Adelaide Central School of Art

Student Grievance Policy and Procedures

Policy Id	S001
Original version	23 February 2013, 19 March 2018, 3 May 2021, 27 May 2024
Current version	Approved by Board of Governors 31 March 2025
Scheduled review date	March 2028
Threshold Standard	2.4
Responsible person/s	CEO
Appendix A	List of amendments

1. Introduction

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that arise in the course of being a student or a prospective student of the Adelaide Central School of Art ('the School'). The Grievance Policy and Procedures describe how the School will deal internally with complaints by students against the School. Its purpose is to ensure a safe and fair learning environment for all. Academic grievances are complaints made by students. Non- academic grievances are complaints made by staff or students.

The School recognises that a student may refer a grievance to a relevant external agency at any time. External agencies may include the Equal Opportunity Commission, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Ombudsman or Police, or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal or Office of the Training Advocate of South Australia.

2. Purpose

This policy provides a framework for the resolution of grievances in order to provide a safe and fair learning environment for all students and outlines the procedures to be used in addressing student grievances.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all enrolled and prospective students and covers academic and non-academic grievances.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Grievance:** A concern, problem or complaint against the School arising within the context of being a student or prospective student.

4.2 **Academic grievance:** A complaint relating to an academic decision including but not limited to:

a) academic progress
b) assessment results
c) an improper or unfair action taken or procedure followed by the School that is related to curriculum or awards in a course of study.

4.3 **Non-academic grievance*:*** A complaint that does not relate to student progress or assessment or curriculum or award in a course of study. It includes but is not limited to behaviour that the student perceives as bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, victimization, vilification, or complaints about the School's services or implementation of policies or procedures (e.g. relating to fees, enrolment, and complaints about personal information the School holds in relation to a student).

4.4 **Student:** The term 'student' includes enrolled students and prospective students (see Non-Academic Grievance Process).

5. Policy

5.1 The School will seek to ensure that all grievances are dealt with fairly, constructively, promptly and with due regard for confidentiality.

5.2 A student may make a complaint about a matter relating to their studies, their student life or an alleged unfair or adverse experience which concerns the School and relates to the operations of the School.

5.3 The School will try and maintain the anonymity of the complainant wherever requested, to the extent possible. However, it may not be possible to progress anonymous grievances (where the identity of the complainant is not disclosed) due to the difficulties of investigating such complaints in accordance with principles of natural justice. Natural justice requires that all parties (including the subject of the complaint) are provided with the opportunity to present their version of events with all relevant information available.

5.4 Grievances made by a group having identified a common issue may be considered under this policy.

5.5 Grievances withdrawn by a student will be considered resolved.

5.6 The School will not normally consider previously withdrawn grievances that are resubmitted, except in exceptional circumstances.

5.7 Every attempt will be made to ensure that complainants and respondents are not victimised or discriminated against.

5.8 The School will ensure that an internal review of the outcome of any grievance will be conducted by independent and impartial reviewers. (See Academic Grievance Process Stage 3.)

5.9 Both complainants and respondents are allowed to be accompanied by a third party as a support person at any stage of the grievance process if so desired, but that support person should not be a legal representative acting in a professional capacity unless everyone involved agrees.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the School is responsible for ensuring that staff follow the School's policy and procedures for dealing with student grievances and complaints.

6.2 The Student Support Team is responsible for assisting students who wish to make a complaint under this policy.

6.3 The Academic Administration Manager (AAM) is responsible for managing the process once a grievance has been lodged. .

6.4 All staff are responsible for complying with the School's Student Grievance Policy.

7. Procedures

7.1 Academic Grievance Process and Timeframes

7.1.1 Where a student is dissatisfied with decisions relating to their academic progress, results of assessment or believes that proper procedures in any matter related to curriculum or awards in a course of study have not been properly or fairly followed, the steps outlined below can be taken. Exception: Students requesting a re-mark of an assessment task should do so under as per the Reassessment Policy and Procedures.

7.1.2 Stage 1: Where a student has an academic grievance, they should raise the grievance with the lecturer concerned in writing within seven calendar days. The lecturer will respond in writing within seven calendar days. If a student is not comfortable raising the issue with the lecturer, they can consult with the SLO about submitting a written grievance directly to the AAM.

7.1.3 Stage 2: If not satisfied, within a further seven calendar days, the student may notify the

AAM of their grievance in writing. The AAM will attempt to arbitrate the grievance with the lecturer and student.

7.1.4 Stage 3: If not satisfied, the student may request, via the CEO, a review by the Academic Committee which will be tabled at the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Committee. The Academic Committee will notify the student of their determination within 14 calendar days. Should independent mediation then be required, this will take place within 14 calendar days of the Academic Committee's response to the student. The Academic Committee may decline to participate in independent mediation if it does not consider it likely to lead to a resolution of the complaint or where it considers the complaint to be unfounded or vexatious.

