



Student Grievances Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This Policy outlines the process taken by the Central Institute of Technology and Innovation (the Institute) to be followed that promotes the timely and fair resolution of concerns, complaints, appeals, and grievances raised by students about the Institute.

Scope

This Policy applies to all current and prospective students enrolled in a course of study at the Institute.

Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Institute documents:

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures
- Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures
- Student Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures
- Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures
- Academic Appeals and Grades Review Policy and Procedures

All documents referenced in this policy can be accessed via the CITI website



Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Staff Member	Any person who is an employee of the Institute. This includes full-time, part-time, sessional, and casual staff.
Student	Any person enrolled as a student at the Institute. This includes enrolment in all modes of study and at all locations.
Complainant	Complainant means the student(s) who is notifying a complaint.
Complaint	Complaint means any type of approach by a student(s) to the Institute in which they indicate they are not satisfied with the way a decision/action/matter affecting them was handled/is being handled. This includes but is not limited to the process or the outcome. This may include a decision/action/matter affecting them as a result of an Institute-registered Education Agent or third party.
Grievance	Grievance means a complaint of such a serious nature that it has reached a situation where a student(s) feels aggrieved by the seriousness of the unfair treatment towards them which emanated from a decision/action/matter affecting them. The student is seeking resolution and redress. This may also apply to a situation where a student is not satisfied with the way a complaint or appeal they have lodged has been handled from the point of view of the process or the outcome.
Appeal	Appeal means a request made by a student to have a situation, process or



Term	Definition
	outcome reviewed by a party not involved in the original decision, at a level appropriate to review the decision, and with the requisite expertise to conduct such a review.
Appellant	Appellant means a person lodging a formal appeal against a decision/action/matter that affects them.
Complaints and Grievances Officer	Complaints and Grievances Officer means the nominated member/s of staff responsible for the administration of appeals or complaints under this Policy. All formal complaints made under this Policy must be lodged with the Complaints and Grievances Officer who will investigate the complaint. The Complaints and Grievance Officer will be responsible for recording and tracking formal complaints under this Policy on a confidential and securely stored database. The Complaints and Grievances Officer is also a source of advice available for all parties involved in an investigation of a complaint and can be contacted at any stage during the complaints process for advice or assistance.
Investigating Officer	Investigating Officer refers to a person formally appointed by the Delegated Officer to conduct an investigation of a complaint, appeal or grievance, and provide a report for consideration.
Delegated Officer	Delegated Officer refers to the holder of a position who has the delegations to consider and make a decision in relation to relevant matters. This is usually the Registrar.



Term	Definition
PRISMS	PRISMS means the Provider Registrations and International Student Management System.
Respondent	Respondent means the Institute or its nominated representative.
Vexatious complaint	Vexatious complaint means a complaint deliberately intended to annoy or bring distress or suffering to another person.

Policy Principles

The Institute recognises the important role of feedback from students to promote a healthy, safe, and productive education environment which engages with stakeholders. Legitimate complaints are an important part of that feedback and help the Institute to identify and implement preventative strategies to minimise recurrent or systemic problems. Student satisfaction is enhanced through the provision of an effective complaints management process. The following principles apply:

1. The principles of natural justice shall apply to student complaint management.
2. All parties to a complaint shall have the right to be heard.
3. All relevant submissions and evidence shall be considered.
4. Matters that are not relevant shall not be taken into account.
5. The decision maker shall not be biased or appear to be biased.
6. Complaint handling shall comply with AS ISO 10002-2006 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations.
7. Analysis of student complaints shall contribute to continuous improvement of the Institute's policy and practice and to the student experience.



Exclusions

The policy covers issues arising from a student's involvement with the Institute. This Policy does not apply to complaints or grievances that are covered by State or Federal legislation, or determinations relating to other policies which include:

1. Complaints of unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying by staff or students, which are addressed by the Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedures, Staff Code of Conduct, and Student Code of Conduct.
2. Admission or enrolment matters covered by the Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures.
3. Assessment matters covered by the Assessment Policy and Procedures.
4. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress covered by the Course Progression Policy and Procedures.
5. Vexatious complaints may be investigated under the Student Code of Conduct.

