# COURSEWORK STUDENT ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS POLICY

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>6 Feb 2015</td>
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**First Approved by:** University Council

**Custodian title & e-mail address:** Director, Academic Quality & Standards quality@uow.edu.au

**Author:** Academic Quality & Policy Specialist, Academic Quality & Standards Unit

**Responsible Division & Unit:** Academic Quality & Standards Unit

**Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:**
- Schedule 1: Application of Policy to Third Party Providers
- Schedule 2: Flowchart
- Schedule 3: Terms of Reference - Student Ombudsman

**Relevant Legislation & External Documents:**
- Code of Practice – Honours
- Code of Practice – Student Professional Experience
- Teaching and Assessment: Code of Practice – Teaching
- Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Teaching and Assessment: Subject Delivery Policy
- General Course Rules
- Student Academic Consideration Policy
- Student Conduct Rules
- Internal Reviews, Appeals and Corrections
- Records Management Policy

**Audience:** Public – accessible to anyone

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1 **Purpose**

1. This policy replaces the Academic Grievance Policy (Coursework and Honours Student).
2. The University aims to provide a fair, equitable and productive learning environment for all its students. This policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving requests for review of a mark or grade and student academic complaints.
3. This policy affirms the UOW core values contained in the University Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018.

2 **Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Complaint</td>
<td>A complaint by a student concerning a decision, act or omission of a member of UOW staff or committee which affects the student’s academic progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Task</td>
<td>An activity which a student is required to complete to provide a basis for an official record of achievement or certification of competence in a subject (e.g. examination, test, take-home examination, quiz, assignment, essay, laboratory report, demonstration, folio of creative work, performance, written or oral presentation, participation, simulation, placement report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>An expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conciliation</td>
<td>A process whereby an impartial third party assists in the process of complaint resolution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest</td>
<td>Exists where there is a divergence between the individual interests of a staff member or affiliates and their professional obligation to the University, such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the professional actions or decisions of that staff member are influenced by their own interests or are for their own benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>A program of study that leads to a higher education award, or non-award study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due process</td>
<td>Procedural rights under this policy, other policies (including University, Faculty or Unit policy documents), University rules and codes of practice, and includes the application of the principles of natural justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Designate</td>
<td>A Faculty staff member given designated authority to undertake investigations of academic complaints. A list of current Faculty Designates can be found on the UOW website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good faith</td>
<td>Honestly and with propriety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural justice</td>
<td>Principles that ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable. These involve decision-makers informing people of the case against them or their interests, giving them a right to be heard, not having a personal interest in the outcome, and acting only on the basis of logically probative evidence.</td>
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</table>
3 Application & Scope

1. This policy sets out the general approach of the University of Wollongong (UOW) in resolving:
   a. requests for review of mark or grade (see section 6); and
   b. academic complaints (see sections 7-10).

2. In the case of students enrolled in a UOW program delivered by a third party, the policy applies with the modifications set out in Schedule 1.

3. This policy does not apply to students studying at the University of Wollongong in Dubai, who may make academic complaints using the UOWD Student Academic Grievance Policy.

4. This policy applies to academic complaints by a Higher Degree Research (HDR) student relating to coursework subjects taken as part of a HDR degree.

5. This policy does not apply to any academic complaint by a Higher Degree Research (HDR) student relating to HDR candidature, HDR supervision or the examination of HDR theses. Such complaints are regulated by the HDR Student Academic Complaints Policy and the Higher Degree Research Supervision and Resources Policy.

6. This policy does NOT apply to issues relating to campus access and order, student conduct and discipline or student discrimination, harassment or vilification, which are addressed in other policy documents.
7. The University will accept anonymous complaints and will take action where the matters raised warrant such action to investigate issues or concerns raised by anonymous complainants. In the case of an anonymous complaint, the outcome must be recorded but notification requirements to the complainant do not apply.

8. One central component of the University’s approach to academic complaints is the process of review carried out by the Student Ombudsman, an independent and impartial senior officer who is responsible for reviewing student complaints and who will discharge the functions of that office in accordance with the terms of reference set out in Schedule 3.

