

Policy Owner	College Director & Principal
Contact Officer:	Director of Quality and Student Services
Policy Number:	QBIPO018
Approved by:	Senior Management Group
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Related Policies:	Appeals Policy Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination Policy Equal Opportunity Policy Privacy Policy Progression and Attendance Policy Refund Policy
Related Documents	Formal Complaint Form

1. Overview

- 1.1. This policy has been developed to ensure all current and prospective students of Curtin College or any partner provider are given access to free, effective and fair complaints resolution processes.
- 1.2. There are two separate processes depending on whether the complaint is related to:
 - academic matters (refer to section 5.2);
 - non-academic matters (refer to section 5.3)

Section 5 below sets out the valid grounds and procedures for each type of complaint or appeal.
- 1.3. This policy has been developed in line with requirements set out in Higher Education Support Act (amendment effective March, 2014), the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (amendment effective July 2007) and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards).
- 1.4. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the correct form to submit for each stage of the process.

2. Organisational Scope

- 2.1. Any current or prospective student of the College or its partner provider who experiences incorrect, inappropriate or unfair treatment in the course of their relationship with the College is entitled to access the complaints process set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus at which the matter has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study.
- 2.2. Grievances experienced by staff are to be dealt with according to the terms set out in the institution's staff grievance policy.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **CoE:** Confirmation of Enrolment is a document registered with DIBP to confirm a student's acceptance into a particular course for a specified duration.
- 3.2. **Complaint:** an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality or delivery of service, policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person
- 3.3. **Complainant:** A person lodging a complaint.
- 3.4. **DIBP:** Department of Immigration and Border Protection: The Australian government agency responsible for issuing students with visas.

- 3.5. **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards):** Quality standards that apply to all Higher Education providers, offering courses leading to a regulated higher education award.
- 3.6. **Partner Provider:** an institution that provides a course which is CRICOS registered as being offered by the College, who, for the purposes of this document oversees all matters relating to the delivery of those courses.
- 3.7. **Respondent:** A person responding to a complaint.

4. Policy Principles

The principles which underpin this policy are as follows:

- 4.1. The consideration of complaints will be dealt with according to principles of procedural fairness which respect the right of a complainant to be heard by an impartial party;
- 4.2. Attempts will be made to resolve complaints as close to the source as possible;
- 4.3. Complainants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in the complaints process;
- 4.4. This complaints process does not restrict a student's or person's right to pursue other legal remedies;
- 4.5. Staff will make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits set out in this policy;
- 4.6. The Complaints process forms part of this policy and is available on the College's website; www.curtincollege.edu.au
- 4.7. Complainants and/or respondents have the right to be represented by a third person (such as family member, friend, counselor other professional support person, other than a qualified legal practitioner), if they so desire;
- 4.8. All communications arising from the complaints process, together with the proceedings of the Complaints Committee, will remain confidential, except to the extent necessary to give effect to this Complaints Policy.
- 4.9. The complainant has the opportunity to formally present his/her case at no cost to them, to the external agent listed under point 5.6 of this policy.
- 4.10. If an internal or any external complaint handling process results in a decision that supports the student, the College will implement the decision immediately or take the appropriate corrective/preventative action as required.

5. Policy Content

5.1. Informal Complaints

Prior to lodging any formal complaint to the College, a complainant may contact relevant academic or administrative staff to discuss the matter and seek immediate and acceptable resolution.

In the event that complainant grievances cannot be resolved through informal direct communication with the respondent(s) a formal Complaints process is available through the College.

5.2. Academic Complaints

5.2.1. The Academic Complaints process is for matters which relate to:

- Curriculum content and its delivery
- Teaching staff
- Class timetabling and exam timetabling matters
- Exam procedures

If at any point, a student becomes dissatisfied in relation to these matters, they should commence Stage One (Academic) complaints procedures which are explained below.

