



## AIE Non - Academic Grievance Policy

### Background

Students enrolled in courses of study with AIE are entitled to access AIE's grievance procedures, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. AIE will address each student complaint or appeal in a confidential, punctual and efficient manner, in order to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction.

AIE documents and implements policies and procedures for dealing in a constructive and timely manner with client complaints and appeals against decisions made by AIE. The policies and procedures aim to ensure that:

- Each complaint and appeal and its outcome is recorded in writing
- Each appellant is entitled to be heard by an independent person or panel
- Each appellant has an opportunity to formally present his or her case and is given a written statement of the appeal outcome, including reasons for the decision
- Each party may be accompanied and assisted by a third party at any relevant meeting
- AIE acts upon the subject of any complaint found to be substantiated
- All appropriate records of all grievances will be kept for a minimum of five (5) years, and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to those records.

### Student Privacy

AIE acknowledges and respects the privacy of students. It is required under the Privacy Act 1988 to comply with the National Privacy Principles in respect of the collection, use and disclosure of personal information from individuals. All records of grievances and their outcomes must be stored and kept strictly confidential.

### Non - Academic Grievance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and equitable procedure for AIE students, staff and stakeholders to submit and process a grievance related to non-academic matters and receive fair treatment throughout the process.

- Policy and Procedure review date: November 2015
- Policy and Procedure last reviewed date: November 2014
- Procedure approved by: CEO
- Compliance Officer: Head of School
- Responsibility: CEO

### Scope

This policy and process applies to all staff, students and other stakeholders who study, work with or regularly come into contact with AIE education personnel and services. Non-academic matters may include but are not limited to operational, administrative, discrimination and harassment issues. Examples of these include sexual harassment, racial or sexual discrimination, physical or verbal abuse. Any staff member, student or stakeholder who feels aggrieved on any non-academic matter related to dealings with AIE may use this policy and procedure to seek resolution.

This policy does not replace or modify policies or other responsibilities which may arise under other education provider policies or under any other statute or law. Also, these dispute resolution procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

The grievance procedure will be publicly available on the AIE website [www.aie.edu.au](http://www.aie.edu.au) and/or student handbook. Staff induction includes information on the college grievance and appeals procedure.



## Procedure

Students have five stages at which a complaint may be addressed. Each of the stages is free of charge to the student.

### Step 1. Informal Resolution

It is in the student's best interests for a dispute to be resolved amicably and at an early stage. A difficulty should initially be discussed with the staff member and/or Senior Teacher concerned and a satisfactory outcome might be achieved through discussion. At any stage of the process the student has the right to be accompanied by a friend, advocate or carer in any face to face discussions. If appropriate, the Harassment officers available on each AIE campus may be accessed. Details of each Harassment officer are available on the student handbook, on posters or through administration offices.

During all stages of the Non-Academic Grievance procedure AIE will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all parties will not suffer victimisation or discrimination. Full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken will be provided to all parties at every stage of the grievance process, if requested. There is no cost to the complainant for utilising this grievance procedure.

If the issue is not resolved within 5 working days then the student should proceed to Step 2.

### Step 2. Informal Resolution

The student should lodge a written complaint using the approved AIE Complaint and Appeals Form. Student should submit the form to the relevant Administration Manager/Head of School who will investigate the complaint. They will advise the complainant of the process to be followed and:

- review documentation
- review informal resolution process to date
- notify student of recommendation in writing

A satisfactory outcome might be achieved through conciliation.

If the grievance is not resolved within 5 working days the student should proceed to Step 3.

### Step 3. Appeal process

The student can appeal to the Student Grievance committee.

The student should complete an addendum to the original Complaints and Appeal Form and submit to the CEO within 14 days of receiving a response from the Course Coordinator/Program Manager (Step 2) and must detail the nature of the matter, the grounds of the appeal, the avenues of conciliation previously undertaken and his/her desired outcome.

Membership of the Student Grievance Committee shall be nominated by the CEO and shall be composed of at least 3 people - for example:

- a Director or independent Program Manager (as Chair)
- a student representative
- a Counsellor/other support person
- an independent teacher from another area
- a representative from another education provider

The Committee shall meet within five working days of receipt of the addendum to the Complaints and Appeal Form from the student. The student is able to formally present his or her case to the Student Complaints Committee in person. A support person may assist the student during the appeal and accompany the student to the meeting of the Student Complaints Committee.



The Chair of the Committee will advise the student in writing of the decision within five working days of the hearing. If the matter remains unresolved student can proceed to Step 4.

**Step 4. Informal Resolution - External ‘Round Table Conference’**

AIE can organize a ‘Round Table Conference’ between the student and AIE at Australian Council of Private Education and Training’s (ACPET) . ACPET is the peak body representing private education and training providers in Australia. AIE is a member of ACPET. The college should contact ACPET within 24 hours of receiving the request from the student to arrange a 'Round Table Conference'. ACPET will organize the 'Round Table Conference' within 10 working days at its office in the same city as the AIE campus where the complaint was registered.

Options will be discussed and the desirable result is resolution of the complaint through conciliation. The outcome of Step 4 - the 'Round Table Conference' will be agreed to at the completion of the 'Round Table Conference'.

ACPET’s role is not to decide on the outcome but to facilitate the meeting to ensure both parties are able to present their views. If the complaint remains unresolved then the student can proceed to Step 5.

**Step 5. Formal Resolution - External Professional Mediator appointed**

Formal Dispute Resolution may be requested after all appropriate forms of informal resolution have been sought. Student can request mediation by completing an appropriate ‘Request for Mediation’ form. AIE can request ACPET to organize an accredited independent professional Mediator. Mediator will be organized within 14 working days and the outcome of this mediation will be known at the end of the mediation session.

In consultation with the Mediator all costs associated with mediation are to be agreed to by both parties. The Mediation can be held at ACPET’s office. ACPET’s role in the mediation is limited to organizing the Mediator and a room for the mediation. ACPET will not take part in the formal Mediation. Both parties will commit to resolving the complaint. Third parties of each party may also attend the mediation. The Mediator will document all outcomes of mediation. At completion of the Mediation, both parties must sign an Agreement agreeing to the outcomes.

This agreement does not remove the right to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other education provider policies or under statute or any other law

**Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure (Non - Academic Grievance)**

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Informal Resolution	Informal Resolution	Appeal/Grievance process	Informal Resolution: External ‘Round Table Conference’ (ACPET to facilitate)	Formal Resolution: External Professional Mediator appointed

AIE will keep appropriate records of grievances for at least five (5) years and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records.

**Continuous Improvement**

Any improvement action arising from a student grievance or appeal will be recorded in the Improvement Action Registry. This register will be reviewed by the Heads of School at least three times per year and a report will be supplied to the CEO. The CEO is required to report all grievances to the Board of Directors.