POLICY
Student Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Policy

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Approved by: Interim Council
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Current to: 21/09/2014
Policy number: BIITE
Version: Version 2
Contact Officer: Manager, Quality and Accreditation
Telephone: 08 89 39 72 91

1. Preamble

Batchelor Institute has a student body drawn from markedly different locations and life experiences with quite diverse world views. In order to provide a safe and harmonious learning environment that ensures that values like respect, and integrity and the process of accountability are reflected in everyday practice, it is essential to have a student complaints and grievance policy that provides clear pathways for voicing dissatisfaction and transparent mechanisms for resolution. In addition, the policy should also operate according to five principles:

- Fairness
- Accessibility
- Responsiveness
- Efficiency, and
- Integration of better practice into core business

(Commonwealth Ombudsman, Best Practice Guide 2009)

2. Outline

This policy:

- defines the types of student complaint and grievance,
- describes who shall be responsible for the recording and resolution of both and
- describes how they may be used to improve processes at all campuses of Batchelor Institute.

3. Summary

- It is the responsibility of all staff to deal with student complaints fairly and efficiently.
If a student lodges a formal complaint with a Complaints Officer by completing a Complaints Form an attempt should be made to resolve it within 7 working days.

Unresolvable formal complaints or serious matters will be first reviewed by a Senior Complaints Officer and if that officer is unable to resolve them, then that officer will request that they are reviewed by a Grievance Committee.

If a complaint or grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then they have the right to appeal to the Director.

All complainants should be aware of external bodies that can assist with complaint resolution.

4. Information about complaint policy and procedures

4.1 The complaints policy and procedures should be readily accessible to the public, students and staff via the Batchelor Institute website.

4.2 Information about outside organisations that handle complaints should also be provided and prominently displayed with the complaints policy and procedures.

4.3 All students and staff should be directed to the policy, guidelines and procedures during orientation, and whenever a dispute or issue concerning management or delivery of academic programs arises.

5. Protecting student complainants

5.1 When a complaint is lodged, measures should be taken to ensure that there is no breach of privacy for all parties involved and that the students will in no way be disadvantaged or subjected to discrimination and harassment in any form.

5.2 Throughout the complaints process students have the right to have a person to support or represent them present.

6. Staff responsibilities

6.1 When member of staff from Batchelor Institute receives a complaint they should in the first instance take the time to listen and decide whether it can be solved quickly, or requires further investigation. The staff member may seek the advice of a senior staff member or counsellor to decide how to progress.

6.2 If a staff member feels that a complaint can be readily and satisfactorily resolved through discussion with the complainant, then this should be attempted.

6.3 If the matter requires actions rather than discussion to resolve, and the actions are within the ability of the staff member who receives the complaint to undertake with minimal disruption to their main duties, to the satisfaction of the complainant, then this should be attempted. A record should be kept of the complaint and the action and sent to the relevant complaints officer.

6.4 Where Staff members feel that a matter is so serious that it should be brought to the attention of senior staff, and/or is not within their ability to resolve, they should:

   • Direct the complainant to the relevant complaints officers [see 7], and
• Explain to the complainant how the matter will be dealt with and where the information about the policy and procedures can be found on the Batchelor Institute homepage.

7 Complaints Officers and Senior Complaints Officer

7.1 The designated complaints officers shall be associated with a position and are:

- **Alice Springs**
  - DPC main office
  - Campus Administrator

- **Batchelor**
  - Student Services
  - Team Leader, Student Support

- **Batchelor**
  - FEASS
  - Senior Administration Officer

- **Batchelor**
  - FBHS
  - Senior Administrative Officer

- **Batchelor**
  - Research, T & L
  - Senior Administrative Officer

7.1.1 Students in remote areas who wish to make a complaint should contact the general free call number: 1800677 095 and will be directed to the most appropriate complaints officer.

7.2 All members of staff who by their position take up the role of Complaints Officer shall undergo a basic training that is culturally sensitive, and be provided with a set of guidelines and help page. They will also be encouraged to continually improve their skills through participation in other relevant training.

