

Student Complaints Procedure

Purpose

The procedure outlines the steps *students* must follow to submit a *complaint* and the responsibility of Monash College ("the College") at each stage of the process.

This procedure 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 procedure 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 procedure 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](#).

Procedure

1. Information and support for students seeking to make a complaint

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
1.1	All students to be informed about the <i>complaint</i> procedure and student support services as part of the orientation process.	Student Administration
1.1.1	Students must lodge a complaint within 20 working days of the matter arising, unless the delay is due to <i>compassionate or compelling circumstances</i> . In such cases, students must include evidence of the circumstances and demonstrate that they were beyond the student's control.	Students
1.2	When making a complaint, students are expected to: • treat <i>staff</i> with courtesy and respect; • not engage in behaviour that due to its nature or frequency raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues; • not make complaints that are frivolous, vexatious or lacking in substance; • provide truthful information and not purposely misrepresent or withhold relevant information;	Student

	• articulate the desired outcome that would resolve the matter; • cooperate with the process; including answering questions, providing information and copies of documents, and attending meetings if requested; and • keep records of their interaction with the College, including consultation with staff. Failure to do so may result in the process being discontinued. Refer to Student Code of Conduct, Non-Academic Student Misconduct Policy, and Student General Misconduct Procedure for further details.	
1.2.1	A student making a complaint may be accompanied by one support person at any meeting or consultation. The support person can be a Monash College student, staff member, close family member, or friend. However, they cannot represent or advocate for the student, as their role is strictly to act as an observer. The support person must: • remain silent during the meeting, • not communicate with the student, and • not participate in the discussion.	Students
1.2.2	If the support person engages in any activity beyond their role as a passive observer, the chair of the meeting has the authority to: • ask the support person to leave the meeting, or • close the meeting and reschedule it.	Students
1.3	Complaints must be considered fairly, reasonably and with integrity.	All staff
1.4	Only the individual student concerned can make a complaint under this Procedure. Complaints cannot be made on behalf of another person or persons.	Students
1.5	Lodgement of complaints by Under 18 students Students under 18 may lodge complaints with the support of parents or guardians.	Students
1.6	A complaint cannot be made on any of the following grounds due to failure to. • make adequate forwarding arrangements for email; • read emails; • keep copies and records of correspondence; • follow up on previous correspondence to the College that was not acknowledged as received; or • make all relevant material reasonably available to the academic processes at the time of the meeting. This is not an exhaustive list.	Students

2. Complaint Stage 1: Informal, direct complaint

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
2.1	In the first instance, complaints should be raised directly with the staff member concerned in person or in writing (STAGE 1). It is preferably for students to write to the staff member about the complaint. A complaint should be raised as soon as possible after the event that caused the complaint. Delaying the lodgement of a complaint may make it more difficult for staff to resolve the matter.	Students
2.1.1	Any complaint related to the outcomes of academic processes, such as special consideration, academic misconduct allegations, or Academic Progress Committee hearings, must be lodged as a Stage 3 complaint. The appeal must be submitted within 20 working days from the date on the outcome letter.	Students
2.2	Where a student wishes to provide feedback to the College, without seeking a resolution, they may follow Stages 1 and/or 2 of this procedure but should make clear that the purpose is feedback.	Students
2.2	The receipt of the complaint to be acknowledged within 2 working days and provide written update about the progress and/or an outcome of the complaints within 5 working days.	Staff
2.3	Attempts must be made to resolve a complaint in Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2, unless there is compelling reason not to do so, for example if the staff member is unavailable or students are complaining about the staff member.	Students
2.4	Students must provide all relevant information when raising a complaint. This is to enable staff to make informed decisions in a timely manner.	Students
2.5	While some complaints are best resolved locally and informally via Stages 1 and 2, more serious complaints, such as allegations of assault or sexual harassment are unlikely to be suitable for informal resolution.	Staff and Students

3. Complaint Stage 2: Informal, escalated complaint

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
3.1	If a complaint has not been resolved in Complaint Stage 1, the complaint is to be directed to the relevant leaders responsible for discipline or program delivery via email (Stage-2). English language program Refer to the “Study Help and Support” block in Moodle for Program Leaders’ details. Foundation Year program Refer to the “Study Help and Support” block in Moodle for Discipline Leaders’ details. Diploma program	Students

	Refer to the “Study Help and Support” block in Moodle for Team Leaders’ details. Professional Year mpp-programs@monashcollege.edu.au MAPP?	
3.2	The receipt of the Stage 2 complaint to be acknowledged within 2 working days and provide written update about the progress and/or an outcome of the complaints within 5 working days.	Program Leaders (English) Discipline Leaders (Foundation Year) Team Leaders (Diplomas) or equivalent