Policy Statement

1. Legitimate Complaints

The Institute will investigate and seek to resolve all legitimate complaints in a fair, impartial, and timely fashion. The Institute takes all legitimate complaints seriously and will ensure that complainants do not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination because they make a complaint. The following apply:

- 1.1 Anyone who makes a complaint is expected to observe the processes in place for their complaint (including those about confidentiality) and to behave in a courteous and reasonable manner towards staff who investigate or decide those complaints.
- 1.2 Complaints may be made informally; in which case the matter is investigated urgently through the Complaints and Grievances Officer with



a view to achieving a quick resolution. This may be effective for example where there may be some misunderstanding or misinterpretation/communication breakdown involved. In all cases the complaint is entered to the Complaints Register.

- 1.3 The result of an investigation of an informal complaint is communicated to the student within 3 working days of notification of the complaint. This may extend to 5 working days where the matter is complex, with an interim advice/update provided to the student at 3 working days after notification of the complaint.
- 1.4 A complaint, appeal or grievance may also be lodged formally in writing. In this case the matter will be initially investigated internally by the Institute.
- 1.5 The Institute also makes provision for an external review in relation to situations where matters have reached a grievance level and the student is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal review by the Institute. These matters may be referred to the Resolution Institute¹. External review costs (including mediation and/or conciliation services) may be covered by the Institute depending upon the nature of the grievance. The flow chart at Appendix 1 depicts the process for internal and external review of grievance matters.

2. Informal Complaints

A student may make an informal complaint at any time within 12 months from the date of the event leading to the complaint. The following apply:

- 2.1 An informal complaint can be made face to face, by telephone, by email or in writing to the Dean for academic matters or to student services for non-academic matters.

¹ The Resolution Institute is an external mediation and resolution company:
<https://resolution.institute/Web/Web/About-Us/About-Us-Landing-Page.aspx?hkey=5428825c-8ac6-460c-90eb-6020dc8fef9d>



- 2.2 Staff members who receive an informal complaint must respond to the complaint as soon as practicable, normally within 20 working days of the complaint being raised.
- 2.3 Where the informal complaint cannot be resolved in this timeframe, the Registrar must be informed, and the complaint may be referred to the formal process.

3. Formal Complaints

Student can make a formal complaint at any time including if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of any informal complaint already made, provided the complaint is lodged within 12 months from the date of the event leading to the complaint or within a reasonable timeframe after receiving notification of the outcome of an informal complaint. The following apply:

- 3.1 A formal complaint must be lodged in writing with the Complaints and Grievances Officer, using the approved form for this purpose (Appendix 2).
- 3.2 The written complaint must contain sufficient information necessary for the complaint to be investigated and to substantiate the complaint.
- 3.3 All available information including a brief description of what the complaint is about, how it arose, who is involved, what (if any) steps have been taken to resolve the complaint and what outcome the complainant is seeking, should be lodged at the outset, along with any supporting documentation.
- 3.4 In cases where no formal written complaint has been received or the complainant refuses to put their complaint in writing, the Complaints and Grievances Officer may decide on whether an investigation is warranted.

4. Anonymous Complaints

The Institute does not generally respond to anonymous complaints unless they involve allegations of a serious nature, such as corruption or criminal behaviour. Where appropriate, the Complaints and Grievances Officer may decide that an investigation is warranted.



5. Withdrawal of a Complaint

A student may withdraw their complaint at any stage of the informal or formal process. If the formal process is underway, any withdrawal must be in writing. In most instances, the Institute will then deem the complaint resolved. However, in certain circumstances the Institute may deem the complaint serious enough for an internal investigation to continue or for referral to an external agency.

6. International Students

Where the outcome of an investigation will change the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) recorded for an international student, the Institute will report the changes to the Department Education via PRISMS which may affect the student's visa and length of stay in Australia. In this event, the student will be advised of the decision in the written notification letter outlining the Institute decision, and the student contact the Department of Home Affairs directly to discuss the subsequent impact on their student visa.