7.3 A Senior Complaints Officer will oversee the complaints processes, provide assistance to other Complaint Officers, maintain the electronic complaints register, and ensure that all complaints are dealt with according to this policy.

7.3.1 The Senior Complaints Officer will normally be the Head of Student Services;

7.3.2. In the event of a complaint being directed at the Senior Complaints Officer, then the Chair of Academic Board will assume the role of Senior Complaints Officer.

7.4 The complaints officers shall record the details of the complainant and complaint on the standard Institute Complaints Form [available on the Quality Myshare page],

7.5 After recording the complaint on the relevant site, the Complaints Officer should take one of the following actions:

- Identify in a plan how to collect facts relevant to the complaint, and the personnel who should be involved;
- Send the information on the complaint and plan to the Senior Complaints Officer and the Head of Faculty or Division, who may provide further input;
- Initiate action to resolve the matter within seven (7) working days wherever possible or
- If they are unable to initiate a plan because of conflict of interest or other difficulties, pass the complaint to the Senior Complaints Manager who should seek to resolve the matter within ten (10) working days, or
- Advise the student to write a formal grievance letter [see]
If the action is to advise the complainant to write a formal grievance letter then this will be recorded as the action taken, and the complainant will be directed by the Complaints Officer to information about the steps in the grievance procedure.

8. Satisfactory resolution of a complaint

8.1 If the matter to be resolved to the satisfaction of the student then:

- it should be recorded on the complaints form and filed electronically, and
- be collated into a report by the relevant complaints officer and forwarded to the next Quality Management Group [QMG] meeting identifying the issue(s) and how they were solved while ensuring that Privacy is maintained.

8.2 When complaints and/or grievances are received by QMG they should analyse the nature of the complaint against present policy and procedures and, if necessary, recommend changes to the next tabled Executive Management group.

9. Unresolved complaints/ registering of a Grievance

9.1 When a student is not satisfied with the resolution of a formal complaint or a Complaints Officer feels that the matter is of such a serious nature that it is more appropriately dealt with by the grievance procedures and rules, then a formal grievance letter should be lodged with the Senior Complaints Officer.

9.2 The contents of the grievance letter should include:

- A clear date of lodgement
- An address, email and telephone number [contact details ] of the person lodging the grievance
- A description of the issue at the centre of the grievance, including times, places and names of others involved;
- A description of any steps taken by the complainant to try and resolve the matter;
- Contact details of any witnesses, and
- Availability of the person for further information.
- The signature of the person lodging the grievance

9.3 A grievance letter should be received within 14 working days of the matter first occurring however as per grievance procedures exceptions can be made according to the nature of the issue initiating the grievance.

9.4 The Senior Complaints Officer should acknowledge receipt of the grievance letter by telephone, or email within a day of receiving it.

9.5 A formal letter will then be sent within seven (7) working days of receiving the grievance letter, indicating what steps will be taken to address the grievance. Prior to this time the Senior Complaints officer or their delegated officer may have contacted the writer and any others involved, for further information.

9.6 The Senior Complaints Officer may then:

- Inform the Director about the issue and request direction;
- Take action to resolve the matter his or herself, or
- Set up a Grievance Review committee.
9.7 The Grievance Review Committee

9.7.1 The principles of fairness and efficiency shall direct the membership of the Grievance Review committee.

9.7.2 The Chair of the Grievance review committee shall be the Chair of Academic Board, or the Deputy Chair. If there is a conflict of interest then the Senior Complaints Officer should request that a Divisional/Faculty Head Chairs the Committee.

9.7.3 The Chair shall be responsible for contacting possible members of the grievance committee. This committee should have as minimum membership:

- Two staff members of Batchelor Institute who are not involved in the complaint,
- An ATSI representative, and
- A student member, if appropriate.

If specialised assistance is required to resolve the grievance then this can be co-opted.