4. Complaint Stage 3: Formal complaint

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
4.1	If a complaint has not been resolved, or the student is not satisfied with the outcome in Complaint Stage 1 or 2, a formal written request for resolution must be lodged in Stage 3 by completing the Complaint Form. Students are expected to lodge a Stage 3 complaint within 20 working days after receiving the outcomes for Stage 1 or 2. They must provide all relevant information at the time of lodging a Stage 3 complaint. Failure to do so may result in the process being dismissed or discontinued. The Stage 3 complaint may be withdrawn at any time by writing to the Complaints Officer. The stage 3 complaints process focuses on finding a resolution and is not an appropriate way for students to provide feedback to staff. Students are welcome to provide feedback to the College through other avenues, such as Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units Survey (SETU) or equivalent.	Students
4.1.1	Any complaint related to the outcomes of academic processes, such as special consideration, academic misconduct allegations, or Academic Progress Committee Hearings, must be lodged as a Stage 3 complaint. The appeal must be submitted within 20 working days from the date on the outcome letter.	Students
4.1.2	If new evidence related to decisions made by an Academic Progress Committee (APC) is provided within five working days of the hearing, the evidence may be reconsidered by the original APC via circular resolution.	<i>Complaints Officer</i> and Academic Progress Committee (part of the Student Academic Progress process)
4.1.3	If a student is prevented from lodging a stage 3 complaint within the timeframe specified in section 4.1 due to <i>compassionate or compelling circumstances</i> , they can request an extension by using the online form .	Students

	Requests for extensions must include evidence of the circumstances and demonstrate that they were beyond the student's control. If approved, the extension will be proportionate to the circumstance. An extension will not be granted if a delay in lodging a stage 3 complaint would significantly impact the availability of information required for the investigation, or the ability to offer an appropriate resolution to the student.	
4.1.4	Ensure that all supporting documentation in response to their complaint is in English or accompanied by a translation by an accredited translator (e.g., NATTI in Australia).	Students
4.2	Acknowledgement of stage 3 complaint The receipt of the Stage 3 complaint to be acknowledged within 2 working days. If the student has not completed Stage 1 or 2 without providing a compelling reason or the complaint was lodged outside of the timeframe, the student will be notified that the complaint will not progress.	Complaints Officer
4.3	Commencement of formal investigation The formal investigation will be conducted by the Complaints Officer in accordance with the delegation of authority assigned by the <i>Student Complaints Committee</i>. If further information is required, the student will be contacted within 10 working days of lodging a Stage 3 complaint. The 'lodgement date' will be the date when the College has received all the required information for the investigation. Processing times may vary during the College public holidays; however, students will be provided with the necessary information. Complaints Officer may only discuss the complaint with other persons to: • assist with the investigation; • request for information or advice relevant to the investigation; • disclose information to prevent a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare to the complainant, student, staff or public.	Complaints Officer
4.3.1	Situations where an investigation may be delayed: • Concurrent investigations: If a student has been notified of allegations relating to academic misconduct or general misconduct, those matters must be resolved before any complaint can be investigated. As a result, the timeline for resolving or accepting separate complaints may exceed standard processing timelines. • Abuse of process: A complaint that is lodged for the purpose of delaying another proceeding or process may be dismissed on the ground that it is an abuse of process. • Potential influence on assessment marking: If the complaints team deem that commencing an investigation	Students

	may influence, or be perceived to influence, the marking of assessment, the investigation must be delayed until the marking has been completed.	
4.3.2	If a student is invited to a meeting to discuss their Stage 3 complaint, they will receive a notification stating the purpose of the meeting, the names of all participants, and any other relevant information to help them prepare. The student may be accompanied by one support person, as set out in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.	Students
4.4	Possible outcomes and timeline: Where a complaint is deemed to be of a complex nature, the investigations may exceed the 20 working day resolution timeframe. The complainant will be provided with prompt written notifications of this assessment. The complaint outcomes may • overturn previous decisions; • uphold previous decisions; • vary previous decisions. For exclusion appeals arising from academic progress and academic misconduct, the 'Exclusion Appeals Panel' process will apply, as outlined in sections 4.5 to 4.7 of this Procedure. Timeline: The complaint outcomes will be determined within 20 working days from the 'lodgement date' the completed Complaint form and all supporting documentation are received (as specified in section 4.3).	Academic complaints: Education Director or delegate (or equivalent) Non-academic complaints: Director, Student and Academic Services <i>The Education Director is a position within the Education Portfolio.</i> <i>The delegates must be senior staff members with appropriate expertise and impartiality.</i>
Complaint Stage 3 Outcome Notification		
4.5	Students receive notification of the complaint outcomes within 20 working days from the 'lodgment date' when the completed Complaint form and all supporting documentation are received (as specified in section 4.3).	Complaints Officer
4.6	Implementation of the complaint outcome decision including correction of any system issues found in the investigation of the complaints where: • the Stage 1 or 2 decisions have been overturned, or • the Stage 1 or 2 decisions have been varied	Staff
4.7	Stage 3 is the final stage for matters involving <i>academic judgment</i> , such as complaints about academic merit of awarded grades.	Students
4.8	Staff involved in a Stage 3 complaint may be required to disclose information if necessary to prevent a serious risk to the health or safety of any person, including the student concerned.	Relevant staff

