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Responsible Body/Person	Council
Next Review date	October 2029
Superseded documents	*Grievance Resolution Policy for Domestic Students* *Grievance Resolution Policy for Overseas Students*
Related documents	
Related HE Standards	2.4, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4
Related National Code Standards	Standard 9 and 10

1. PURPOSE

To outline the policy and principles for managing student grievances (also called "complaints" or "appeals").

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary. The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in **bold**.

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

Natural justice: A term used in government and administrative decision-making, meaning the duty to act fairly in a dispute – that is, to act without bias and to ensure a fair hearing for all parties. It can also be called "procedural fairness". The underlying assumption is that some legal principles are self-evident, or "natural". All staff involved in resolving a grievance have a duty to observe the principles of natural justice (or "procedural fairness"). In summary, they encompass the following elements:

- The right of the student to a fair hearing.
- The right to an independent, unbiased decision-maker – a person or committee not involved in previous decision-making of the matter of student appeal.
- A final decision that is based solely on the relevant evidence with all submissions considered.

Support person may be, for example, a friend, family member, colleague or minister/pastor who provides support. They are an observer to proceedings, and they may offer brief general advice to the person they are supporting. Their role is not to offer legal counsel, or to ask questions, advocate, argue or answer on behalf of the person they are supporting.

What is *not* a grievance?: General feedback and comment about administration, academic programs and services is not treated as a grievance unless action or a response is required under this policy. A student expressing disappointment with a decision without explicitly outlining what action or response they are seeking does not constitute a grievance.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Affiliated Colleges, AUT staff, and all students. The scope of this policy is to outline the process for any type of student grievance, complaint or formal appeal.

Staff grievances are considered under other processes.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Overview

The Australian University of Theology (the AUT) is committed to ensuring that students who have a concern about any aspect of our higher education operations have ready access to fair, just and effective grievance processes. Specifically, this means:

- A student may report a grievance about any aspect of the AUT's higher education operations, including operations provided on its behalf by its Affiliated Colleges and other entities.
- The student may do this without fear of reprisal.
- The grievance may be about an academic or a non-academic matter.
- There is a comprehensive process for handling and resolving grievances, which includes review by an independent third party if the process cannot resolve the dispute.

If an Affiliated College or other entity acting on behalf of the AUT does not comply with this policy, the Council of the AUT will take disciplinary action as it sees fit, with the maximum penalty being dis-affiliation and exclusion from the AUT.

4.2 Principles Underpinning the Policy

The policy and its accompanying process are based on the following principles:

1. All students have a right to lodge a grievance, and do so either in English or in the language of delivery of their course.
2. Actions will be undertaken promptly, and deadlines for responses will be specified at each stage of the process.
3. The process will be as simple as possible and easily accessible to students.
4. The process will not victimise or discriminate against any student or respondent.
5. Reasons and explanations will be given for decisions and actions taken.
6. Records of all documentation in relation to a student grievance will be kept for at least 5 years, or until at least two years after the student ceases to be an enrolled student, whichever is the latter. Records of the handling of a grievance will be treated as confidential, with access available to involved parties and staff as appropriate.
7. In the case of Stage One and Stage Two academic grievances, a fee may apply where a student has received a passing grade on a unit and is seeking to

increase their grade in one or more assessments within the unit, or in the case of a unit not yet completed, where a student has received a passing grade on an **assessment** and is seeking to increase their grade on that assessment. See aut.edu.au/fees for fee values. Consideration of all other grievances will be at no cost to the student apart from relevant travelling and/or communication expenses related to the grievance.