4 Principles of Complaints Resolution

1. The following principles must be adhered to when dealing with a request for review of a mark or grade or academic complaint:

   1.1. Requests for review of a mark or grade or academic complaints must be handled within an appropriate time frame having due regard to procedural fairness and to the specific requirements of this policy;
   1.2. All parties involved in an review of mark or grade request or academic complaint must be treated with respect and impartiality;
   1.3. Any relevant issues put forward by the complainant, such as the existence of a disability or medical condition, will be taken into consideration;
   1.4. All parties involved should seek to resolve the request for review of a mark or grade or academic complaint in good faith;
   1.5. Individuals must not victimise or harass other parties involved in the matter;
   1.6. Confidentiality must be observed by all participants and at all stages of the review of mark or grade or academic complaints process;
   1.7. All parties must be informed of the progress of and, if relevant and subject to the University’s obligations under privacy legislation, the outcome of the request for review of a mark or grade or academic complaint and must be provided with reasons for the outcome reached; and
   1.8. Requests for review of a mark or grade and academic complaints from anonymous sources must be considered but the anonymity of the complainant should be recognised as a potential hindrance to the effective examination of a complaint.

1. The University is committed to the principles of continuous improvement and monitors academic complaints to identify trends that may require proactive measures to minimise or eradicate subsequent academic complaints.

5 Flowchart

1. A flowchart depicting the stages in the review of a mark or grade and in the academic complaint process can be found at Schedule 2.

6 Review of Mark or Grade

Informal Explanation – Feedback under the Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy

1. A student may request an explanation of a mark for an assessment task or a final grade for a subject consistent with the student’s right to appropriate and useful feedback on their performance in an assessment task under the Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy. The student should do so by
contacting the Subject Coordinator or another member of the subject teaching team as soon as possible after notification to the student of the mark or grade.

2. If a student requests feedback on a mark for an assessment task or a final grade, the Subject Coordinator or other member of the subject teaching team must provide feedback to the student and should inform the student of the student's right to lodge a formal request for review of a mark or grade with the Head of School. The Subject Coordinator or other member of the subject teaching team must create a record of the provision of such feedback to students.

**Formal Request for Review of a Mark or Grade**

3. A student may lodge a formal request for a review of a mark or grade with the Head of School within ten (10) working days from notification to the student of the mark or grade.

4. Students may lodge a formal request for a review of a mark or grade on the grounds of alleged:
   a. failure to assess work in accordance with the assessment criteria specified in the relevant subject outline;
   b. technical marking or mark collation error; or
   c. bias on the part of the marker.

5. The formal request for review of a mark or grade must:
   a. include the student's name, student number and contact details; and
   b. state:
      i. the grounds for the request for review of a mark or grade,
      ii. the specific issues to be addressed,
      iii. supporting evidence, and
      iv. the form of resolution sought.

1. After examining the request and any supporting material and other relevant documentation and, if necessary, speaking to the student and other relevant parties where appropriate, the Head of School may:
   a. proceed with review of the mark or grade, and carry out the review or appoint an academic staff member to do so on their behalf; or
   b. refuse to take the matter further if there are insufficient grounds for the request.

1. No review under section 6(4)(a) is available in respect of a student’s mark or grade that has been the subject of a formal moderation process as provided in the Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy.

2. The Head of School must, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the request:
   a. determine the request for review of a mark or grade; and
   b. notify the student, in writing, of their determination, including reasons for the determination and, if appropriate, any remedial action to be taken if the review is upheld.

1. A student may lodge an appeal against the outcome of a request for review of a mark or grade on the basis of:
   a. the determination of the request is not supported by the available evidence;
   b. due process has not been adhered to by the Faculty, or
c. relevant new or additional information is now available that was not previously available.

1. Any such appeal will be lodged by way of an academic complaint with the Faculty Designate as provided in clause 8.6, and shall detail the basis for the appeal.

7 Academic Complaints

Informal Consultation

1. Any student who has a question or concern about a decision, act or omission that affects their academic progress should first seek to resolve the question or concern informally before initiating formal academic complaint procedures. In the first instance the student should contact the staff member closest to the issue to discuss the matter.

2. Students may also seek advice informally from other appropriate persons, such as the:
   a. Subject Coordinator
   b. Course Coordinator
   c. Faculty Student Support Advisor
   d. Student Advocacy Officer; or
   e. the relevant Student Association.

Stages in the Academic Complaint Process

3. The stages in the formal academic complaint process are:

   Stage 1: Formal Complaint to Faculty (see section 8 below)

   Stage 2: Referral of Complaint to Student Ombudsman (see section 9 below)

   Stage 3: Appeal to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (see section 10 below)

4. At each step in the academic complaint process the staff member to whom the matter has been referred:
   a. may exercise their discretion to extend the specific time limit for application or referral in consultation with the student; and
   b. must respond to the student, and resolve the matter, as soon as practicable.