4.9	Students receive notification of the complaint outcomes within 20 working days from the 'lodgment date' when the completed Complaint form and all supporting documentation are received (as specified in section 4.3).	Complaints Officer
4.10	Implementation of the complaint outcome decision including correction of any system issues found in the investigation of the complaints where: - the Stage 1 or 2 decisions have been overturned, or - the Stage 1 or 2 decisions have been varied	Staff
4.11	Stage 3 is the final stage for matters involving <i>academic judgment</i> , such as complaints about academic merit of awarded grades.	Students
4.12	Staff involved in a Stage 3 complaint may be required to disclose information if necessary to prevent a serious risk to the health or safety of any person, including the student concerned.	Relevant staff

5. Complaint Stage 4

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
Pathway program students		
5.1	If dissatisfied with the Stage 3 complaint outcome, a request for review may be lodged with the National Student Ombudsman	Students
5.2	Inform Monash University of the lodgement with the National Student Ombudsman by emailing ESOS.reporting@adm.monash.edu.au with the application and the Case Number allocated by the Ombudsman's office.	Students
5.3	If the National Student Ombudsman overturns the Stage 3 decisions, the actions as recommended by the National Student Ombudsman will be implemented within 20 working days by Monash College.	Student Complaints Committee or delegate (as part of the Academic Governance structure)
5.4	The students will be informed of the actions taken as a result of the National Student Ombudsman's recommendation from Monash College.	Complaints Officer

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.
Compassionate or compelling circumstances	Evidence of compassionate and compelling circumstances can include but is not limited to: • serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes • bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible, a death certificate should be provided) • major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has impacted on the student's studies • a traumatic experience which could include but is not limited to, involvement in or witnessing a serious accident, or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime. These cases should be supported by information provided by relevant professionals such as police, psychologists, GP or other professionals. Please note that backdated medical certificates (medical certificate issued after recovery from an illness) will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances when a student can provide reasons why backdated medical certificates were required. Only verified evidence will be accepted as supporting evidence.

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.
Staff	For the purposes of this procedure, staff includes all Monash College staff.
Students or learner	A student or learner is a person who: • is admitted or enrolled in a course of study or program at Monash College • has deferred, or has intermitted, or has been suspended from a course of study or program at Monash College

Related Documents

Parent Policy	Student Complaint Policy
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 Student Complaints Management Guidelines (internal document) Complaint Form

Version Control and Accountability Table

Accountable Area		Academic Process and Policy Academic Governance			
Responsible Officer		Senior Officer, Complaints			
Review Date		1 June 2026			
Approved by					
Academic Board					
Endorsed by					
Not applicable					
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date
2.4	Senior Academic Governance Advisor	Removed references to RTO and Professional Year	Academic Board	02/06/2026	02/06/2026
2.3	Senior Consultant - Education Policy and Procedures	Provided clarity to: - the purpose of this Procedure. - update the timeframe for submitting a complaint. - general principles when lodging a complaint (section 1) - Complaint Stages 1, 2 and 3 with further details. - Revised definitions for 'academic judgment' and 'complaint'.	Academic Board	23/04/2025	12/05/2025
2.2	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	04/02/2025	04/02/2025

2.1	Senior Academic Governance Advisor Student Complaints Committee and Chair	Administrative changes to capture updated scope, role and committee names, reference documents and align timelines in each stage		24/9/2024	01/10/2024
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		including the process flow chart			
2.0	Senior Academic Governance Advisor	Academic Board approved to align the policy with the new academic governance structure		29/03/2023	29/03/2023
1.3	Academic Governance Officer	Director Governance approved minor administrative amendment to update roles and responsibilities		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		09/11/2020	09/11/2020
1.1	Academic Governance Officer	Academic Board approved the policy review to update the principles, scope and definitions		04/08/2020	04/08/2020