8. All **staff** involved in a grievance or appeal have a duty to observe the principles of **natural justice**.
9. The AUT must maintain the student's enrolment throughout the internal appeals process for all types of complaints or appeals. However, this does not require the AUT or its colleges to continue to offer learning opportunities throughout the complaints or appeals process. The AUT will determine whether it will continue to offer learning opportunities throughout any appeals process on a case by case basis. For example, the AUT may decide to exclude a student from attending classes, but continue to provide work to complete outside of the classroom environment. In making this decision, the AUT will consider that to deny students learning opportunities throughout the appeals process may disadvantage the students in their subsequent studies should the appeals process find in their favour.
10. Students may seek resolution of a grievance under this policy regardless of where the college involved is located, where the student lives, and the mode in which the student studies.
11. The student reporting the grievance may withdraw it at any stage in the process. If the grievance is withdrawn, the matter will be considered closed.
12. In accordance with **Higher Education Standard** 2.4.5, if a formal appeal is upheld, any action required is initiated promptly. If the appeal results in a decision that supports the student, the AUT will immediately implement that decision and take any corrective and preventative action required, and will advise the student of the outcome.
13. Each party may be accompanied and assisted by a **support person** at any relevant meeting.

4.3 Student Rights

This policy does not take away the right of any student to pursue other legal remedies, or take action under Australia's consumer protection laws in the case of financial dispute.

Students may lodge a complaint with the National Student Ombudsman (NSO). Students are first encouraged to engage in the Grievance Resolution Procedures outlined in this document, but do have the right to contact the NSO to lodge a complaint. Information about the NSO is available at https://www.nso.gov.au/.

An **overseas student** may lodge a complaint with the **Overseas Student Ombudsman** (OSO) if the student is not satisfied with the way that a grievance has been managed. Overseas students may contact the Overseas Student Ombudsman if a student believes that the AUT or its colleges have not followed its grievance resolution policy and have

treated the student unfairly. Information about the OSO is available at https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints.

If a student has a complaint about the AUT's actions, they may raise concerns with the Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA) regarding the AUT's registration as an education and course provider. TEQSA does not deal with students' specific academic or non-academic grievances. Those grievances are dealt with under this policy.

5. POLICY APPLICATION

STAGES AND MANAGEMENT OF GRIEVANCES

5.1 Overview of Grievance Stages and Grievance Types

The process to follow for reporting and resolving a grievance consists of an escalating approach. The management of grievances has three broad stages, as outlined below:

- Stage One Grievance Management, in most cases managed by a staff member of an Affiliated College
- Stage Two Grievance Management, in most cases managed by the Vice-Chancellor
- Stage Three Grievance Management

Grievances are categorised in the following manner:

- Grievances about academic matters:
    - Stage 1 Appeals – to the Affiliated College Academic Dean
    - Stage 2 Appeals – to the Vice-Chancellor
    - Stage 3 Appeals – to the Academic Appeals Committee
- Grievances about non-academic matters:
    - Stage 1 Appeals – to the Affiliated College Principal or AUT Registrar
    - Stage 2 Appeals – to the Vice-Chancellor
    - Stage 3 Appeals – external review

While anticipated timelines are provided for each stage, in complex cases a longer timeframe for a response from the AUT may be required, in which case the student will be made aware of the alternative timeline.

The process is also illustrated graphically at the end of this document.

5.2 Academic Grievances

If you believe that there is a suitable reason to contest an academic decision that affects you, you can apply for review of the decision via the submission of an academic grievance. If you are not happy with the outcome of the grievance management, and you believe that the review decision was procedurally unfair, you can escalate the grievance.

With the following exceptions, all academic grievances are to commence at either informal grievance management (5.2.0) or Stage One grievance management (5.2.1):

- If the student's grievance relates to an externally marked project of 12,000 words or more, student grievances are to be submitted under Stage Two (5.2.2), with a request for a review of the grade awarded, as well as a report detailing the issues perceived to have influenced the mark awarded.
- If a HDR candidate wishes to appeal a decision of the Research Committee or the Human Research Ethics Committee, grievances are to be submitted under Stage Three (5.2.3).

5.2.0 Academic Grievance: Initial Informal Grievance Management

There are instances where an academic grievance can be managed informally. This includes complaints about the grade awarded in an enrolled unit, or other academic matters relating to student admission or progression, the curriculum and awards in a course of study, and marks for intra-semester assessments. Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns, complaints or grievances with the relevant staff of their Affiliated College or the AUT (informal resolution), but may choose to bypass this step and move to formal grievance resolution stages.

