

## Non-Academic Grievances Policy and Procedure

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>MQC believes complaints should be resolved, wherever possible and appropriate, at the local level with a minimum of formal procedures. An informal process, involving discussion between a student and Student Services Manager or nominee, will be conducted in each case to try to resolve the issue prior to a formal appeal being lodged.</p>
<p><b>Scope</b></p>	<p>This policy applies to all students at MQC.</p> <p>This policy and procedure addresses non-academic matters</p>
<p><b>The Policy</b></p>	<p>The HEP Guidelines (amendment effective January, 2007), the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (amendment effective July 2007) requires registered education providers to maintain an appeals and grievances procedure to be made available to all international students. This policy and procedure have been developed to ensure all current and prospective students at MQC are given access to an effective and fair complaints resolution and appeals process.</p> <p>All MQC students, or persons who seek to enrol in a course of study at MQC, are entitled to access this grievance procedure.</p> <p>MQC attempts to resolve all complaints and appeals as close to the source as possible. Complainants/respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in the complaints process. MQC staff will make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits set out in this policy and procedure.</p> <p>Students, or persons who seek to enrol in a course of study at MQC, who feel they have been unfairly dealt with in relation to a non-academic matter should write to the MQC Campus Director and Principal outlining the exact reasons for concern, making a note of instances and when they occurred. Such complaints and grievances will be directed initially to the Student Services Manager or nominee.</p> <p>The following grievance procedure will be used in dealing with complaints made by MQC students, and persons who seek to enrol in a course of study at MQC, relating to non-academic matters.</p>

	<p>Reasons and a full explanation will be given to the complainant and/or respondent, in writing, for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures. The student, complainant and/or respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against at any stage of this procedure. The student, complainant and/or respondent may be assisted and, where appropriate accompanied by a third party (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if desired throughout each stage of the Procedure.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Documents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 – Standard 8</li> <li>• AQTF 2007 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration - Standards 3.1 and 3.3</li> <li>• MQC International Student Release Policy</li> <li>• MQC International Student Fee and Refund Policy</li> <li>• MQC Academic Grievances Policy</li> <li>• MQC Accommodation and Welfare for International Students</li> <li>• Under 18 Policy</li> </ul>

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#### **Informal Complaints and Appeals**

Prior to lodging any formal complaint or appeal with MQC, the complainant must contact the relevant staff member to discuss the matter and seek immediate and acceptable resolution. In the event that the complainant's grievances cannot be resolved through informal direct communication, the complainant can move on to the formal lodgment of a complaint or appeal.

#### **Non-Academic Complaints**

The following examples include, but are not limited to, the kinds of matters which would be addressed in a non-academic complaint;

- Customer service and administration
- Marketing and information
- Facilities
- Fees / finance related matters
- Welfare

#### **Lodging a Complaint or Appeal**

Students seeking to lodge a complaint or appeal at MQC must lodge a written complaint. The following steps will then occur;

- (i) The Student Services Manager (SSM) or nominee will consider the written complaint or appeal within 5 working days of its receipt. The SSM will review the disputed decision and consider a range of options for the solution of the dispute (this arrangement is free-of-charge).
- (ii) If the matter is not resolved at this stage in favour of the student, the complainant will be referred to the Campus Director and Principal or nominee within 5 working days of the SSM's decision. The Campus Director and

Principal or nominee will also review the decision and consider a range of options for solution of the dispute (this arrangement is free of charge).

- (iii) If the matter is not resolved in favour of the student, the student will be advised in writing that the original decision stands. The student then has the option of appealing through MQC's independent grievance handling / dispute resolution process within 10 working days of the Campus Director and Principal's decision.

### **Independent Grievance Procedure**

A suitably qualified external independent panel comprising appropriately qualified legal practitioners will be set up by the Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET).

The complainant and MQC are required to share the \$400 cost of this service equally (\$200 each).

The contact for External Appeals is [student.appeals@acpet.edu.au](mailto:student.appeals@acpet.edu.au) Students must lodge appeals via this email address are required to complete the external appeals form which includes payment details. Appeals will not be completed until the payment has been made

The appeals form is available here - [http://www.acpet.edu.au/students/student-support/appeals#how\\_do\\_i](http://www.acpet.edu.au/students/student-support/appeals#how_do_i)

There will be no mediation, only paper-based appeals will be considered. Any further enquiries should be directed to this email address. Students must NOT call or come into the ACPET offices as the appeals are conducted by an independent legal practitioner who is offsite.

Turnaround time for appeals will be within 1 month of lodgment. Both the student and MQC will receive an acknowledgement letter from ACPET advising of the deadline to provide supporting information for the appeals process.

The independent panel will forward their decision to ACPET who will forward the decision to all parties.

The student and MQC will be bound by the decision of the panel and such decisions are final and non-reviewable. While the parties attempt to resolve the matter the student will continue to attend classes as normal unless the student has a reasonable concern about an imminent risk to his or her health and safety.

Students may access and receive the outcome of only **one** external appeals process before MQC may exclude them.

MQC will deal with reported complaints and appeals as expeditiously as the circumstances of the complaint or appeal allow. The procedures set out in this

document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law and do not circumscribe a students' rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students may contact the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) via the online enquiry form at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Pages/WebEnquiries.aspx> or via the helpline on 1300 363 079. DEEWR will only look at whether the appeals process met the requirements of the National Code 2007, it will not be looking at whether the outcome of a properly conducted appeals process was right or wrong.

Records of grievances will be kept strictly confidential for a period of 5 years and the student will be allowed supervised access to these records through the Academic Manager. Such records will be kept in a secure section of the student's file.

This procedure has been communicated to all MQC staff and the MQC Student Services Manager is responsible for training staff in its application. This procedure is published on [http://www.city.mq.edu.au/useful\\_links-forms.html](http://www.city.mq.edu.au/useful_links-forms.html). All students are made aware of the existence and location of this and all other policy/procedure statements at the time of orientation to MQC.

## Definitions

**Appeal:** In this context an appeal constitutes a request to review a decision or outcome relating to any aspect of the student's results, conditions of enrolment, or academic progress and attendance.

**AQF:** Australian Qualifications Framework.

**Complainant:** A person lodging a complaint or appeal

**DIAC:** Department of Immigration and Citizenship: The Australian government agency responsible for issuing students with visas.

**HEP Guidelines:** Guidelines for Higher Education Providers set down by the Department for Education Science and Training by (DEST) to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Support Act (HESA), 2003.

**Respondent:** A person responding to a complaint or appeal

**National Code:** The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (amendment effective July 2007).

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05/11/10	Policy put into new template