5. Where a complaint is not resolved at any stage after one calendar month, the student may proceed to the next stage.

6. At all stages of the academic complaint process, students may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.

8 Stage 1 – Formal Complaint to Faculty

1. Where a student wishes to make a complaint concerning a decision, act or omission of a member of UOW staff or committee which affects the student's academic progress, the student may lodge a formal academic complaint with the Head of School (or nominee) within ten (10) working days of the decision, act or omission giving rise to the complaint.

2. Examples of academic complaints include:
   a. failure to manage a request for student academic consideration in accordance with the Student Academic Consideration Policy;
b. failure of an Honours Project Supervisor to fulfil their responsibilities as defined in the Code of Practice – Honours;

c. failure to adhere to the requirements of the General Course Rules, including the rules governing the award of grades of performance, granting of awards "with Distinction", minimum rate of progress, advanced standing, amendments to academic records;

d. failure to adhere to the requirements of the Course Progress Policy in respect of minimum rate of progress;

e. failure to adhere to the requirements of the Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy in respect of the awarding of credit or advanced standing;

f. failure to adhere to the requirements of the rules with respect to the course of study in which the student is enrolled;

g. failure to adhere to mandatory requirements of a relevant Code of Practice (e.g. Teaching and Assessment, Honours, Student Professional Experience), including assessment or examination requirements, other than failure to assess work in accordance with specified criteria;

h. failure to adhere to Faculty or University assessment or examination requirements;

i. failure to retain adequate class attendance records where attendance is an assessment criteria;

j. failure to follow due process in handling student requests, academic appeals or academic complaints;

3. The formal academic complaint must:

a. be lodged by the student within ten (10) working days of the decision, act or omission giving rise to the complaint;

b. include the student's name, student number and contact details; and

c. state the nature of the academic complaint and the form of resolution sought.

4. After examining the complaint, any other relevant documentation and, if necessary, speaking to the student and other relevant parties, the Head of School or their nominee may:

a. uphold the complaint and direct actions be taken to resolve the matter on the basis that:

   i. University policy has not been observed, as a result of which the student has suffered detriment,

   ii. The student has otherwise been treated unreasonably; or

b. dismiss the complaint on the grounds that there are insufficient grounds for the academic complaint.

1. Within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint, the Head of School or their nominee must notify the student, in writing, of their determination regarding the academic complaint, including reasons for the decision, and advise the student of their right to lodge a formal appeal with the Faculty Designate.

2. Where a student is not satisfied with the determination of the Head of School or their nominee, the student may lodge a formal appeal with the Faculty Designate within ten (10) working days of the date of the response from the Head of School (or nominee).

3. After examining the appeal, any other relevant documentation and, if necessary, speaking to the student and other relevant parties, the Faculty Designate may:

a. uphold the appeal and direct actions be taken to resolve the matter; or
b. refuse the appeal on the basis there are insufficient grounds for the academic complaint.

1. The Faculty Designate must notify the student, in writing, within ten (10) working days of receiving Stage 1 appeal, of their determination of the appeal, including reasons for the decision, and notify the student of their right to refer the academic complaint to the Student Ombudsman as per Stage 2.

2. The student's academic complaint and the response of the Faculty must be clearly documented and recorded by the Faculty and retained in accordance with the University Records Management Policy.

9 Stage 2 – Referral of Complaint to Student Ombudsman

Referral of complaint

1. Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the process, the student may refer the matter, in writing, to the Student Ombudsman within ten (10) working days of the date of the response from the Faculty, on the grounds that:
   a. the final determination at Stage 1 of the process is not supported by the available evidence;
   b. due process has not been adhered to by the Faculty, or
   c. relevant new or additional information is now available that was not available at Stage 1.

2. The Stage 2 referral must:
   a. be lodged by the student within ten (10) working days of the date of the final determination of the Faculty;
   b. include the student’s name, student number and contact details; and
   c. outline the basis for the Stage 2 referral.

3. The Faculty must, upon request, provide the Student Ombudsman with a copy of all documentation regarding its consideration of the issues raised in the academic complaint.