7.1.5 Stage 4: If not satisfied, the student may seek external mediation (appeal) as outlined in Item 9.

7.2 Non-Academic Grievance Process and Timeframes

7.2.1 These procedures apply to:

a) Students
b) Persons seeking to enrol in courses of study

7.2.2 The procedures will be used to deal with all complaints relating to non-academic matters which have a connection with the School in the course of School business including but not restricted to alleged instances of discrimination or harassment appearing to relate to sexual, ethnic, racial, age or disability based issues. These procedures will be used in conjunction with other relevant policies of the School, including but not limited to the Child Safe Policy and Procedures, Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Policy, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and Students with Disability Policy and Procedures.

7.2.3 These procedures provide five options which are processes internal to the School for resolving complaints relating to non-academic matters in a timely manner.

7.2.4 The Student Support Team is available to support and guide students through the non-academic grievance process. A student wishing to lodge a non-academic grievance is encouraged to consult with a member of the Student Support Team in the first instance. If a student does not feel comfortable raising the matter with the Student Support Team, then they also have the option of contacting the School's external counselling service.

7.2.5 A student wishing to lodge a complaint should notify the AAM in writing as soon as possible after the alleged incident. If a student does not feel comfortable notifying the AAM directly, they may direct their communication to a member of the Student Support Team. However, students should be aware that written complaints will be viewed by Administration management. Delays made in making complaints may affect the ability of the School to effectively and fairly deal with and/ or investigate the complaint.

7.2.6 Reasons for decisions and actions taken throughout the grievance procedure will be provided in writing to both complainant and respondent if so requested at any stage during the grievance procedure.

7.2.7 **Non-Academic Grievance Assessment**

The AAM makes an initial assessment of the validity of the complaint based on the information available and may make preliminary enquiries as necessary, including interviewing relevant parties. The initial assessment also determines how the complaint should be addressed and whether the grievance can be resolved informally or whether a formal investigation should be conducted.

The AAM will then determine the appropriate avenue for the matter to be addressed from the following options.

Option 1: The AAM determines that there is no basis for taking further action.

Option 2: The AAM may try and resolve the matter directly with the complainant.

Option 3: The AAM may recommend that the complainant and other relevant parties engage in informal conciliation to attempt resolution.

Option 4: The AAM may recommend that the complainant and other

relevant parties engage in a formal conciliation with an independent mediator to attempt resolution.

Option 5: The AAM may arrange for the complaint to be formally investigated and take action as necessary at the conclusion of the investigation which may include any of the other options.

Nothing in this policy prevents the AAM from taking any one or more of these options in any particular order. The AAM will make decisions based on the evidence available, fairness to all parties involved, with impartiality and objectivity. The AAM will at all times comply with its obligations under applicable equal opportunity and safety legislation.

8. External service for complaints and appeals

8.1 National Student Ombudsman

The National Student Ombudsman is a free, impartial, and independent service for students to escalate complaints about the actions of their higher education provider. The NSO can consider a range of issues including student safety and wellbeing, racism and racial vilification, discrimination, gender-based violence, course administration, and the fairness and effectiveness of student complaints. For complaints that students haven't been able to resolve or don't feel safe talking to Adelaide Central School of Art about, students can contact the NSO. The NSO will ask students if they have raised the matter with Adelaide Central School of Art but this is not mandatory.

Please note, the NSO cannot consider complaints about academic decisions, such as complaints about grades. However, administrative complaints related to grades, such as complaints about the appeals process, may be considered by the NSO.

The NSO will work with students to consider the best resolution pathway. Find out more at nso.gov.au

8.2 Administrative Appeals Tribunal – Fee HELP

To appeal decisions of the School relating to FEE-HELP (particularly refusal to re- credit a FEE-HELP balance), the external appeals body is the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). Phone: 1800 228 333. Web: aat.gov.au

9. Monitoring and Compliance

9.1 The School will record all grievances and complaints in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Threshold Standards 2021.

9.2 A report will be produced each semester by the Academic Administration Manager for submission to the Finance, Audit and Risk 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.

9.3 An annual report will be submitted to the Board of Governors for noting.

Related Documents

Child Safe Policy and Procedures
Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Policy
Reassessment Policy and Procedures
Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
Student Handbook
Student Misconduct Policy
Students with Disability Policy and Procedures

APPENDIX A: Policy Amendments

1. Version 1: Approved by the Board of Governors on 23 February 2013.
2. Version 2: Updates to 5. Policy, 6. Responsibilities and 7 & 8 Procedures. Minor amendments in accordance with the new policy template. Approved by the Board of Governors on 19 March 2018.
3. Minor amendment: changes to the external appeals process. 27 February 2020.
4. Version 3: Approved 3 May 2021.
5. Version 4: Minor changes to Item 8 to cross reference other policies. Inclusion of 10. Monitoring and Compliance. 27 May 2024.
6. Version 5: Inclusion of National Student Ombudsman in Item 9, 31 March 2025.