

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure

APPENDIX A – COMPLAINT AND APPEAL PROCESS

Summary of the Student Complaints and Appeals Process

Step 1: Local Level Resolution	➤ Attempt local level resolution with the people involved as soon as practically (if appropriate).
Step 2: Written Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lodge a written complaint if local level resolution is not possible or appropriate: www.melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/feedback ➤ Receive the complaint, assign a suitable Investigator (triaging the complaint where appropriate) and contact the Complainant within ten (10) working days. ➤ Investigate the complaint, consulting with the Complainant, Respondent, Witness and any party who may have relevant information. ➤ Decision and proposed resolution. ➤ Respond to Complainant in writing within thirty (30) working days. ➤ Record all decisions and documentation and close the complaint if no appeal is lodged within ten (10) working days of a decision being reached.
Step 3: Access to Internal Appeal	➤ Lodge an internal appeal request in writing to: appeals@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au
Step 4: Access to External Review	➤ Lodge an external review request in writing to: appeals@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au

Detailed Student Complaints and Appeals Process

Step 1: Local Level Resolution

Task	Responsibility	Notes
<p>Discuss Concerns with Relevant Parties</p> <p>Discuss (where possible) their concerns with the other party (staff or student) and make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter informally.</p>	<p>Complainant Staff (if applicable)</p>	<p>It is expected that many concerns will be resolved at this stage and will not progress to become a written complaint.</p> <p>Melbourne Polytechnic Student Counsellors can give students emotional support and advice about complaints and appeals processes.</p>

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Step 2: Lodge Written Complaint

Task	Responsibility	Notes
<p>a. Lodge Complaint Submit complaint via the online form accessible from the Melbourne Polytechnic website, the Student Portal or the Thrive App.</p>	Student/Complainant	<p>Complaint to be lodged if concerns remain after attempts at informal resolution, or if the Complainant feels that they cannot approach the person directly.</p> <p>Students preferring to lodge a hard copy form can obtain one from Student Services.</p>
<p>b. Receive and Acknowledge Complaint If staff receives a hard copy form or email, forward to Student Services.</p> <p>An email confirming receipt, including assigned case file number, is sent to student once feedback is received.</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer</p>	<p>If complaint was lodged using online form acknowledgement is automatic.</p>
<p>c. Student Services Review the Complaint Triage complaints and determine which department is best placed to investigate complaint and liaise with relevant Program Leader, Department Manager, or Director to assign an Investigator.</p> <p>Forward complaint from student to the investigator.</p>	<p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer with Program Leader, Department Manager or Director (or their delegate)</p> <p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer</p>	<p>Usually within five (5) working days of receipt.</p> <p>Complaints requiring immediate action will be triaged to Executive Director Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships.</p> <p>If the complaint concerns allegations of bullying or harassment by a staff member, the Executive Director, People, Culture and Corporate Services will be consulted.</p> <p>To avoid any conflict of interest, a staff member cannot oversee the investigation of a complaint which involves them.</p>
<p>d. Investigate Complaint Contact relevant staff and student/s</p>	Investigator	Respondent is to be informed that a complaint has been lodged against

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<p>(asrequired) and gather information.</p> <p>An investigation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of written complaint; • interview/s with Complainant; • interview/s with Respondent; • interviews with relevant Witness/es; and/or • review of relevant policies and documents <p>The Complainant MUST be contacted by the Investigator within ten (10) working days of lodgement of a written complaint.</p> <p>Where the complaint is still under investigation, then an update is to be provided to the Complainant.</p>		<p>them and given the opportunity to respond.</p> <p>Any Respondent, Complainant or Witnessis allowed to have a Support Person attend meetings with them.</p> <p>Complainants who are under 18, vulnerable or unable to represent themselves may request to have an Advocate speak to their wishes and views at complaints meetings.</p> <p>Confidentiality is to be maintained, with details of feedback to be known only to those directly involved in its resolution.</p>
<p>e. Make Decision</p> <p>Based on results of investigation, make a decision and forward to relevant Manager or Director.</p>	<p>Investigator</p>	<p>A template for written response to a complaint is available on the Staff Portal.</p> <p>Decision to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outcome of the investigation; • attempts to resolve the issue; and • any action to be undertaken.
<p>f. Review/Approve a Decision</p> <p>Review results of investigation, and approve, or if required revise, the decision made by the Investigator regarding the complaint.</p> <p>Send draft outcome response to Student Services for review.</p>	<p>Investigator's Manager</p> <p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer</p>	

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<p>g. Send Complaint Response Send written response/decision to Complainant.</p> <p>Forward copy of findings and written response to Student Services for saving in Online Complaints Management System.</p>	<p>Investigator or delegate following review by Manager</p>	<p>To be sent ASAP, usually within ten (10) working days of a decision being reached.</p>
<p>h. Close Complaint Close complaint in Online Complaints Management System.</p>	<p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer</p>	<p>Upon receipt of response letter to Complainant.</p> <p>A complaint or appeal is not considered closed until all documentation has been received by Student Services.</p>