4. Should the Student Ombudsman, following an initial review of the matter, determine that the matter requires further consideration, the Student Ombudsman may request the Faculty to prepare a report for the Student Ombudsman on the background to the matter.

5. In considering the appeal the Student Ombudsman will, where necessary in order to determine the appeal fairly and appropriately:
   a. give the student concerned an opportunity to be heard and advise him/her of procedures and time requirements;
   b. invite any staff member or student, whom he/she considers may assist the review, to provide evidence in person or otherwise;
   c. provide both the student and the person against whose decision the student is appealing with access to information considered by the Student Ombudsman in determining the appeal;
   d. permit the student to nominate staff or students to be invited to speak with the Student Ombudsman in support of his/her case;
   e. allow the student to be accompanied by a person who may lend support but who shall not be permitted to address the Student Ombudsman;

6. In considering the appeal the Student Ombudsman will:
   a. keep an adequate record of the evidence;
b. with the consent of the student concerned, allow any member of the University with sufficient justification to have access to that record; and

c. outline their findings and advise the student and any other relevant parties of the decision in relation to the student's complaint.

Possible outcomes

7. After examining the relevant documentation and, where necessary, speaking to the student and other relevant parties, the Student Ombudsman may:
   a. refuse to take the matter further on the basis there are insufficient grounds for the Stage 2 referral to be upheld;
   b. conciliate the matter in accordance with sections 9.8 and 9.9;
   c. uphold the Stage 2 referral on the basis that the evidence does not support the final determination at Stage 1 and take appropriate action in accordance with sections 9.10 - 9.12; or
   d. uphold the Stage 2 referral on the basis of a failure by the Faculty to observe due process and take appropriate action in accordance with sections 9.10 - 9.12.

8. The Student Ombudsman will determine an outcome for a Stage 2 referral within twenty (20) working days of having received the referral.

Conciliation

9. The Student Ombudsman may conciliate the matter in order to clarify the issues with the student and suggest possible directions for resolution of the academic complaint.

10. The Student Ombudsman may, with the student's consent:
    a. refer the student to another person, or student representative body, who can provide relevant advice or assistance with the aim of resolving the academic complaint; and/or
    b. facilitate negotiation of the academic complaint between the parties.

Decision and Outcome

11. Where the Student Ombudsman decides that the evidence does not support the final determination at Stage 1 or that due process has not been followed by the Faculty, he/she may:
    a. conciliate the matter in accordance with sections 9.8 and 9.9; or
    b. refer the matter, in writing, back to the Faculty for reconsideration of the matter in accordance with due process and within a specified time period; or
    c. make a determination on the matter.

12. Where the matter is referred back to the Faculty for reconsideration under section 9.10(b), the Faculty must report back their final determination on the matter including reasons to the Student Ombudsman within a designated time limit.

13. Where the Student Ombudsman makes a determination under section 9.11(c) he/she must notify the Faculty Designate and the Executive Dean, in writing, of that decision as soon as practicable.

Student to be notified

14. The Student Ombudsman must notify the student, in writing, of the final decision regarding their academic complaint, including reasons for the decision, and of the student's right to appeal to the Deputy Vice-
Chancellor (Academic) under Stage 3 if they believe that there are grounds for appeal as specified in section 10.1.

10 Stage 3 – Appeal to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Lodging a Stage 3 Appeal

1. Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their academic complaint under Stage 2, the student may appeal the outcome, in writing, to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), on the ground that:
   a. due process has not been adhered to at either Stage 1 or Stage 2, or
   b. relevant new and substantial information is now available.

2. The appeal must:
   a. be lodged, in writing, with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) within ten (10) working days of receiving written notification of the decision of the Student Ombudsman;
   b. state fully the reasons for the appeal; and
   c. include any relevant documentary evidence to support the appeal.

Consideration of Appeal by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

3. If the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) has had prior involvement in the matter, or if a conflict of interest exists, the Vice-Chancellor will nominate an alternative officer to determine the appeal in place of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in accordance with clauses 10.4 – 10.12 below.

4. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will conduct a preliminary assessment of the appeal, to determine whether the appeal meets the requirements of clause 10.1.

5. Following the preliminary assessment, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will:
   a. review the matter in accordance with 10.6; or
   b. refer the matter to another appropriate member of staff, who is free from prior involvement in the matter, to review the matter in accordance with 10.6.

