

<b>POLICY</b>			
<b>Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals</b>			
<b>Date of approval</b>	November 2014	<b>Approved by</b>	EMG
<b>Date of effect</b>	November 2014	<b>Current to</b>	November 2017
<b>Registered no.</b>	STU004	<b>Version</b>	v14 2014
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Executive Director, Strategic & Shared Services		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	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 world views. 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 Institutes 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.

### 3. Policy

#### **Principles**

3.1 While the Both-Ways philosophy is integral to all aspects of the Institutes 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 better 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 of Indigenous Culture and Tradition.

#### **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 Unresolved formal complaints or serious matters will be first reviewed by a Senior Complaints Officer who will:

- 3.5.1 Resolve the issue,
- 3.5.2 Set up a Grievance Committee, or
- 3.5.3 Seek direction from the Director.

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

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

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

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

3.10 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.

- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 Throughout the complaints process students have the right to have a person to support or represent them present.

#### 4. Responsibilities

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

#### 5. Acronyms & Terms

<b>Acronym/Term</b>	<b>Definition/Description</b>
Appeal	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.
Complaint	The identification by a student of a matter that they feel requires the attention of the Institute. This could be an academic, residential, procedural or Occupational, Health and Safety issue that may have implications for all students of the Institute. It would not normally be a personal conflict with another student unless the complainant is in danger of physical or emotional harm on the Institute premises. - A student Counsellor can assist resolve grievances with another student.
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.

#### 6. Supporting Documents

Student Complaints Form - available on the web and in My Share > Student Services > Forms

Complaints and Grievance Procedures - available on the web and in the Policy library,

## 7. Related documents

Student information page - available through *Students* link on web.

*Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012. Standard 5*

Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2009 Better Practice Guide to Complaints Handling, accessed, 17/05/2014 at <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/docs/better-practice-guides/onlineBetterPracticeGuide.pdf>

NSW Ombudsman 2006 Complaints handling at Universities: Best Practice Guidelines, accessed on 17/05/2014 at: [http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/4205/GL\\_ComplaintHand\\_Universities\\_Jun12.pdf](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/4205/GL_ComplaintHand_Universities_Jun12.pdf)

University of Southern Queensland 2010 Complaints management., accessed on 17/05/2014 at <http://policy.usq.edu.au/documents.php?id=13157PL>

University of Western Sydney Complaints Management and Resolution, July 2013, accessed on 17/05/2014 at [http://www.uws.edu.au/about\\_uws/uws/governance/complaints\\_management\\_and\\_resolution](http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/uws/governance/complaints_management_and_resolution)

## 8. Modification history

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Sections modified</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Details</b>
20/07/2011	1.0	Whole policy revised	Academic Board	
March 2012	2.0	Preamble Staff responsibilities Complaints Officers Grievance Committee Appeal	Request by Council	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.
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.
May 2014		Whole policy		Replace "Head of Faculty of Division" by "Head of Division"
	1.	Principles		Increased principles from five to six to include "Respect of Indigenous Culture and Tradition"

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Sections modified</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Details</b>
	7.1	List of complaints officers	Council	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"
	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" by "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.
November 2016	151.0	Titles		Amendments due to changes in organisational titles & logo

## 9. Feedback

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