Procedures

The following procedures apply to student grievances, complaints, and appeals:

1. Preliminary Complaint Investigation and Determination Procedures

On receipt of a formal complaint the Complaints and Grievances Officer will:

- 1.1 Record the complaint on a confidential and securely stored Complaints Register.
- 1.2 Send an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant as soon as practicable, normally within 3 working days.



- 1.3 Refer the complaint to the Registrar or Delegate under the formal procedure with a recommendation as to the process and timeframe for investigation.
- 1.4 Advise the student as soon as practicable, normally within 3 working days, of acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint of the timeframe for resolution of the complaint. This is generally within 5 working days. This advice will include the name of the Investigating officer.
- 1.5 The Registrar or Delegate will undertake a preliminary investigation of the complaint. The preliminary investigation must determine whether or not a full investigation is warranted.
- 1.6 Where the Registrar or Delegate determines that the complaint should be investigated under this Policy, the Investigating Officer will liaise with the complainant and relevant Institute staff members to investigate the complaint.
- 1.7 The Investigating Officer will provide a report and recommendation to the Registrar or Delegate within 10 working days of commencing the investigation. The Registrar or Delegate will then advise the student of the outcome within a further 2 working days.

2. The Investigation

The process for investigating complaints will be open and transparent and will have due regard for natural justice and procedural fairness principles. Both the complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to present their cases in writing. The following apply:

- 2.1 This process will include ensuring all parties are in receipt of these procedures and providing the respondent with written details of the complaint.
- 2.2 The Investigating Officer must seek the complainant's permission prior to releasing details of the complaint to the respondent.



- 2.3 The Investigating Officer will examine the relevant documentation, interview relevant parties where necessary and seek clarification on information supplied from the relevant parties where required.
- 2.4 Both the complainant and the respondent are entitled to invite a support person or a neutral third party to attend any interviews or meetings conducted during the formal process.
- 2.5 The support person can be a fellow student, friend, or family member, and may provide assistance with communication for the complainant. The support person must be aged over 18. They cannot be a member or former member of the Institute staff.
- 2.6 The investigation will be concluded, normally within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint. Where this is not possible, the Complaints and Grievances Officer must keep the complainant informed of the reason and expected finalisation date.
- 2.7 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will provide one of the following written recommendations to the Delegate:
- 2.8 The complaint has been substantiated and recommendations made on any action required; or
- 2.9 The complaint has not been substantiated.
- 2.10 The Complaints and Grievances Officer will provide a written advice to the student advising them of the outcome, the opportunity to further discuss the outcome with the Delegate, and of the availability of independent external review under the grievance provisions.

3. Grievance Investigation and Determination Procedures

Where a situation has reached a formal grievance stage, the Institute must have regard to the possibility of the matter being subsequently referred for external review. The investigation and decision-making process must be clearly recorded in a way



which shows clearly the steps and processes involved in managing the grievance to an outcome. The following apply:

- 3.1 When either an academic or non-academic matter has reached a grievance situation, normally the Chief Academic Officer (Dean) if not involved in the original decision, will formally appoint an Investigating Officer.
- 3.2 This may or may not be the Complaints and Grievances Officer, and in all cases must be a person not previously involved in handling an earlier related complaint or be in any way the subject of or a party involved in the complaint/grievance.
- 3.3 Following investigation, the outcome of grievances relating to academic and non-academic matters will be determined by the Chief Academic Officer (Dean) or Delegate.
- 3.4 Where necessary, the Chief Executive Officer is available as Delegated Officer where the circumstances require this as an officer under the 'one level above' grievance determination principle. In some situations, involving for example the Chief Executive Officer, or the Chief Academic Officer (Dean), the Board may determine that an external party should be called on to conduct the investigation.
- 3.5 Acknowledgement will be provided to the complainant or aggrieved party within one working day of receiving the grievance.
- 3.6 Students will be informed of the likely timeframe for resolution of the grievance within 3 working days of receipt (5 working days where the grievance is complex and interim advice provided at 3 working days).
- 3.7 Complainants or aggrieved parties are also informed of the name of the Investigating Officer who will be their contact through the process of considering the matters raised, and who may request additional information or clarification in considering such matters.
- 3.8 The Investigating Officer will also be the liaison point in relation to the progress of considering the complaint or grievance.