Curtin College students have access to a three stage complaints process as follows:

Stage One (Academic) - Formal Complaints Process

If, the matter cannot be resolved informally the complainant must lodge their complaint in writing to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au within 10 working days of the complaint issue becoming apparent. The email will be acknowledged and within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint, the student will be advised in writing of the outcome by the Academic Director or nominee.

Stage Two (Academic) - Complaints Committee

Where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage One and believes that:

- they did not have sufficient opportunity to present their case to the decision-maker ; or
- the decision was made contrary to the evidence provided;

the complainant should lodge their complaint in writing by lodging the Complaints form (Formal) located on the College's website <http://www.curtincollege.edu.au>, to the Complaints Committee via complaints@curtincollege.edu.au. This form must be lodged, within 10 working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of Stage One negotiations.

To avoid any conflict of interest, where the Academic Director or equivalent has been responsible for the decision being appealed or has been involved in the outcome of Stage One, they must nominate another senior staff member to stand in their place on the Complaints Committee.

Stage Three - External Agencies

Where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Two they may lodge an appeal with an External Appeal body in accordance with clause 5.6.

5.3. General (Non-Academic) Complaints

5.3.1 The General Complaints process is for matters which relate to:

- Customer services and administration
- Refusing admission to a course or cancellation of enrolment
- Refusing to issue a Letter of Release.
- Marketing and information
- Facilities
- Fees and finance related matters
- Pastoral Care (Welfare)

Stage One (Non-Academic) - Formal Complaints Process

The complainant must lodge their complaint in writing by completing the 'Complaint' form located on the Curtin College website <http://www.curtincollege.edu.au> and email it to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au within 10 working days of the complaint issue becoming known. The Director of Quality & Student Services or nominee will discuss with the complainant options to resolve the matter.

Within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint, the Director of Quality & Student Services or nominee will provide in writing the outcome of this step of negotiations to both complainant and respondent.

Stage Two (Non-Academic) - Complaints Committee

Where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage One and believes that:

- they did not have sufficient opportunity to present their case to the decision-maker; or
- the decision was made contrary to the evidence provided;

the complainant can lodge a written statement of their complaint to the Complaints Committee via complaints@curtincollege.edu.au. This statement must be lodged within 10 working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of Stage One negotiations.

To avoid any conflict of interest, where the Director of Quality and Student Services or nominee has been involved at Stage One, they must nominate another senior staff member to stand in their place on the Complaints Committee.

Stage Three - External Agencies

Where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Two they may lodge an appeal with an External Appeal body in accordance with clause 5.5.

5.4. The Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee shall be comprised of at least three members of the following:

- College Director and Principal (or nominee)
- Director of Quality & Student Services (or nominee) - Chair
- Academic Director (or nominee)
- Director Finance & Administration (or nominee)
- Admissions Manager (or nominee)
- Student & Academic Services Manager (or nominee)
- Business Compliance Manager – Curtin University

The committee will review the appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint and will inform the complainant of the outcome of this decision in writing. The Committee may ask either the complainant or respondent (or both) to present their case in person to the Committee.

Complaints to the Complaints Committee can be submitted in the following ways:

Via email: complaints@curtincollege.edu.au

In writing: Curtin College
Complaints Committee
GPO Box U 1987
Perth WA 6845

5.5. The Conciliator

At any point during the complaint process, international students may seek independent advice. The conciliator is an independent party whose role is to assist parties involved in a dispute to reach an agreement on issues that they have been unable to resolve themselves. The conciliator can be contacted at:

International Education Conciliator
Department of Education Services
20 Walters Drive,
OSBORNE PARK WA 6017
Telephone: 08 9441 1900
Email: conciliation@des.wa.gov.au

Local Students are able to discuss the matter with the Department of Commerce – Consumer Protection

Phone: 1300 304 054

5.6. External Complaint

Where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint to the Curtin College Complaints Committee, they may lodge an external complaint within 10 working days of this decision. The complainant must notify the College of the lodgment of an external review.