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Step 3: Request an Internal Appeal

Task	Responsibility	Notes
<p>a. Request an Internal Appeal A Complainant has the right to appeal a decision made in relation to a complaint.</p>	Student/Complainant	<p>To be lodged within ten (10) working days after receipt of the written decision.</p> <p>Complainant is to outline reason for appeal. Reasons may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedural irregularity; • new information available; • decision is manifestly wrong; and/or • evidence of prejudice or bias in decision of complaint.
<p>b. Receive and Acknowledge Request for Appeal Review request for an appeal and decidewhether there are grounds for an appeal.</p> <p>Inform Complainant in writing if there is/is not grounds for appeal and explain next steps.</p>	Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships, or their delegate	Within five (5) working days of receipt of appeal.
<p>c. Review Complaint Assign an appropriate Senior Manager toconduct an internal review and notify Student Services and the Internal Reviewer.</p> <p>Send copies of relevant documents to Internal Reviewer.</p>	Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships, or their delegate Student Complaints Liaison Officer	
<p>d. Investigate Internal Appeal Conduct internal review, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of written complaint andrequest for appeal; • review of complaint decision andrelated documents; • further interview/s with Complainant, Respondent/s or Witness/es as required; and/or • review of relevant policies and 	Internal Reviewer	To commence within ten (10) working days of receipt of appeal

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documents.		
<p>e. Make Recommendation/s Draft an Internal Review Report, making recommendation/s about any action Melbourne Polytechnic could take.</p> <p>Forward Internal Review Report to Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships</p>	Internal Reviewer	Complete as soon as reasonably practicable (usually within ten (10) working days).
<p>f. Review/Approve Recommendation/s Review recommendations outlined in Internal Review Report and make decision regarding outcome of internal appeal.</p>	Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships	
<p>g. Respond to Complainant Send written response to Complainant.</p> <p>Forward copy of Internal Review Report and written response to Student Services for saving in Online Complaints Management System.</p>	Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships, or their delegate	Complete as soon as reasonably practicable (usually within five (5) working days)
<p>h. Close Internal Appeal Forward copy of findings and written response to Student Services for saving in Online Complaints Management System.</p>	Executive Director, Student Engagement, International and Community Partnerships, or their delegate	

Step 4: Request an External Review

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Task	Responsibility	Notes
<p>a. Request an External Review A Complainant has the right to request an external review if they are not satisfied with the outcome or process of an internal appeal.</p> <p>Student is to outline reason for an external review.</p>	Student/Complainant	<p>Within ten (10) working days of receiving the Internal Review outcome.</p> <p>Complainant is to outline reason for appeal. Reasons may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedural irregularity; • new information available; • decision is manifestly wrong; and/or • evidence of prejudice or bias in decision of complaint.
<p>b. Receive and Acknowledge Request for External Review Review request for an external review and decide whether there are grounds for an external review.</p> <p>Inform student in writing if there are/are not grounds for external review and explain next steps.</p>	Chief Executive, or their delegate	Within five (5) working days of receipt of appeal.
<p>c. Assign External Reviewer Select an External Agency to complete an external review and notify Student Services and External Reviewer.</p> <p>Send copies of relevant documents to External Reviewer.</p>	<p>Chief Executive, or their delegate</p> <p>Student Complaints Liaison Officer</p>	<p>The cost for the external review and the preparation of the External Report will be borne by Melbourne Polytechnic.</p> <p>As soon as reasonably practicable (usually within five (5) working days).</p>
<p>d. Conduct External Review Conduct External Review, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of written complaint and request for internal appeal and external review; • review of complaint decision, appeal decision and related documents; • further interview/s with Complainant, Respondent/s or Witness/es as required; and/or • review of relevant policies and documents. 	External Reviewer	As soon as reasonably practicable within ten (10) working days of receipt of request for external review.

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<p>e. Make Recommendation Draft an External Review Report, making recommendation/s about any action Melbourne Polytechnic could take.</p> <p>Forward External Review Report to Chief Executive.</p>	<p>External Reviewer</p>	<p>As soon as reasonably practicable (usually within ten (10) working days).</p>
<p>f. Consider External Review Recommendation Consider the recommendations in the External Review Report and make a final decision.</p>	<p>Chief Executive, or their delegate</p>	<p>Within thirty (30) days of the Chief Executive receiving the External Report.</p>
<p>g. Notify Complainants & Respondent/s Send final decision to the student and Respondent/s.</p>	<p>Chief Executive, or their delegate</p>	<p>As soon as is reasonably practicable after Final Decision is made.</p>
<p>h. Close External Review Forward copy of External Review Report and written response to Student Services for saving in Online Complaints Management System</p> <p>Ensure all documentation and correspondence relating to a complaint or appeal is forwarded to Student Services for archiving in Online Complaints Management System.</p>	<p>Chief Executive, or their delegate</p> <p>Relevant staff involved in conducting investigation or appeal</p>	<p>As soon as is reasonably practicable after the Decision/Final Decision is made.</p> <p>A complaint or appeal is not considered closed until all documentation has been received by Student Services.</p>