- 3.9 Aggrieved parties will be informed of the outcome of their grievances within 20 working days of submitting the grievance in the majority of cases, however this will depend on the nature and complexity of the matters raised. In all cases complainants or aggrieved parties will be kept informed in a timely way of progress and timeframes.
- 3.10 Students are to be provided with formal notification in writing of the outcome of their complaint, appeal or grievance in the format at Appendix 3. In all cases the outcome of the decision will also be discussed with the student at the same time as part of this process.
- 3.11 The Institute also makes provision for an external review in relation to situations where matters have reached a grievance level, and the student is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal review by the Institute
- 3.12 The flow chart at Appendix 1 depicts the process for internal and external review of grievance matters, including as they relate to academic decisions, matters, or outcomes.

4. Charges

The Institute does not charge a fee for considering an appeal or grievance where the matter is warranted and is not seen to be vexatious to a staff member, student, or the Institute. Where students elect to seek external review through The Resolution Institute, there is similarly no charge to students.

5. External Agency

Complainants are encouraged to follow the procedures in this Policy and to act in good faith to try and resolve any actual or potential complaint. The following apply:

- 5.1 The complainant may, at any stage, refer their complaint to an external agency such as an Ombudsman.
- 5.2 Where this occurs, the Institute will advise the agency of review action already in train and discuss with the agency the best way for taking the matter forward.



- 5.3 Where the Institute is aware that a complaint has been lodged externally, the complaint will be recorded.

6. Appeals Procedure

The provision for students to appeal applies to both academic and non-academic matters. Students have the right to informally raise questions and seek clarification in relation to any decision/action/matter that affects them. The following apply:

- 6.1 In the case of academic assessment and grades, this can be through an informal request which must be responded to in a timely and considered way by the original decision maker, who should seek to provide further clarification and justification for the grade awarded.
- 6.2 Students have the right to then appeal such decisions if they are not satisfied with the process or outcome of the request. Students are encouraged to contact the Registrar, who will provide them with the required application form and advice for taking forward a formal appeal. Appeals are considered by delegated officers not involved in the original decision who have the expertise and authority to consider appeals.
- 6.3 Acknowledgement is provided to the student within one working day of receiving the appeal, along with an indication of the anticipated timeframe for considering and resolving the appeal. Students are also informed of the officer who will be their contact through the appeal process, and who may request additional information or clarification in considering the case. This officer will also be the student's liaison point in relation to progress of the appeal.
- 6.4 Students have the right to have matters relating to academic outcomes reviewed internally if they are dissatisfied with either the process or outcome of an academic matter (e.g. assessment, mark, or grade etc.).
- 6.5 In this situation, the Institute will make arrangements for the student's assessment, mark, or grade etc. to be reviewed by an academic staff member who has subject area expertise and was not involved in the



original decision. Note that students who request a remark of an assessment will be granted the remarked grade. This grade may be higher or lower than the original grade.

- 6.6 A recommendation will be made to the Registrar who may consult with the Chief Academic Officer (Dean) in reaching a decision as to the outcome of the appeal. Any student aggrieved by either the outcome or process is able to take such matters forward under the formal grievance arrangements, including for external review.
- 6.7 Appeals will be resolved within 20 working days in the majority of cases; however, this will depend on the nature and complexity of the matters under appeal. In all cases the appellant will be kept informed in a timely way of progress and timeframes.

