

(Excerpted and adapted from the Policies and Procedures Handbook Section X: Grievance procedures)

Student Handbook Version

Grievance procedures

Policy

Institution XYZ believes that we have a responsibility to provide you with a study environment which is physically safe, free from harassment of any kind, and conducive to the achievement of good learning outcomes.

Limitation

While we are sympathetic with any situation which causes you distress, the main areas this policy is intended to deal with relate to the following:

- (i) inappropriate policies and procedures of our institution,
- (ii) failure to act in accordance with our appropriate policies and procedures, and
- (iii) actions by staff or students which cause upset to others

Principles

1. We will try to deal with your complaints in a sensitive and confidential manner. There may be times when we will need to discuss the issues with the person you are complaining against if we are to help achieve a resolution. If so we will discuss this with you and get your agreement before proceeding.
2. Problems should be dealt with as close to the source as possible. They will be referred to a higher level only after attempts to resolve them at the lower level have failed.
3. The person you are complaining about has a much right to a fair hearing as you do. We will listen to both sides without prejudice.
4. Our focus is on solving problems, not on laying blame or holding grudges. However, where disciplinary action becomes necessary we accept the need to pursue this.

Procedure

We can deal with your complaint formally or informally.

Informal complaints

Informal complaints are suitable for minor issues which can be resolved with the minimum of difficulty, in keeping with the principle of dealing with problems at the lowest level.

Examples of informal complaints might include the following:

- minor classroom irritations (other students break concentration by always talking in class, teacher fails to keep order)
- concerns arising from miscommunication or misunderstanding
- minor disagreements over academic matters (teacher didn't accept my late assignment, when I felt I had a good excuse)
- resource difficulties (e.g. internet connection keeps crashing)

Informal complaints are usually made verbally. You will be directed to the person best able to address your complaint and facilitate a speedy resolution, i.e. the facilitator. Resolution will be determined when you express satisfaction with the outcome, or at least verbally accept the decision reached by the facilitator. If you cannot accept the outcome, you may lodge an appeal. It then becomes a formal matter which is recorded in the Complaints Register.

Formal complaints

Formal complaints are suited to more serious issues. The complaint will be made in writing and referred to a facilitator. The complaint is recorded in the Complaints Register, and the facilitator is charged with trying to bring about a satisfactory resolution. The facilitator will keep notes to assist follow-up. At the end of the process the facilitator will produce an outcome statement which should be signed by you and the facilitator.

Examples of formal complaints might include the following:

- harassment* by staff or other students
- inappropriate treatment by staff or other students
- unfairness in a formal assessment situation
- unfairness of institutional policies
- unsafe learning situation

* NB Most institutions have a list of contact people for harassment, and may choose to have a designated facilitator for dealing with referrals under their anti-harassment policy.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee.

Should you want to pursue the matter outside your institution you may lodge an appeal with the Quality Commissioner of the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers (NZAPEP) (provided the provider is a signatory to the NZAPEP Quality Commission Scheme). **This appeal must be notified to the Quality Commissioner within 6 months of the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint.**

If complainants are still not satisfied, their final recourse is to the NZQA Student Complaints Process (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>). **This appeal must be notified to NZQA within 6 months of the date of the act or omission giving rise to the complaint.**