

1. Purpose

This procedure supports Australian School of Accounting's (ASA's) commitment to handling student grievances effectively, promptly and fairly through an accessible, transparent, professional and equitable process. It establishes the structure of the grievance handling process and provides guidelines for managing complaints and appeals.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to current and prospective students at ASA.

3. Lodging a Formal Grievance

In the event that it is not possible or appropriate for the matter to be resolved informally, students may submit a formal grievance/complaint. This must be lodged in writing with the Student Administration Manager's Office as soon as possible following the incident or occurrence, together with all/any relevant supporting documentation.

4. Grievance Process

The formal Grievance Process will commence within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint submission, as follows:

- 4.1 The Student Administration Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five (5) working days.
- 4.2 The Student Administration Manager, who has formal training/qualifications in dispute resolution will make an initial assessment to determine the extent and nature of the complaint.
- 4.3 Where it is found that there are reasonable and verifiable grounds for a complaint, the matter will be referred for internal mediation (if appropriate) with the aim of finalising the outcome as soon as practicable.

5. Internal Mediation

Any process of internal mediation between both parties will be arranged and conducted by the Student Administration Manager. A student is entitled to formally present their case at no cost and have a support person with them and/or seek independent professional advice and/or have someone advocate for them during any meeting or interview.

Depending on the nature of the complaint and its substance, possible outcomes of the mediation process may include:

- successful resolution;
- dismissal of the complaint;
- a determination that no further action is required;
- counselling;
- conditions being applied (for example, an informal or formal apology);
- referral for further mediation;
- referral to another staff member;
- referral to an external agency (for example law enforcement agencies); or
- progression of the matter to a formal review (see below).

A written statement of the outcome will be provided to the student.

6. Formal Review

Where mediation is not considered appropriate or possible, or where it has not resulted in a satisfactory resolution, the matter may be investigated by the Academic Dean. In this case, the Academic Dean will:

- provide all parties with the opportunity to present their case at no cost, examine relevant documentation, as well as related policies and procedures;
- seek clarification, if necessary, from relevant parties; and
- seek internal or external advice, if necessary.

The Academic Dean may also organise individual and separate meetings with both parties. A student is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a support person during any meeting or interview.

In cases where the Academic Dean has already been a party in the decision making, including cases of non-progressing students, the formal review must be undertaken by the Principal or their nominee.

Depending on the nature of the complaint and its substance, possible outcomes of the formal review process may include:

- dismissal of the complaint;
- a determination that no further action is required;
- counselling;
- conditions being applied (for example, an informal or formal apology);
- referral to another staff member for consideration;
- referral to an external agency (for example law enforcement agencies).

The formal review process will be completed as soon as possible, and a written statement of the outcome will be provided to the student.

7. Internal Appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of either Internal Mediation or Formal Review, they are entitled to lodge an appeal against the decision. Appeals must be lodged in writing with the Chair, ASA Student Grievances and Complaints Committee within twenty (20) working days of notification of the outcome. The appeal will be considered and both parties advised, with a full written explanation of the outcome, including the reasons for the outcome, within twenty (20) working days.

Appeals relating to findings of unsatisfactory course progress, and decisions on student transfers, deferrals, suspensions, exclusions and cancellations all proceed directly to the Internal Appeal stage. These written appeals are lodged with the Chair, ASA Student Grievances and Complaints Committee.

8. External Mediation or External Resolution

ASA must advise the complainant within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the complainant's right to access either an independent dispute mediation process or an independent resolution process at a reasonable cost (see Schedule below).

The complainant must advise ASA of their decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification of the appeals decision.

There is no requirement for a complainant to start with Option 1 (external mediation). A complainant may go straight to Option 2 (external resolution). The two options available to the complainant are:

Option 1: External Mediation - A complainant may request an independent dispute mediation process. ASA provides an external mediation service to students at a reasonable cost via the [Student Mediation Scheme](#) provided by the Resolution Institute. Details of the cost structure to students are described below in the Schedule, until further notice.