7. External Appeals Procedure for International Students

The external appeals process for international students is to consider whether the Institute has followed its student complaint and appeals procedure and should only be enacted after exhausting the internal procedures described above. The following apply:

- 7.1 If a complainant wishes to lodge an external appeal or complaint about a decision made by the internal appeal process, the student can contact the National Student Ombudsman.
- 7.2 The National Student Ombudsman can investigate complaints from international students about private schools, colleges, institutes, and universities in Australia.
- 7.3 The National Student Ombudsman can investigate complaints from international students who are currently studying, previously studied, or are planning to study with private education providers on a student visa.
- 7.4 The National Student Ombudsman can investigate matters relating to:



- 7.4.1 Course fees and refunds
- 7.4.2 Transfers between courses or providers
- 7.4.3 Intention to report to Home Affairs for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance
- 7.4.4 Cancellation of enrolment
- 7.4.5 Deferment and suspension of studies
- 7.4.6 Incorrect advice given by an education agent
- 7.4.7 Refusing admission to a course
- 7.4.8 The Institute's handling of a complaint or appeal
- 7.5 There is no charge for lodging an external appeal.
- 7.6 In accordance with this Commonwealth Legislation, the Institute will maintain a student's enrolment while an appeal is ongoing and immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.
- 7.7 Following the receipt of the outcome of the external appeal, the Institute will implement the decision, convey the outcome to the student, place a copy of the documentation on the student file and undertake any improvement actions arising from the complaint.
- 7.8 If an external appeal is against the Institute's decision to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress, the Institute will maintain the student's enrolment (i.e. not report the student for unsatisfactory progress or attendance) until the external appeals process is complete and has supported the provider's decision to report.
- 7.9 If an appeal is against the Institute's decision to defer or suspend a student's enrolment due to misbehaviour or to cancel a student's enrolment, the Institute will await the outcome of the internal appeals process (where the outcome/decision is in support of the provider) before



notifying the necessary departments including the relevant authorities through PRISMS of the change to the student's enrolment.

8. External Appeals Procedure for Domestic Students

The purpose of the external appeals process for domestic students is to consider whether the Institute has followed its student complaint and appeals procedure. It should only be enacted after exhausting the internal procedures described above. The following apply:

- 8.1 In the event that internal resolution to a complaint cannot be reached, students will have access in the first instance to an external, independent reviewer to consider the case (Appendix 1).
- 8.2 Where on completion of such an external review and the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, it is open to the student to contact the National Student Ombudsman.

9. Information and Records Management

Responsible staff members for managing a complaint must keep accurate and complete records in accordance with the relevant Institute Policies and Commonwealth legislation. A summary of identified complaints will be raised at the relevant Boards and Sub-Committee meetings. This will include the number, nature, and outcome of the complaint.

10. Conflict of Interest

- 10.1 A participant may disqualify themselves from participating in these complaint procedures should they consider that their involvement would create a conflict of interest.



- 10.2 The Registrar is required to ensure that any participant in the processes specified by this Policy has the opportunity to declare whether or not they have a conflict of interest.
- 10.3 Any participant who perceives a possible conflict of interest should report the matter to the Registrar for a determination on what action is appropriate, and the Registrar may disqualify a person from participating.

11. Victimisation

Any victimisation of a complainant acting in good faith will be regarded seriously and should be referred to the Registrar for appropriate action. Victimisation will be addressed under the relevant Staff or Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 There should be limited disclosure of information relating to a complaint.
- 12.2 Dissemination of relevant information should be to as few people as possible, and only to those who are legitimately involved in the process of resolving the complaint.
- 12.3 All parties involved in an investigation of a complaint including the complainant, respondent and investigators are to maintain confidentiality.
- 12.4 Any breaches of confidentiality on the part of any of the parties involved in the resolution of the complaint will be regarded seriously and should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for appropriate action.

13. Training

All staff members who are or may be involved in complaints handling under this Policy are to participate in appropriate training for handling complaints and grievances.