If a student wishes to discuss an informal academic grievance, they are encouraged to raise the matter informally with the relevant lecturer in relation to an intra-semester assessment result, or for other matters, the Registrar or Academic Dean of their college of enrolment (or Overseas Student Liaison Officer in the case of Overseas Students, or another staff member of a student's college appointed to resolve grievances for students other than overseas students). This must be done within 14 calendar days of the decision, action or inaction.

The staff member is to respond to the student's concern promptly, giving a full explanation of the reasons for the decision, action or inaction, or providing a full explanation of the reasons a particular grade was awarded, and to direct the student to access to this policy.

5.2.1 Academic Grievance: Stage One Grievance Management

A student's formal grievance commences at Stage One. Students may lodge a formal Stage One Appeal, by submitting their grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of the concern and the grounds for its appeal, and send it to the Academic Dean of their enrolled college.

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, and send it to the Academic Dean. You must include all information relevant to the grievance that is available to you at the time of your submission.
- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the decision, action or inaction, or within 7 calendar days of the outcome of the informal grievance discussion outlined above.
- The normal grounds for a formal appeal are one or more of the following:

- the lecturer did not provide sufficient information in the unit or assessment details
- the assessment requirements were not advised through a unit outline or were varied in an unreasonable way after being provided
- you believe that the examiners' judgement was not applied objectively
- you believe the mark your received in a unit or assessment was unfair
- you believe there has been a clerical error in the calculation of the grade
- you believe you have been disadvantaged in some way due to the circumstances surrounding your unit's examination or other assessment.

Note: A fee may be charged for appeals where you have been awarded a passing grade in an assessment or unit and are seeking to increase the grade. See https://aut.edu.au/fees/ for fee values.

Academic Dean's Action

Note: If the Academic Dean was involved in the original decision, the college Principal must appoint another person with relevant expertise to review the matter.

- Acknowledge the grievance in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- If a Stage One Appeal does not contain sufficient evidence to enable the Academic Dean to determine an outcome in favour of the student, the Academic Dean may choose to invite the student to provide further information and write to the student, providing 7 calendar days for the student to submit further evidence. If the student does not provide further documentation to support their claims, the Academic Dean must determine the outcome based on the evidence provided in the initial submission of the appeal.
- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance. This could involve:
  - bringing the student and the relevant lecturer together to discuss the matter
  - having the contested assessment marked by another lecturer in the same college
  - if the grievance relates to the mark for an intra-semester assessment, arrange for the assessment to be marked by another lecturer in the same college
- Advise the student of your decision in writing within 10 working days of concluding the review, including:
  - setting out your reasons
  - advising that if the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may have the right to escalate the matter under a Stage Two Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor
  - providing access to a copy of this policy and instructing the student to read it.

5.2.2 Academic Grievance: Stage Two Grievance Management

If a student believes that the outcome of a Stage One Appeal warrants subsequent appeal on the basis that:

- the Stage One decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure, and/or
- the Stage One decision-maker failed to consider relevant information available at the time of the Stage One Appeal which may have materially affected the outcome, and/or
- the student has further material to provide to a reviewer which was not available to the student at the time of the Stage One submission, but which if available at the time of the Stage One Appeal may have materially affected the outcome

they may submit a Stage Two Grievance Appeal. This cannot simply consist of the re-submission of the grievance and appeal presented in Stage One. Rather, it should be a request to review the process used in Stage One of the grievance and appeal process, or consideration of further material which if available at the time of the Stage One Appeal may have materially affected the outcome.

Submission of a request for a Stage Two Appeal is not automatically granted. When a student requests a Stage Two Appeal, the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) will consider the reasons the student has provided for the Stage Two Appeal. If the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) determines that the reasons the student have submitted for the Stage Two Appeal are sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter, the Vice-Chancellor will oversee a review of the Stage One grievance management and the submission of any further evidence.