6. In his/her review of a student academic appeal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or other member of staff as per 10.5(b), may:
   a. give the student concerned an opportunity to be heard and advise him/her of procedures and time requirements
   b. invite any staff member or student, whom it considers may assist the review, to attend the meeting and advise such persons of procedures and time requirements
   c. provide both the student and the Executive Dean of the Faculty or the Student Ombudsman (as appropriate) with access to information considered in determining the appeal
   d. permit the student to nominate staff or students to be invited to appear in support of his/her case, and/or
   e. allow the student to be accompanied by a person who may lend support but who shall not be permitted to address the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or other member of staff as per 10.5(b).

7. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or other member of staff as per 10.5(b) must keep an adequate record of the evidence and his/her decision.
8. Where the matter was referred to another member of staff as per 10.5(b), the member of staff will recommend an outcome to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

**Outcome of Appeal**

9. Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) determines there are insufficient grounds for the appeal he/she will advise the student that there are insufficient grounds for the appeal and that the decision of the Student Ombudsman shall be upheld.

10. Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) determines that there are sufficient grounds for the appeal he/she will refer the matter back to the Faculty or Student Ombudsman (as appropriate) for reconsideration.

11. Where the matter is referred back to the Faculty or Student Ombudsman, the Faculty or Student Ombudsman (as appropriate) must report their final determination on the matter including reasons to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) within a designated time limit.

12. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) must notify the student, the Executive Dean of the Faculty and the Student Ombudsman of the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) working days of his / her determination.

**11 Extension of Time Limits**

1. Any time limit set in this policy may be extended at the discretion of the investigating officer, for example, to provide adequate time to gather evidence and convene a meeting or because of special circumstances demonstrated by the student.

**12 External Review**

1. At any point during the academic complaint process, a student who is dissatisfied with the outcome or conduct of the academic complaint may lodge a complaint with an external agency. Students have the right to make a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman when there is evidence of maladministration or misconduct by the University of Wollongong. The NSW Ombudsman may choose to not investigate a matter until the University has had sufficient opportunity to remedy/rectify the academic complaint internally.

**13 Conflict of Interest**

1. If a staff member is involved in a review of a mark or grade or complaint against a decision arising from a matter in which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest, they should disqualify themselves from the investigation and an appropriate alternative staff member should be appointed.

2. Staff involved in a lower level of a complaint will not be involved in reviewing the same complaint again at a later stage.

**14 Record Keeping**

1. Files relating to requests for review of a mark or grade and to academic complaints considered by the Subject Coordinator, Head of School (or nominee), or Faculty Designate, will be retained and disposed of by the Faculty in accordance with the UOW Records Management Policy.

1. Files relating to academic complaints considered by the Student Ombudsman will be retained and disposed of by the Office of the Student Ombudsman in accordance with the UOW Records Management Policy.

2. Files relating to academic complaints considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will be retained and disposed of by the Academic Quality & Standards Unit in accordance with the UOW Records Management Policy.
3. Records of student academic complaints will be maintained in order to allow for the occurrence and nature of complaints to be monitored and to ensure that action is taken to address underlying causes.

15 Roles & Responsibilities

1. All persons involved in requests for review of a mark or grade or investigations of academic complaints have a responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

2. The University has a responsibility to:
   a. ensure that this policy is accessible and communicated to all staff and students;
   b. ensure that this policy is implemented and applied consistently across all faculties and academic units;
   c. promote best practice in resolving requests for review of a mark or grade and academic complaints; and
   d. ensure that the process for resolving requests for review of a mark or grade and academic complaints allows for:
      i. timeliness of response;
      ii. fairness of consideration
      iii. respect for privacy; and
      iv. keeping all parties informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to requests for review of a mark or grade and academic complaints.

3. Students and staff involved in requests for review of a mark or grade and academic complaints have a responsibility to follow the requirements of this policy.

4. Faculties, the Student Ombudsman and the Academic Quality and Standards Unit have responsibility to monitor the occurrence and nature of student academic complaints and the action is taken to address underlying causes.