Related Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)
- [AS ISO 10002-2006 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations](#)

Change and Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Authored by	Approved by	Description
1.0	16/10/2024	Chief Executive Officer	Board of Directors	Corporate policy

Policy Information

Author	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Approved by	Board of Directors
Approval date	16/10/2024
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Next review due	16/10/2027

Name of Policy	Student Grievances, Complaints, and Appeals Policy and Procedures
Version	V1.0

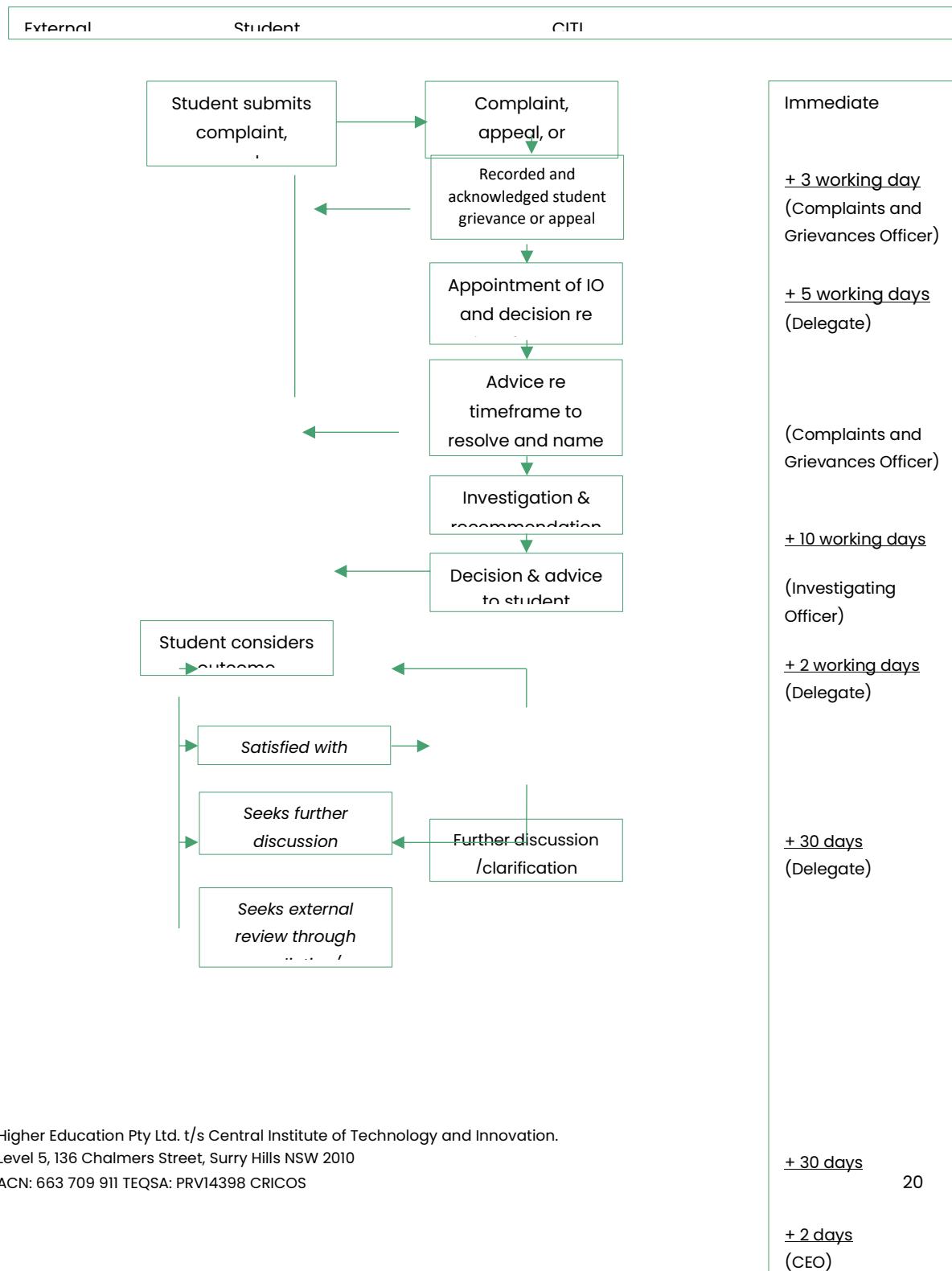


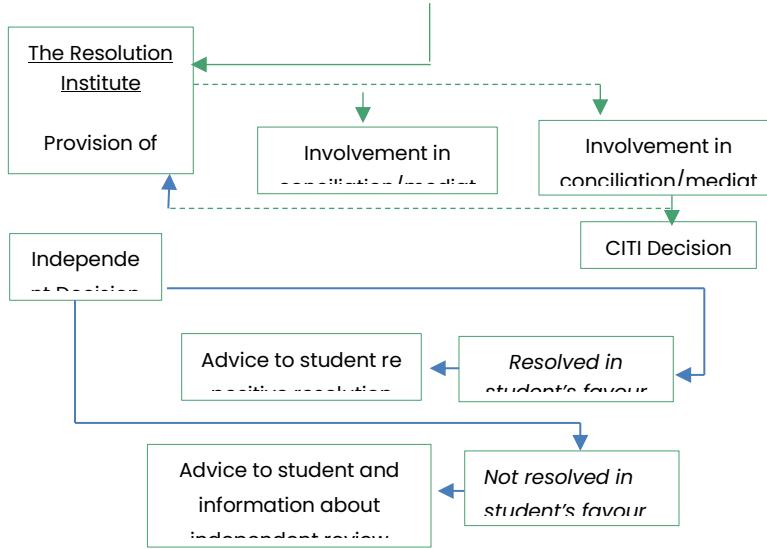
Policy: Corporate/Academic	Date: 16/10/2024	Status: Final ratified by the Board of Directors on 16/10/2024
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File: Student Grievances, Complaints, and Appeals Policy and Procedures_V1.0



Appendix 1: Flow chart – formal complaints, grievances, and appeals







Appendix 2: Request for Review of a Decision/Action Proforma

Note: Before filling out this Form please refer to the Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures and/or the Academic Appeals and Review of Grades Policy and Procedures, available on the CITI website.

1. Student Information

Type of request	<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal against a decision or action <input type="checkbox"/> Grievance about a decision or action <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Current student <input type="checkbox"/> Potential student
Name	
Student Number (if enrolled)	
Signature	
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

2. Overview of Complaint, Grievance, or Appeal

1. What decision or action does your complaint, appeal or grievance relate to? Please describe the decision or action, indicate who made the decision or took the action, and the approximate date when this happened).	
2. What action or outcome are you seeking from your complaint/appeal/grievance?	
3. Do you agree to the Institute discussing your complaint, appeal or grievance with any staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