If the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) determines that the reasons for the Stage Two Appeal do not meet the requirements of this policy, then the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) will write to the student to inform them of this outcome by way of concluding this grievance process.

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, including how it meets the requirements above for a Stage Two Appeal, and send it to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor James Dalziel, at vc@aut.edu.au.
- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the written notice from the college Academic Dean in relation to a Stage One Appeal, or within three months of submission of the initial formal grievance if the student claims that the initial decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure.

Note: A fee may be charged for appeals where you have been awarded a passing grade in in an assessment or unit and are seeking to increase the grade. See https://aut.edu.au/fees/ for fee values.

Vice-Chancellor's Action

Note: If the Vice-Chancellor was involved in the original decision that has become the matter in dispute, the Chancellor must appoint another person with relevant expertise to review the matter. The Vice-Chancellor may choose to appoint a delegate with relevant expertise to manage Stage Two reviews on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

- Consider the reasons the student has provided for a Stage Two Appeal. Determine if there are the reasons the student have submitted for the Stage Two Appeal are sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter.
    - If not deemed sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter, inform the student within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance outlining the reasons for this.
- If there are grounds to proceed in a review of the matter, acknowledge the grievance in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- If the grievance relates to the mark for an intra-semester assessment, consider having the assessment re-marked by another lecturer in a different college.
- Advise the student of your decision in writing within 10 working days of concluding the review, including:
    - setting out your reasons
    - advising the student that if they do not agree with the decision, and believe the grievance resolution process has not been followed appropriately, they may have the right to escalate the mater under a Stage Three Appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee
    - providing access to a copy of this policy and instructing the student to read it.

- If the student's grievance relates to an externally marked project of 12,000 words or more, the Vice-Chancellor may choose to send the unmarked project to another examiner as a "blind marking", or may choose to send both the marked project as well as the student's appeal and Supervisor's report detailing the issues perceived to have influenced the mark awarded, or may choose another course of action in relation to the student's appeal.
- The Vice-Chancellor may also communicate to the student's college the existence of the grievance, the outcome of the grievance, and any matters arising from the grievance that will support the Affiliated College in improving its academic quality and compliance with AUT policy.

5.2.3 Academic Grievance: Stage Three Grievance Management

If a student believes that the outcome of a Stage Two Appeal warrants subsequent appeal on the basis that:

- the Stage Two decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure, and/or
- the Stage Two decision-maker failed to consider relevant information available at the time of the Stage One Appeal or further information provided in the Stage Two Appeal which was not available to the student at the time of the Stage One submission which may materially affect the outcome

they may submit a Stage Three Grievance Appeal. This cannot simply consist of the re-submission of the grievance and appeal presented in Stage Two. Rather, it should be a request to review the process used in Stage Two of the grievance and appeal process.

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, including how it meets the requirements above for a Stage Three Appeal, and send it to the AUT Registrar at registrar@aut.edu.au. The matter will be considered by the Academic Appeals Committee (AAC).
- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the written notice from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to a Stage Two Appeal, or within three months of submission of the Stage Two grievance if the student claims that the Stage Two decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure.

Note: No fees apply for the submission of a Stage 3 Academic Appeal.

AUT Registrar's Action Based on an Appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee

- Acknowledge the formal appeal in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Advise the student of the Committee's decision in writing within 10 working days of concluding the review, including:
  - setting out their reasons
  - advising the student that the decision is the final point of internal review under the AUT's grievance resolution processes, and advise that provision for review by an appropriate independent third party is available if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance, and that students should consider a Stage 3 Non-academic Grievance if the student believes the matter has not been resolved
  - if the student is an overseas student, explicitly advise the overseas student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the overseas student's right to access an external complaints handling and appeals

process at no cost (via a Stage 3 non-academic appeal) and include the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body in relation to this process

  - provide access to a copy of this policy.