16 Version Control and Change History

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<th>Version Control</th>
<th>Date Effective</th>
<th>Approved By</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Autumn Session 2015</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>New policy to replace Academic Grievance Policy (Coursework and Honours Students) 2003 – 2014</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3 April 2015</td>
<td>Vice- Chancellor</td>
<td>Minor amendment to scope of policy (addition of clause 3.5) and correction to flowchart p16.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5 July 2016</td>
<td>Vice- Chancellor</td>
<td>Minor amendment to Schedule 3: Student Ombudsman Terms of Reference to clarify focus of role is on student academic complaints. Transfer to rebranded template.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7 October 2016</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>Consequential amendments following the approval of new Teaching and Assessment Policy Suite. Amendments to Relevant Legislation &amp; External Documents, Section 6(1)</td>
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<td>7 October 2016</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>Consequential amendments following the approval of new Teaching and Assessment Policy Suite. Amendments to Relevant Legislation &amp; External Documents, Section 6(1) and Section 6(7).</td>
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Schedule 1 - Application of Policy to Third Party Providers

Definition of “third party provider”

1. Third party provider – a higher education provider operating within Australia or overseas (other than the University of Wollongong Dubai - UOWD) with which UOW has an agreement for the delivery of UOW courses at or in conjunction with that provider.

Application

2. Where a student is enrolled in a UOW program delivered by a third party provider, the Coursework Student Academic Complaints Policy (“this policy”) applies with the modifications set out in this Schedule.

Procedural Matters

3. Where they do not exist, the course owning faculty will designate staff at the third party provider who hold positions equivalent to those specified in this policy:
   a. Subject Coordinator
   b. Head of School
   c. Faculty Designate

4. An appeal by a student, as per Stage 3, must be lodged in accordance with section 10 respectively with either:
   a. the Academic Registrar (or equivalent) of the third party provider;
   b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

5. An appeal lodged with the Academic Registrar (or equivalent) of the third party provider must be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

6. An appeal meeting may be conducted by teleconference or video-conference. In such a case, a member of staff of UOW or the third party provider may be present to assist the student at the third party provider’s premises. This does not preclude the right of the student to nominate their own support person in accordance with this policy.
Schedule 2 – Flowchart

Review of Mark or Grade

Informal Request for Review of Mark or Grade

Student asks Subject Coordinator (or another relevant member of the subject teaching team) for explanation or reconsideration of assessment task mark or final grade for a subject.

Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) considers informal request.

Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) refuses to reconsider mark or grade on the basis there are insufficient grounds for request.

Does the Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) reconsider the mark or grade?

Yes: Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) conducts an informal reconsideration of mark or grade.

No: Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) notifies student of his/her decision in writing.

Subject Coordinator (or other relevant member of the subject teaching team) maintains record of decision.

Student lodges formal request for review of mark or grade (see next page).

Is the student satisfied with the decision?

Yes: No further action.

No: Further action as per the policy.
Academic Complaints

Informal Consultation

Student seeks to resolve a question or concern about a decision, act, or omission that affects their academic progress by contacting a staff member closest to the issue in the first instance; and or seeks advice informally from other appropriate persons.

Stage 1: Formal Complaint to Faculty

Student lodges formal academic complaint with the Head of School.

HOS considers formal academic complaint; relevant documentation, and speaks to student and other relevant parties if necessary.

HOS dismisses the complaint on the basis there are insufficient grounds for complaint.

Does the HOS uphold the complaint?

HOS upholds the complaint and directs action to be taken to resolve the matter.

HOS notifies student of his/her decision in writing.

Is the student satisfied with the decision?

No further action.

Student lodges formal appeal with Faculty Designate.

Faculty Designate considers formal appeal; relevant documentation, and speaks to student and other relevant parties if necessary.

Faculty Designate refuses the appeal on the basis there are insufficient grounds for complaint.

Does the Faculty Designate uphold the appeal?

Faculty Designate upholds the appeal and directs action to be taken to resolve the matter.

Faculty Designate notifies student of his/her decision in writing.

Complaint and Faculty Response is documented and recorded by the Faculty.

Is the student satisfied with the decision?

No further action.

GO TO STAGE 2
Academic Complaints

Stage 2 – Referral of Complaint to Student Ombudsman

Student refers matter to Student Ombudsman

Student Ombudsman considers referral relevant documentation and speaks to student and other relevant parties if necessary

Are there sufficient grounds for the referral?

Yes

Student Ombudsman investigates referral

No

Is conciliation appropriate?

Yes

Student Ombudsman conciliates the matter in order to reach resolution.

