

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure

APPENDIX C – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table provides an outline of the responsibilities of different parties who may be involved in resolving a complaint:

Responsibility	Accountability
<p>STAFF All persons who are employed by Melbourne Polytechnic, including teaching, academic and administrative staff, whether employed on a permanent, part-time or casual basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are familiar with the terms of the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure. • Upon inquiry, provide Complainants with general information about the complaints and appeals process, including where to access the Policy and Procedure and who can give them advice or support. • Address and attempt to resolve complaints they are involved with in a respectful, responsible and timely manner and without engaging in any form of victimisation or discrimination.
<p>STUDENT (COMPLAINANT) The Complainant is a student who is making a complaint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain respectful conduct in accordance with Melbourne Polytechnic policies, procedures and guidelines. • Seek advice from Melbourne Polytechnic staff and define the exact nature of the issue. • Present the facts that relate to the complaint. • Collect and provide objective evidence to support the facts. • Outline the resolution they are seeking and cooperate with reasonable conciliatory offers. • Maintain confidentiality. Any person identified within a complaint must not be publicly named.
<p>RESPONDENT The Respondent is a person/department the complaint is being made about.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be informed about the substantive allegations in the complaint. • Be given time and the right to respond to the complaint. • Participate in options for resolution. • Seek support and advice if required e.g. from a colleague or friend.
<p>WITNESS A Witness is any person other than the Complainant or Respondent who is questioned as part of investigating a complaint, internal appeal or external review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend interviews or meetings and provide written responses to assist with determining the facts of the matter relating to a complaint, internal appeal or external review.

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<p>SUPPORT PERSON</p> <p>A Support Person is a person who provides support to or acts as an observer for a Complainant, Respondent or Witness during the student complaints and appeals process. Usually the Support Person will not be a potential Witness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May attend any meetings or interviews convened as part of investigating the complaint and may take notes on discussions and agreements. • Must agree to comply with all reasonable directions given by a Melbourne Polytechnic staff member during any meetings or interviews. • A support person cannot be legally qualified.
<p>ADVOCATE</p> <p>An Advocate (friend, guardian or nominee) supports a Complainant who cannot act for themselves because they are under the age of 18 years or because there are special circumstances which result in the Complainant being vulnerable, and represents their wishes and views with their prior permission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May act on behalf of the Complainant. • Must agree to comply with all reasonable directions given by a Melbourne Polytechnic staff member during any meetings or interviews. • An advocate cannot be legally qualified or a Melbourne Polytechnic staff member.
<p>INVESTIGATOR</p> <p>An Investigator is a staff member delegated responsibility for investigating a complaint and is usually a Program Leader or Department Manager.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the issues outlined in the complaint in a fair, respectful and timely manner. • If required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speak with the Complainant; - interview relevant Witnesses (staff and students); - speak with other staff who may have relevant information; and - review relevant policies, procedures and documentation. • Recommend a decision and outcome to their Manager.
<p>INVESTIGATOR'S MANAGER</p> <p>An Investigator's Manager is usually the Investigator's line manager and the Manager or Director accountable for the person/department the complaint is being made about.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to the investigator to ensure they complete the investigation in a fair, respectful and timely manner. • Review and approve the decision and outcome as recommended or determine an alternative decision and outcome. • Ensure any corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner. • Ensure the department undertakes required process improvement analysis and implementation. • Ensures all relevant records relating to the complaint are held centrally within the complaints system upon conclusion of the process.

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STUDENT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and disseminate information about the student complaints and appeals process. • Facilitate access to interpretation services if required. • Provide access to Student Counsellors who may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide a potential Complainant the opportunity to discuss his or her concerns confidentially prior to deciding whether to lodge a complaint; and - provide emotional support and impartial guidance for a Complainant, Respondent or Witness if requested. <p><i>Note: Student Services does not manage any meetings regarding the complaint, advocate for the Complainant in meetings or give advice to Complainant or Respondent during meetings. Melbourne Polytechnic Student Counsellors may not act as a Support Person or provide legal advice.</i></p>
STUDENT COMPLAINTS LIAISON OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and advice to students and staff members about the student complaints and appeals process. • Triage all complaints lodged and escalate complaints to Executive Director Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships where necessitated. • Liaise with staff investigating and resolving complaints, ensuring requirements and timeframes are met. • Oversee maintenance of accurate, objective and confidential records and files. • Report to departments, directorates and the executive as required, providing relevant statistical data and analysis in a suitable format for the intended audience. • In consultation with the Executive Director Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships, develop and deliver (or arrange the delivery of) appropriate training to relevant Melbourne Polytechnic staff covering Melbourne Polytechnic’s student complaints and appeals process and student complaints management systems.
DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse complaints data for trends • Supports academic and non-academic departments to undertake root cause analysis in response to complaints. • Identify opportunities for improvement as per Melbourne Polytechnic’s performance and improvement framework.

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<p>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, INTERNATIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the documentation of complaints is maintained in compliance with the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure and any relevant regulations. • Monitor, review and improve effectiveness of complaints handling within Melbourne Polytechnic. • Determine suitable Investigator and ensure timely response to all escalated complaints. • Nominate a suitable Investigator if the Respondent to a Complaint is a Manager or Director. • Nominate a suitable Internal Reviewer if the complaint is escalated. • Make policy determinations and interpretations as required. • Seek legal advice as appropriate. • Report on the implementation of appropriate corrective and improvement actions. • Report, as appropriate, to Melbourne Polytechnic Boards and Committees.
<p>INTERNAL REVIEWER An Internal Reviewer is an appropriate senior manager nominated by the Executive Director Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships to investigate an internal appeal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the issues outlined in the internal appeal in a fair, respectful and timely manner. • Prepare a written report about the complaint which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a copy of the complaint; - any written response provided by a respondent; - summary of the evidence considered in the internal appeal review; - findings regarding the substantiation or refutation of the complaint or proposed resolution; and - any recommendations regarding appropriate resolution of the complaint. • Recommend the decision and outcome of the complaint.
<p>EXTERNAL REVIEWER An External Reviewer is an appropriately qualified external agency appointed by the Chief Executive or their delegate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an independent investigation into an internal appeal. • Provide an External Review Report setting out the findings and recommendations of an investigation to the Chief Executive.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make complaint handling a priority of Melbourne Polytechnic. • Use their discretion to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reinstate a complaint; - escalate a complaint to the External Review step; or - grant a request to review a complaint about that has occurred more than twelve (12) months ago. • Request that an external agency conduct an external review of a complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if request by the Complainant holds merit; and - if the Complainant has exhausted all avenues of the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure. • Consider the recommendations of the External Review Report and determine the final decision and outcome.
ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE BOARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor all continuous improvement activities, reporting and corrective actions arising from <i>academic</i> related student complaints.
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor all continuous improvement activities, reporting and corrective actions arising from <i>non-academic</i> related student complaints.