- The Registrar may also communicate to the student's college the existence of the grievance, the outcome of the grievance, and any matters arising from the grievance that will support the Affiliated College in improving its academic quality and compliance with AUT policy.

5.3 Non-academic Grievances

In this policy, "non-academic matters" means various administrative and other matters related to fees, withdrawals, expulsion, allegations of bullying, any form of racial discrimination, etc, and any other serious action, inaction or decision that students may consider are interfering with the progress of their studies or with the granting of an award.

Students may lodge grievances without fear of reprisal, and the appeals process provides for review by an independent third party if a student believes that the process has not been followed appropriately. Students are to commence at Stage One.

Matters relating to Sexual Assault or Sexual Harassment (SASH) are addressed by the AUT's *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure*. Any appeal under the *Grievance Resolution Policy – Students* against the findings or decisions from an investigation managed under the *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure* will be based on a procedural review only, that is, an appeal of a SASH issue under the *Grievance Resolution Policy – Students* will not re-investigate the substance of a SASH issue that has already been investigated.

5.3.1 Non-academic Grievance: Stage One Grievance Management

A student's formal grievance commences at Stage One. Students may lodge a formal Stage One Appeal, by submitting their grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of the concern and the grounds for its appeal.

If the grievance relates to the college the student is/was enrolled in, the Stage One Appeal is to be submitted to the college Principal. If the grievance relates to AUT policy or regulations, the Stage One Appeal is to be submitted to the University Registrar (registrar@aut.edu.au).

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, and send it to either the college Principal if the grievance relates to the college you are/were enrolled in, or to the AUT Registrar (registrar@aut.edu.au) if the grievance relates to AUT policy or regulations. You must include all information relevant to the grievance that is available to you at

the time of your submission.

- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the decision, action or inaction, or in the case of an overseas student lodging an appeal against an intention to report for unsatisfactory progress, within 20 working days of the date of the letter to the student from the University.

Note: No fees apply for the submission of a Non-academic Appeal.

Principal's Action

Note: If the Principal was involved in the original decision, the college Principal must appoint another person with relevant expertise to review the matter.

- Acknowledge the grievance in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- If a Stage One Appeal does not contain sufficient evidence to enable the Principal to determine an outcome in favour of the student, the Principal may choose to invite the student to provide further information and write to the student, providing 7 calendar days for the student to submit further evidence. If the student does not provide further documentation to support their claims, the Principal must determine the outcome based on the evidence provided in the initial submission of the appeal.
- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Advise the student of your decision in writing, including:
  - setting out your reasons
  - advising that if the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may have the right to escalate the matter under a Stage Two Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor
  - providing access to a copy of this policy and instructing the student to read it.

AUT Registrar's Action

Note: If the AUT Registrar was involved in the original decision, the Vice-Chancellor must appoint another person with relevant expertise to review the matter.

- Acknowledge the grievance in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- If a Stage One Appeal does not contain sufficient evidence to enable the AUT Registrar to determine an outcome in favour of the student, the AUT Registrar may choose to invite the student to provide further information and write to the student, providing 7 calendar days for the student to submit further evidence. If the student does not provide further documentation to support their claims, the AUT Registrar must determine the outcome based on the evidence provided in

the initial submission of the appeal.

- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Advise the student of your decision in writing, including:
  - setting out your reasons
  - advising that if the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may have the right to escalate the matter under a Stage Two Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor
  - providing access to a copy of this policy and instructing the student to read it.

5.3.2 Non-academic Grievance: Stage Two Grievance Management

If a student believes that the outcome of a Stage One Appeal warrants subsequent appeal on the basis that:

- the Stage One decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure, and/or
- the Stage One decision-maker failed to consider relevant information available at the time of the Stage One Appeal which may have materially affected the outcome, and/or
- the student has further material to provide to a reviewer which was not available to the student at the time of the Stage One submission, but which if available at the time of the Stage One Appeal may have materially affected the outcome

they may submit a Stage Two Grievance Appeal. This cannot simply consist of the re-submission of the grievance and appeal presented in Stage One. Rather, it should be a request to review the process used in Stage One of the grievance and appeal process, or consideration of further material which if available at the time of the Stage One Appeal may have materially affected the outcome.

