

Student Complaints Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide Monash College (“the College”) with a consistent organisational approach to managing and resolving student complaints and appeals. It also ensures that the College is accountable in its decision making and handling of *student* complaints.

The policy sets out the general principles that guide the management of student complaints and appeals, the stages of the escalation process, and the responsibilities of students, and *staff*.

This policy is supported by the Student Complaints Procedure, which sets out the steps for students or learners to take at each stage of the process and what they can expect from the College in return.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- This policy applies to all Monash College (the College) staff and students including Monash University students undertaking a pathway program at Monash College.
- former students who make complaints within the specified timeframe;
- prospective students whose complaints relate to administrative process(es) during application, selection or admission.

This policy does not apply to matters where the College has separate processes for handling complaints or appeals in relation to those matters. Without limiting the generality of the preceding sentence, this policy may not be used to:

- initiate a request for re-marking of an assessment task. This process is governed by the ‘Assessment Remarking’ process in the [Assessment Procedure](#).
- manage attendance appeals. This process is governed by the Student Attendance Monitoring [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

Policy Principles

A student making a *complaint* has the right to a fair and thorough investigation and will not be retaliated against or face any detriment for doing so.

The College is committed to addressing complaints effectively and fairly, through a process that is:

- impartial and fair to all parties involved;
- carried out with transparency and consistency;
- accessible and available to students and learners;

- handled within an established timeline;
- respects the privacy of all parties involved;
- appropriate for dealing with complex and sensitive issues.

Policy Standards

1. Student complaints process

Full details are provided in the Student Complaints Procedure.

The College strives to resolve complaints as close as possible to where the complaints arose and with the people most directly involved. If a complaint cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, the student has the option to escalate the complaint. The complaint process has four stages:

- 1.1 **Stage 1: Informal complaints** raised directly with the staff member for the decision or service related to the complaint.
- 1.2 **Stage 2: Informal, escalated complaints** raised with supervisor or relevant senior staff members within the same area.
- 1.3 **Stage 3: Formal complaints** are investigated by independent *Complaints Officers* who have had no previous involvement with the case. This is the final stage for matters involving *academic judgment*, such as complaints about academic merit of awarded grades. Formal complaints may be lodged under any of the following circumstances, but are not limited to:
 - new or additional relevant information or evidence not previously available or considered at the time the original decision was made;
 - procedural irregularity; and/or
 - evidence that the condition imposed is unreasonable;
- 1.4 **Stage 4:** External review through a third party if the student is not satisfied with the outcome of a Stage 3 complaint.
 - Pathway programs: National Student Ombudsman.
- 1.5 The College may set limits on the handling of complaints or discontinue any process if the student making the complaint engages in behaviour that is inconsistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, behaviours such as:
 - threatening the safety and wellbeing of other students, learners, and/or staff;
 - creating excessive strain on College resources;
 - disadvantaging another student, learner, or group of students or learners.

If a complaint is deemed to be *vexatious* or *frivolous*, the College may discontinue the complaints process and may impose penalties as permitted under the College's policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Decision/Action	Responsibility	Conditions and limitations
Making a complaint	Students	Students cooperate with the College's complaint management process and treat staff with courtesy and respect. Failure to do so may result in the process being discontinued. Only the individual student concerned can make a complaint under this policy and cannot be made on behalf of another person or persons.
Delegated by the <i>Student Complaints Committee</i> to conduct investigation. Receive Stage 3 complaints and maintain a register of Stage 3 complaints by recording and monitoring the complaints received from students.	Complaints Officer	Determine if an investigation of a Stage 3 complaint is required.
Ensuring that a fair investigation is carried out by the Complaints Officer	Student Complaints Committee	
Determining the complaint outcome (excluding complaints related to attendance)	Academic complaints: - Education Director or delegate (or equivalent), or - Exclusion Appeals Panel for appeals related to academic progress and academic misconduct Non-academic complaints: Director, Student and Academic Services. (or equivalent)	
Determining attendance complaint outcome	Academic Processes and Policy	