9.7.4 The complainant shall be informed of the membership and has the right to request alternative members, who again should not be involved in any way with the complaint.

9.7.5 The committee may have as many meetings as required to review the evidence, but at least one should involve input from the complainant and if the complaint is specifically about another person, staff or student, then that person should also have the right to address the committee.

9.7.6 Under normal circumstances the committee should seek to hear all evidence and resolve the matter within 30 days of receiving the request.

9.7.7 Minutes of all meetings should be taken, a file created, and the complainant should be informed of the final resolution of the committee in writing, with an explanation of their right to appeal.

10. Right of appeal

10.1 The complainant has the right to appeal the decision of the Grievance committee, by writing to the Director within 14 working days of receiving correspondence form the Grievance Committee.

10.2 After reviewing the grounds for appeal the Director shall then:

- Decide whether or not further action is required;
- If it is decided further internal action is required to resolve the matter, initiate that action, or
- Seek external assistance to resolve the matter

10.3 The complainant shall be advised of the Director’s decision on appeal, in writing 14 days after receiving the appeals letter.

11. Record keeping
11.1 All Complaints received by staff should be recorded, in a manner that protects the complainant.

11.2 It is the responsibility of the Senior Complaints officer to maintain all records of complaints and grievances in both electronic and paper form [where applicable], and to present regular reports on complaints to the QHG and Director.

12. Responsibilities

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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible Officer, Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Complaint handling-formal and informal</td>
<td>Receive and assess complaints</td>
<td>All staff; Complaints officers</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Record formal complaints</td>
<td>Record in writing and enter in database; Resolve if possible</td>
<td>Complaints Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assistance in managing complaints</td>
<td>Oversee and provide advice, promote an effective culture of complaint management</td>
<td>Senior Complaints Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Review resolved complaints</td>
<td>Review and analyse all complaints across BIITE</td>
<td>Quality Management Group</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
<td>To receive and resolve grievances</td>
<td>Senior complaints Officer Grievance committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>To receive and resolve appeals</td>
<td>The Director</td>
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13. Acronyms & Terms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym/Term</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Any complainant has the right to appeal a decision made regarding a decision on a complaint. It is the Director’s responsibility to act on any appeal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>The identification by a student of a matter that they feel requires the attention of Batchelor Institute. This could be an academic, residential, procedural or Occupational, Health and Safety issue that may have implications for all students of Batchelor Institute. It would not normally be a personal conflict with another student unless the complainant is in danger of physical or emotional harm on Batchelor Institute premises. - A student Counsellor can assist resolve grievances with another student .</td>
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### Formal complaint
A complaint becomes formal when it is recorded by the relevant officers identified in this policy and a plan is formulated to address it.

### Grievance
A matter becomes a grievance when it is identified in writing by a student and/or staff member as warranting a formal independent review and/or resolution.

### Informal complaint
If a complaint is brought to a staff member’s attention and can be solved quickly through discussion, mediation or an action that is acceptable to the complainant without a plan, it is classed as informal. The nature of the complaint and action taken however, should still be recorded, to enable reflection and changes to practice as appropriate.

#### 14. Related documents

- Complaints Form [available on the Quality Myshare page]
- Student information page [Available through Students link on web]
- Complaints and Grievance Procedures [Available in Policy library, Myshare]
- Complaints and Grievance Guidelines [Available Policy library, Myshare]

References used:


#### 15. Modification history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Sections modified</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>20/07/2011</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Whole policy revised</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>Refer to best practice documents, Identification of a Senior</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>Request by Council</td>
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**Version 2.0:** Academic Board 29/08/2012    Review 30/08/2012
Grievance Committee
Appeal

| September 2012 | 2.1 | Sections 4, 5 added Section 7.1 | Council | Confidentiality, right to have representative present, training of Complaints Officers added. Minor wording changes as requested. |

### 16 Feedback

If you have any comments or feedback about this Policy, please contact the Manager, Quality and Accreditation, telephone: 08 89 39 72 91.