Submission of a request for a Stage Two Appeal is not automatically granted. When a student requests a Stage Two Appeal, the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) will consider the reasons the student has provided for the Stage Two Appeal. If the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate) determines that the reasons the student have submitted for the Stage Two Appeal are sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter, the Vice-Chancellor will oversee a review of the Stage One grievance management and the submission of any further evidence.

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, including how it meets the requirements above for a Stage Two Appeal, and send it to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor James Dalziel, at vc@aut.edu.au.

- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the written notice from the college Principal or AUT Registrar in relation to a Stage One Non-academic Appeal, or within three months of submission of the initial formal grievance if the student claims that the initial decision-maker in Stage One failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure.

Note: No fees apply for the submission of a Non-academic Appeal.

Vice-Chancellor's Action

Note: If the Vice-Chancellor was involved in the original decision that has become the matter in dispute, the Chancellor must appoint another person with relevant expertise to review the matter. The Vice-Chancellor may choose to appoint a delegate with relevant expertise to manage Stage Two reviews on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

- Consider the reasons the student has provided for a Stage Two Appeal. Determine if there are the reasons the student have submitted for the Stage Two Appeal are sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter.
    - If not deemed sufficient to proceed in a review of the matter, inform the student within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance outlining the reasons for this.
- If there are grounds to proceed in a review of the matter, acknowledge the grievance in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Advise the student of your decision in writing within 10 working days of concluding the review, including:
    - setting out your reasons
    - advising the student that if they do not agree with the decision, and believe the grievance resolution process has not been followed appropriately, they may have the right to escalate the mater under a Stage Three Appeal
    - if the student is an overseas student, explicitly advise the overseas student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the overseas student's right to access an external complaints handling and appeals process at no cost (via a Stage 3 non-academic appeal) and include the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body in relation to this process
    - providing access to a copy of this policy and instructing the student to read it.
- The Vice-Chancellor may also communicate to the student's college the existence of the grievance, the outcome of the grievance, and any matters arising from the grievance that will support the Affiliated College in improving its academic quality and compliance with AUT policy.

5.3.3 Non-academic Grievance: Stage Three Grievance Management

If a student believes that the outcome of a Stage Two Non-academic Appeal or a Stage Three Academic Appeal warrants subsequent appeal on the basis that:

- the previous decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure, and/or
- the previous decision-maker failed to consider relevant information available at the time of the Stage One Appeal or further information provided in the Stage Two Appeal which was not available to the student at the time of the Stage One submission which may materially affect the outcome

they may submit a Stage Three Non-academic Grievance Appeal. This cannot simply consist of the re-submission of the grievance and appeal presented in Stage Two. Rather, it should be a request to review the process used in Stage Two of the grievance and appeal process.

For Stage Three Non-academic Grievances, the AUT participates in external grievance review processes in consultation with Independent Higher Education of Australia (IHEA), ensuring the ability for review by an appropriate independent third party if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance.

Student's Action

- Put your grievance in writing, explaining clearly the nature of your concern and the grounds for its appeal, including how it meets the requirements above for a Stage Three Appeal, and send it to the Vice-Chancellor of the AUT at vc@aut.edu.au who will coordinate the matter to be reviewed by an external reviewer.
- This must be done within 21 calendar days of the written notice from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to a Stage Two Non-academic Appeal, or within three months of submission of the Stage Two Non-academic Grievance if the student claims that the Stage Two decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure. If relating to the management of an academic grievance, this must be done within 21 calendar days of the written notice of the outcome of a Stage Three Academic Appeal, or within three months of submission of the Stage Three Academic Grievance if the student claims that the Stage Three decision-maker failed to follow AUT policy and/or procedure.

