

POLICY			
Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals			
Date of approval	31 July 2018	Approved by	Executive Leadership Team
Date of effect	31 July 2018	Current to	July 2021
Registered no.	STU004	Version	v1 2018
Responsible Owner	Director, Student Experience		
Functional Manager	Manager, Student Services		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Batchelor Institute (the Institute) has a student body drawn from markedly different locations and life experiences with quite diverse worldviews. In order to provide a safe and harmonious learning environment that ensures that values like respect, 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.
- 1.2 In addition to the above, a guiding philosophy of the Institute is the Both-Ways Philosophy. This is a philosophy that 'brings together Indigenous Australian traditions of knowledge and western academic disciplinary positions and cultural contexts, and embraces values of respect, tolerance and diversity'. This philosophy extends to the Institute's approach to academic, student and human relations practices; as the Both-Ways philosophy recognises that who we are is as important as what we know, and that relationships underpin all learning and that strengthening identity is integral to the Institute.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This policy defines the Institute's intent in its approach and handling of student complaints, grievances and appeals and includes any learner or student who is enrolled at the Institute.
- 2.2 This policy and related procedures do not apply to appeals of academic decisions. These are covered by:
- Academic Rules,

- PhD Degree of Indigenous Knowledges by Research Rules,
- Master's Degree of Indigenous Knowledges by Research Rules, and
- VET Appeals Policy.

3. Policy

Principles

3.1 While the Both-Ways philosophy is integral to all aspects of the Institute's operations, including attitudes towards students and staff, the approach to Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals will also operate according to the following five principles:

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

(Commonwealth Ombudsman, Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling 2009)

3.2 A sixth principle that is of utmost importance to the Institute in the handling of Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals is:

- Respect for Indigenous Culture and Traditions.

Other Policy Intent

3.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to deal with student complaints fairly and efficiently. Attempts should be made to resolve any issues As Soon As Possible.

3.4 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.

3.5 Student complaints about a staff member, third party provider or contractor; including for bullying or harassment, should be recorded on the Students Complaints Register and then referred to Human Resources.

3.6 Unresolved formal complaints or serious matters will be first reviewed by the Senior Complaints Officer (Manager, Student Services) who will:

- 3.6.1 Resolve the issue,
- 3.6.2 Set up a Grievance Committee, or
- 3.6.3 Seek direction from the Executive Director, Strategic & Shared Services.

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

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

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

- 3.10 Information about outside organisations that handle complaints should also be provided and prominently displayed with the complaints policy and procedures.
- 3.11 All students and staff should be directed to the policy and procedures during orientation, and whenever a dispute or issue concerning management or delivery of academic programs arises.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 Throughout the complaints process students have the right to have a person to support or represent them present.
- 3.14 Information regarding a complaint is confidential and will only be referred to or used where this is necessary to address the complaint or resulting issues.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 Responsibilities are outlined in the Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure.

5. Acronyms & Terms

Acronym/Term	Definition/Description
Appeal	Any complainant has the right to appeal a decision made regarding a decision on a complaint. It is the Executive Director, Strategic & Shared Services and/or Chief Executive Officer's responsibility, as appropriate, to act on any appeal.
Complaint	The identification by a student of a matter that they feel requires the attention of the Institute.
Formal complaint:	A complaint becomes formal when it is recorded by the relevant officers identified in this policy or procedure 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.

6. Supporting Documents

- Student Complaints Form
- Student Complaints Grievances and Appeals Procedure

- External Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy

7. Related documents

- *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015,*
- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015,*
- NSW Ombudsman, March 2016, *Complaint Handling at Universities: Australasian Best Practice Guidelines,*
- Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009, *Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling,*
- Australia – New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014), *Guidelines for complaint management in organizations.*

8. Modification history

Date	Version	Authority	Sections Modified & Details
Jul 2011	1.0	Academic Board	Whole policy revised
March 2012	2.0	Council	Preamble- Staff responsibilities Complaints Officers Grievance Committee Appeal-Refer to best practice documents. Identification of a Senior Complaints Officer and their role. Appointment of Chair of Academic Board as Chair of Grievance Committee. Director to oversee Appeals.
Sept 2012	2.1	Council	Sections 4, 5 added Section 7.1- Confidentiality, right to have representative present, training of Complaints Officers added. Minor wording changes as requested.
May 2014			Whole policy- Replace “Head of Faculty of Division” with “Head of Division”
	1.		Principles- Increased principles from five to six to include “Respect of Indigenous Culture and Tradition”
	7.1	Council	List of complaints officers Replaced “Campus Administrator” by “Head of Campus” Replaced “FEASS and FBHS Senior Administration Officers” by “Bachelor VET Senior Administrator” Updated Higher Education representative to “Batchelor Higher Education & Research, Senior Administrative Officer”

Date	Version	Authority	Sections Modified & Details
	7.4 8.0		Recording of complaints- Replace “form” by “database” Remove “Quality page” (the database has its own site with access restricted to complaints and Senior complaints officers.
	8.1		Provision of reports- Replaced “relevant” by “Senior” Replaced “Quality Management Group [QMG] by Executive Management Group (EMG)”
	8.2		Replaced “QMG” with “EMG: Replaced “the next tabled Executive Management Group” by “Council”
	11.2		Provision of Reports- Removed “QHG”
	12.0		Review of Complaints Remove “Quality Improvement Group” by “Executive Management Group”
	14.0		Whole document- Update Links Remove procedural material from the previous policy into a separate procedure.
Nov 2016	v1 2015	Senior Policy Officer	Titles- Amendments due to changes in organisational titles & logo
July 2018	v1 2018	ELT	Summary Other policy intent Supporting & related documents Review of Policy & Procedure Policy excludes appeals relating to academic decisions Add s3.13 - privacy of information 2.2 – added reference to the VET Appeals Policy 3.5 – added para - refer staff complaints to HR Update references

9. Feedback

If you have any comments or feedback about this Policy, please contact the Manager, Student Services.