Option 2: External Resolution ("Expert Determination"): A complainant may request the independent dispute resolution process provided by the Resolution Institute. This option is called a request for "Expert Determination". The decision of the external independent Expert Determination is final. The Expert Determination process is provided by the Resolution Institute. Unless the parties agree upon an Expert, either party may request a nomination from the Chair of Resolution Institute. Details of the cost structure to students are described below in the Schedule, until further notice.

Resolution Institute

Level 1 and 2
13-15 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: +61 2 9251 3366
Free call: 1800 651 650
Fax: +61 2 9251 3733
Email: infoaus@resolution.institute

Domestic students are advised to contact the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) about any issues covered by Australian Consumer Law and the Resolution Institute regarding broader educational quality issues. Student Support Staff will assist in making contact if required.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Level 20
175 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: +61 2 9230 9133
Information Centre: 1300 302 502

International students can access an external appeals process through the Commonwealth Ombudsman if the complaint relates to administrative actions or decisions made by ASA and the related processes. For broader educational quality issues international students may also contact the Resolution Institute.

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman investigates complaints that international students have with private education providers. The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman provides support to future, current or former students.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

Commonwealth Ombudsman. Overseas Students, How we can help:
<https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>

Phone: 1300 362 072 (within Australia), or +61 2 6276 0111 (outside Australia).

9. Recommendations and reporting

Australian School of Accounting will fully implement any recommendations arising from an external review within thirty (30) days of receipt, and amend, rectify or modify any associated policy and procedures accordingly.

However, if the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of an overseas student, ASA will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the overseas student of that action.

The Principal will provide a quarterly report to the Board of Directors detailing the occurrence and nature of formal complaints including action taken to address any underlying causes.

10. Review and Improvement

All complaints and appeals will be recorded in a register which will be examined annually by the Executive Management Team. The Principal will use this data to report to the Board of Directors identifying any patterns of recurring complaints relating to particular issues or processes and what action has been taken to address these issues.

11. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

All decisions about formal complaints and appeals are recorded in the register outlined above. The student concerned is informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcomes, and of further avenues for appeal where they exist and where the student could benefit. Records relating to grievances and appeals will be maintained in the strictest confidence for a period of seven (7) years.

12. Specific related documents

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018: Standard 10 Complaints and Appeals
Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Flowchart

The policy related to this procedure can be found under the policy register as “*Student Grievance and Resolution Policy*”.

13. Version Control

Document		Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Procedure			
Approved by		Board of Directors		Date: 04 November 2020	
Version #	3.0	Replaces Version	2.1	Board of Directors approval	
	2.1		2.0	Governance restructure	
	2.0		1.5	Council Approval Next Review	2023
	1.5		1.4	CRICOS RFI	
	1.4		1.3	Review post-TEQSA feedback	
	1.3		1.2	Review post-TEQSA meeting	
	1.2		1.1	Review pre-TEQSA meeting	
	1.1		1.0	Review post-site visit	
	1.0		0.5		
	0.5		0.4	Style review	
	0.4		0.3	Project Manager review Next Review	2020
	0.3		0.2	Reviewed to cover Standard 10 of National Code	
	0.2		0.1		

Schedule

Resolution Institute

Level 1 and 2

13-15 Bridge Street

Sydney NSW 2000

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Free call: 1800 651 650

Fax: +61 2 9251 3733

Email: infoaus@resolution.institute

Cost structure (all amounts are in \$ AUD and GST inclusive)

Option 1: External Mediation

Mediator's fee for the first 4 hours of services	440.00
ASA contribution	360.00
Complainant contribution	80.00
Subsequent hours after the first 4 hours (amount per hour)	165.00
ASA contribution	165.00
Complainant contribution	Nil
Room hire – met in full by ASA	

Option 2: External Resolution (“Expert Determination”)

Application fee	1100.00
ASA contribution	1020.00
Complainant contribution	80.00
Expert hourly rate/hour	c. 250.00
ASA contribution	250.00
Complainant contribution	Nil