Note: No fees apply to the submission of a Non-academic Appeal.

Vice-Chancellor's Action

- Acknowledge the formal appeal in writing within 7 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Engage in external grievance review process, by appointing a person external to the AUT with relevant expertise to review the appeals process and recommend a resolution in writing to the Vice-Chancellor.

- Subject to the external review processes, try to resolve the grievance within 21 calendar days from when the student submitted the grievance.
- Consider the recommendation from the external reviewer and submit the findings to the Chancellor.
- The Chancellor is to decide the outcome of the Stage Three Student Appeal.
- Advise the student of the outcome of the Stage Three Appeal in writing, including:
  - a summary of the findings of the external reviewer
  - setting out the reasons of the outcome of the Stage Three Appeal
  - advising the student that the decision is the final point of review under the AUT's grievance resolution processes
  - provide access to a copy of this policy.

  The Vice-Chancellor may also communicate to the student's college the existence of the grievance, the outcome of the grievance, and any matters arising from the grievance that will support the Affiliated College in improving its academic quality and compliance with AUT policy.

6. OVERSEAS STUDENTS

The following additional considerations apply in relation to overseas students.

6.1 For clarity, this policy applies in the case of an appeal for the refusal of a transfer request.

6.2 In relation to appeals by an overseas student within 20 working days regarding a refusal of granting a letter of release (see *Overseas Students Release and Transfer Policy*), if the student is unsuccessful in appeal, or has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, or withdraws from the appeals processes by notifying AUT in writing, AUT will then finalise the student's refusal status in PRISMS.

6.3 All requests from students for a letter of release and the assessment of, and decision regarding, the request must be retained on the student's file for two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

6.4 In relation to appeals by an overseas student within 20 working days regarding a notification of intent to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress (see *Course Progress Policy*), if the student is unsuccessful in appeal, or does not access the internal appeals process within the 20 working day period, or has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process or withdraws from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying AUT in writing, AUT will then report the student's unsatisfactory course progress in PRISMS.

7. POLICY REVIEW

The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing the satisfactory implementation of this policy, and is responsible for undertaking a review of the policy at least every three years. Proposed amendments to the policy are to be recommended by the Academic Board, another relevant governance body or AUT staff member to the Council for consideration.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 sections 2.4, 6.2, 6.3.

TEQSA Act 2011, section 26 (delivery of courses through affiliate colleges must comply at all times with the Threshold Standards)

Educational Services to Overseas Students Act (2000) National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities' Providers of Education to Overseas Students, 2018

National Student Ombudsman: https://www.nso.gov.au/

Overseas Student Ombudsman: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints

9. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Board of Directors	October 2016	October 2016	Initial approval of policy, consolidating former Dispute Resolution Policies for Overseas and Domestic Students
2	Board of Directors	August 2021	August 2021	Scheduled review and minor updates
3	Board of Directors	November 2023	November 2023	Scheduled review, updates including formatting and editorial updates; update timing of grievance submission and responses for consistency; clarification on escalation of review stages; consolidating alike grievance types and stages; clarifying definition of grievances; reference to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy
4	Chair of Board and ACT CEO	November 2023	November 2023	Minor updates providing clarity on processes for external review of academic grievances
5	Board of Directors	February 2024	February 2024	Minor updates providing clarity for students on academic appeals
6	Council	March 2025	March 2025	Update to new document template; minor editorial updates to implement University status; reference to National Student Ombudsman
7	Council	March 2026	March 2026	Policy review; considering TEQSA Guidance Notes, the Student Academic Misconduct Toolkit; further consideration of the expectations of the National Student Ombudsman; and implementing minor changes as recommended in the 2025 ESOS Act audit report; establishing the Academic

				Board as reviewer of the policy at least every three years
8	Council	October 2026	October 2026	Added racial discrimination

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the University regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at aut.edu.au/documents

Summary of Grievance Resolution Stages

