.gov.au

Appendix II: Student Grievance Process



Version Control

Version	v1.3
Review	The Academic Board will review this Policy in accordance with the Southern Academy of Higher Education *Policy Documents Review Schedule*.
Approving Body	Academic Board
Approval and Effective Date	4 May 2023
Policy Custodian	Dean
Policy Contact	Dean
Higher Education Standards Frameworks (Threshold Standard) 2021 (Cth)	B1.1 "Higher Education Provider" Category Standard 6.1 Standard 6.2 Standard 6.3 Standard 7.3, ss 3
Benchmarking Institutes	The University of Notre Dame The University of the Sunshine Coast The University of New England The Institute of International Studies James Cook University
Related Document	Dictionary of Terms Academic Integrity Policy Academic Freedom Policy Student Code of Conduct Scholarly Activity Policy Records Management Policy

Related Legislations	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth); Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation Amendment Act 2011