No

Outcome

Student Ombudsman dismisses the matter

Student Ombudsman refers the matter back to the Faculty

Student Ombudsman makes a decision to resolve the matter

Student Ombudsman conciliates the matter

Faculty reports back their final determination to Student Ombudsman

Student Ombudsman notifies student, Executive Dean and Faculty Designate of his/her decision in writing

Is the student satisfied with the decision?

Yes

No further action

No

GO TO STAGE 3

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Academic Complaints

Stage 3 – Appeal to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Student appeals to DVC(A)

DVC(A) conducts preliminary assessment

Are there sufficient grounds for the appeal?

No

DVC(A) reviews matter

Or

DVC(A) refers matter to another appropriate member of staff to review the matter and recommend outcome to DV(QE)

Yes

DVC(A) determines that decision of Faculty or Student Ombudsman be upheld

Are there sufficient grounds for the appeal?

No

DVC(A) (or other investigating office) retains a record of review and decision

Yes

DVC(A) refers back to Faculty or Student Ombudsman for reconsideration

Faculty or Student Ombudsman reports back their final determination to DVC(A)

DVC(A) notifies student Executive Dean, and Student Ombudsman of his/her decision in writing

No further action

Does the student wish to take the matter further?

No

Student has option to lodge complaint with an external agency (available at any point in the process)

Yes
Schedule 3 - Terms of Reference - Student Ombudsman

At the University of Wollongong the Student Ombudsman operates as an independent and impartial position responsible for the internal review of student concerns and complaints about student academic matters. The Student Ombudsman provides advice and assistance to students and staff in respect of these matters.

The following provisions will regulate the operation of the Student Ombudsman.

1. Principles for operation of the Student Ombudsman
   1.1. The Student Ombudsman is a senior academic member of staff of the University.
   1.2. The Student Ombudsman is not subject to direction from any officer of the University with respect to the assessment or determination of a student academic complaint.
   1.3. The Student Ombudsman is not to consider any academic complaint in respect of which the Student Ombudsman has a conflict of interest.
   1.4. In the event that the Student Ombudsman has a conflict of interest in respect of any academic complaint or is otherwise unable to consider a complaint, the Vice-Chancellor will appoint an acting Student Ombudsman to undertake the role of the Student Ombudsman in respect of that complaint.
   1.5. The Student Ombudsman is to respect the confidentiality of information provided in the performance of the role.
   1.6. The Student Ombudsman is to strive to operate as informally as possible in performing the role.

2. Powers and Rights
   2.1. The Student Ombudsman has the following powers:
       a. To conduct enquiries with and to request information that is relevant to an academic complaint from any member of staff of the University; and
       b. To determine student academic complaints based on the Student Ombudsman’s findings in accordance with relevant University policy documents.
       c. To act within the confines of the powers of the University, and not beyond these confines.
       d. To interpret and, as appropriate, apply University policy, but not to make or amend University policy.
   2.2. Staff and students at the University will at all times cooperate with the Student Ombudsman in order that the Student Ombudsman may effectively discharge the functions of the office.
   2.3. The Student Ombudsman must ensure that staff whose conduct is the subject of an academic complaint are given reasonable opportunity to respond to any potentially adverse outcome before the finalisation of the matter.
   2.4. The Student Ombudsman must provide reasons for any outcome reached by the Student Ombudsman on a complaint.
   2.5. Students and staff shall not suffer any detriment as a result of bringing an academic complaint to the Student Ombudsman or as a result of cooperating or participating in an investigation of a complaint by the Student Ombudsman.

3. Annual Report
   3.1. The Student Ombudsman will by 31 March each year present to the Vice-Chancellor an annual report on the work of the Student Ombudsman in the preceding year. The Vice-Chancellor may make the annual report available to the University Council and to members of Academic Senate.
3.2. The report will include information on:
   a. The matters dealt with by the Student Ombudsman in the year but taking care to protect the identities of any individuals affected;
   b. An analysis of these matters by reference to:
      i. Type of complaint,
      ii. The outcome of complaints,
      iii. Faculty and school concerned; and
   c. Any systemic issues of concern identified by the Student Ombudsman.

4. Referral of Complaints

4.1. In addition to the mandated role of the Student Ombudsman in respect of student academic complaints under University of Wollongong policy documents, any member of the University Senior Executive may refer any complaint in writing to the Student Ombudsman for investigation or for review provided that:
   a. The complaint is a matter concerning a student or that impacts on student matters; and
   b. The complaint is one in respect of which there is no established internal process under a University policy document for investigation or review of the complaint.