members or students who can provide relevant information about it?	
4. Is there any person you do not want this discussed with? If so, who?	
5. What evidence, documents, further information have you included with this request? Please list your attachments here and attach them to this request - this may include further details relating to points 1, 2 and 3 if there is insufficient space in this form.	

<p><u>OFFICE USE ONLY</u> (To be completed, copied, and returned to the student confidentially, including copies of any attachments provided by the student)</p> <p>Student: Please regard this as a receipt of your request for a review. Your Contact Officer who will keep you informed of progress, and who you can provide any additional information to is provided below.</p>			
Name		Email	
Signature		Date	

Confidential



Appendix 3: Outcome of Student Request for Review of a Decision/Outcome Proforma

Note: Before filling out this Form please refer to the Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures and/or the Academic Appeals and Review of Grades Policy and Procedures, available on the CITI website.

3. Student Information

Type of request	<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal against a decision or action <input type="checkbox"/> Grievance about a decision or action <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Current student <input type="checkbox"/> Potential student
Name	
Student Number (if enrolled)	
Date request received	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date request acknowledged	Click or tap to enter a date.
Complaints and Grievances Officer	
Delegated Officer	
Delegated Officer Signature	
Date of Decision	Click or tap to enter a date.

4. Summary of Investigation of Complaint, Grievance, or Appeal



<p>6. Summary of investigation of complaint, grievance, or appeal. Refer to original student application for review for a full outline of matter which was subject of complaint, appeal, or grievance</p>	
<p>7. Investigation process Outline detail and sequence of investigative action take. Include dates.</p>	

5. Decision Outcome

Outline the decision made by the Institute:

<p>OFFICE USE ONLY</p> <p>Additional action or follow-up required/recommended:</p>

Confidential