The purpose of the external complaints process will be to consider whether the College has followed its policies and procedures. The external bodies will not make a decision in place of the College.

5.6.1. International Students

International Students may lodge an external complaint through the **Overseas Students Ombudsman**. The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint about their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

Student can also make an online enquiry by visiting <http://www.aei.gov.au/> and complete the **ESOS Enquiry Form** available on the website.

- The Overseas Students Ombudsman, if accessed, will determine whether Curtin College has acted reasonably, fairly, and in accordance with its policy/s and the law.
- If the Overseas Students Ombudsman makes any recommendation in relation to a complaint, Curtin College will ensure that the recommendations are implemented immediately and advise the student of the outcome.

5.6.2. Local Students

Local students can lodge an external appeal through:

Department of Commerce – Consumer Protection

Phone: 1300 304 054 or download the Complaint form from:

http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumerProtection/PDF/Forms/CP_Complaint_Form.pdf

The independent reviewer will review the processes (not the decision) undertaken in the case, seeking input from all parties before making recommendations to the College within 15 working days.

6. Administrative procedures

This policy and related documentation is accessible through the Curtin College website at:

<http://www.curtincollege.wa.edu.au>

- 6.1. Records of all complaints will be kept for a period of five (5) years. These records will be under the responsibility Director of Quality & Student Services or nominee.
- 6.2. Curtin College will take all necessary steps to ensure that information regarding the complaint shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the complaints process.
- 6.3. The Director of Quality and Student Services will undertake a review of the Complaints Register twice a year to identify trends in complaints received.
- 6.4. Recommendations for process improvement or policy change arising out of any stage of the complaints process will be forwarded to the Senior Management Group for recording and consideration.
- 6.5. Recommendations arising from any external review of the Complaints Policy or procedures should be implemented within 90 days of notification.

6.6. Policy Dissemination and Staff Training

6.6.1. This policy and related procedures will be communicated to:

- Academic staff through staff induction pack and the College's website (<http://www.curtincollege.edu.au>);
- Students verbally during Orientation Day, in writing in the Student Handbook and published on the College's website (<http://www.curtincollege.edu.au>)
- To support and office staff via email and through the College's website (<http://www.curtincollege.edu.au>)
- New support and office staff will receive policy information during the induction process.

6.6.2. The Academic Director or equivalent is responsible for the training of academic staff in the application of the policy and for verbally advising and explaining the policy to students.

6.6.3. The College Director and Principal or equivalent is responsible for the training of support staff in its application and for publishing the policy on the website.

Version:	Changes/Improvements
V1.6 (Nov '16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removed reference to Vocational Education and Training (VET) course and standards• Updated position titles of Committee members• Updated International Education Conciliator address
V1.5 (Dec '15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renamed policy to 'Student Complaint Policy' to avoid confusion with the staff grievance policy.• Updated Point 1.3• Added Point 1.4 and Appendix 1• Updated Point 2.2 – to reflect Staff Grievance policy• Definitions for Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) added• Point 5.4 updated

Student Complaints Policy

Appenedix 1: Which form do I fill in?

Issue	Stage 1 (Formal)	Stage 2 (Complaints Committee)	Stage 3 (External Appeal)
Academic Complaint	Lodge your complaint via email or written letter to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au	Complete Complaint Form (Formal) and send to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au Requires evidence that Stage One has been completed. Requires the College has not followed its own policies/procedures or has breached applicable laws.	Appeal to an external agency (as per Stage 3 of the relevant section in this policy). Students must work through the Colleges internal processes (stage 1 & 2) before taking their case to the external agency.
Non-Academic Complaint	Lodge the Complaint form (Formal) located on the website and email it to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au	Email your written statement to complaints@curtincollege.edu.au Requires evidence that Stage One has been completed. Requires the College has not followed its own policies/procedures or has breached applicable laws.	