Providing an avenue for an independent review of complaint outcome to ensure students are treated fairly and resolution of student complaints have been carried out in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.	Pathway programs: • National Student Ombudsman •	
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Definitions

Academic judgment	Academic judgement refers to decisions that rely on the opinion of an academic, utilising their expertise and knowledge. It encompasses the evaluation of student work, the determination of grades, and the overall assessment of a student's unit progress and achievement. This includes, for example, decisions about the academic merit of awarded grades, the content of a curriculum, and the selection of teaching and assessment methods.
Complaint	Complaint (also referred to as a grievance) is defined for the purpose of this Procedure and typically fall into two categories: • Minor issues that can be addressed informally and are usually resolved easily (e.g., through a discussion with local staff or clarification of a misunderstanding). • Formal complaints that require a structured resolution process. These grievances are typically referred to as a 'complaint' or 'formal complaint' to distinguish them from matters resolved informally.
Complaints Officer	Staff member responsible for receiving and managing a stage 3 complaint. A Complaints Officer may conduct all or part of the investigation and report findings to the Student Complaints Committee.
Student Complaints Committee	The Student Complaints Committee oversees and enacts the Student Complaints processes for student complaints related to academic and non-academic College decisions, as well as general or other complaints formally submitted by students for all programs at all locations.
Frivolous	Not having any serious purpose or value, relies on trivialities, does not warrant a review of the matter concerned.
Staff	For the purposes of this procedure, staff includes all Monash College staff.
	A student is a person who: • is admitted or enrolled in a course of study or

Student	- program at Monash College - have studied or completed studies at Monash College within six months of leaving the College
Vexatious	A vexatious complaint refers to a complaint made without genuine substance or merit, and is primarily intended to, but is not limited to: - cause unnecessary trouble, annoyance, or distress; - harass or intimidate an individual or group; - disrupt or delay processes; - misuse institutional resources; or - cause detriment to the subject of the complaint. Complaints may be deemed vexatious if they are groundless, lacking in merit, deliberately misleading, or made with intent rather than genuine concern. Students or learners who submit complaints found to be vexatious may be subject to misconduct proceedings under the College's relevant policies and procedures.

Related Documents

Legislation and Standards	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Act 2024
Reference Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documentation	Student Code of Conduct Student Complaints Procedure Complaint Form

Version control and accountability table

Accountable Area	Academic Processes and Policy Academic Governance
Responsible Officer	Manager, Academic Processes and Policy
Review Date	June 2026
Approved by	
Academic Board	
Endorsed by	
Not Applicable	

Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the Changes	Approved by	Date Approved	Effective Date
2.3	Senior Academic Governance Advisor	Removed references to RTO or Professional Year	Academic Board	02/06/2026	02/06/2026
2.2	Senior Consultant - Education Policy and Procedures	Provided clarity to: • The scope of this policy • Remove the 6-month timeframe from the policy and keep it broad. • Roles and Responsibilities table to align with the revised Procedure • Revised/new definitions for 'academic judgment', 'complaint', and 'vexatious'.	Academic Board	23/04/2025	12/05/2025
2.1	Senior Academic Governance Advisor Senior Consultant - Education Policy and Procedures	Academic Board approved the amendment to refer to the National Student Ombudsman for external review	Academic Board	17/1/2025	1/2/2025
2.0	Senior Academic Governance Advisor	Academic Board approved policy alignment to the new academic governance structure	Academic Board	29/03/2023	01/06/2023
1.3	Academic Governance Officer	Director Governance approved minor administrative amendment to update roles and responsibilities	Director, Governance	26/04/2022	26/04/2022
1.2	Academic Governance Officer	Director Governance approved minor amendment to articulate existing practice regarding favourable outcomes for appellants	Director, Governance	09/11/2020	09/11/2020

1.1	Academic Governance Officer	Academic Board approved the policy review to update the principles, scope and definitions	Academic Board	04/08/2020	04/08/2020
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