

SYDNEY FILM SCHOOL

STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE (FOR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC MATTERS)

1. Policy

Sydney Film School ("the School") is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge.

The School aims to provide an amenable and pleasant environment in which to study. As a part of this aim, the School takes the resolution of any student issues seriously.

The School approaches student grievance resolution processes according to the following guiding principles:

- the resolution of grievances will be handled informally where possible;
- grievances will be addressed as close as possible to the source of student dissatisfaction;
- grievances will be resolved expeditiously and with due regard for confidentiality as endorsed in the School's *Privacy and Personal Information Policy*;
- complainants should feel secure in the knowledge that they will not suffer any form of disadvantage as a result of making a complaint;
- grievance processes will promote the principles of natural justice and complainants will be treated equitably;
- grievances will be regarded as valuable input to the continuous improvement of programs, policies, procedures and services, and monitored and acted upon accordingly; and
- grievance procedures and the support available to complainants will be widely publicised to facilitate access to the grievance resolution process.

A grievance can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the School's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;

- academic matters, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- the way someone has been treated.

This *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure* is designed to ensure that the School responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2. Policy coverage

This Policy and Procedure covers all students and persons seeking to enrol with the School and is available regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which a student studies or the student's place of residence.

2.1 Students eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance

In relation to non-academic matters, these procedures apply to students who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance as well as persons seeking to enrol with the School in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance.

In relation to academic matters, these procedures apply to students who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance.

3. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Students (and persons seeking to enrol with the School) are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. There are support staff available to assist in the resolution of issues at this level.

4. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by students and persons seeking to enrol with the School to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters, including complaints in relation to personal information that the School holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure the School will take all steps to ensure that:

- the complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;

- the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to the grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or the respondent;
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, the School will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- there is no cost to the complainant for utilising this grievance and appeals process.

4.1 Stage one – formal grievance:

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing to the Operations Manager. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five working days and the complaints process will commence within ten days of the receipt of the written complaint and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

The Operations Manager, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Operations Manager, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

4.2 Stage two – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they may lodge an appeal with the CEO (who is senior to the original decision maker). An appropriate person or committee will be appointed to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days.

The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

4.3 Stage three – external appeal:

4.3.1 Domestic students

If the complainant, who is a domestic student, is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may make a written request to the School that they wish the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process facilitated by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

The School will then advise ACPET in writing of the request within five working days. ACPET will arrange for a Round Table Discussion (RTD) to be held between the School and the complainant within ten working days of the written notification from the School. ACPET do not charge a fee for this service.

Contact Details for ACPET:

Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)
PO Box 551, East Melbourne, Vic 8002
Ph: 1800 657 644 Fax: (03) 9416 1895
Email: acpet@acpet.edu.au

If the matter remains unresolved after the RTD then ACPET will appoint an independent mediator within 14 working days of the RTD. ACPET plays no role in the actual mediation. It is then up to the mediator, the complainant and the School to resolve the grievance. The School will bear any costs associated with the mediation.

The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to meetings with ACPET or the mediator.

The mediator will report to the CEO, or their nominee, the outcome of the mediation, including any recommendations arising, within 14 days of the completion of the review. Once the CEO, or their nominee, receives the report of the outcomes from the RTD or independent mediation, they will provide a written report to the complainant within ten working days on the recommended actions to resolve the grievance.

The School agrees to be bound by the independent mediator's recommendations and the CEO, or their nominee, will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the mediator's report.

4.3.2 International Students

If the complainant, who is an International Student, is dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal, they may lodge an external appeal to

the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). A student has 20 working days to appeal a decision.

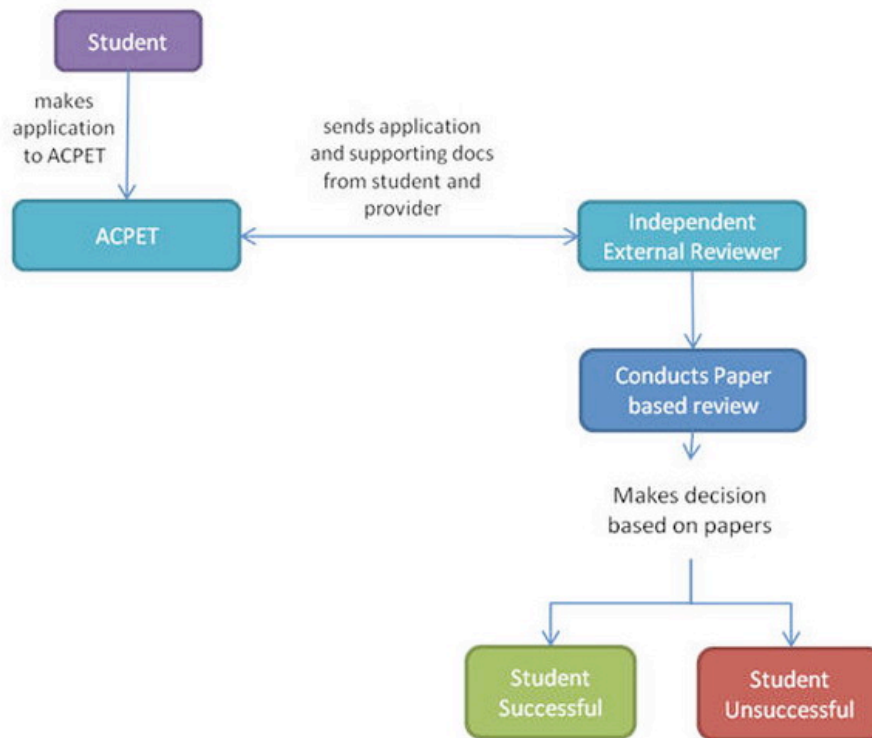
Students who wish to lodge an external appeal must complete the form at Appendix 1 and email it to: student.appeals@acpet.edu.au or post it to: PO Box 551 East Melbourne Vic 8002. Students must also pay ACPET a \$200 fee. If the student's appeal is successful they will be refunded \$100 of this fee.

ACPET will write to both the student and the School acknowledging the application for the external appeal and advising of the deadline to provide supporting information for the external review. ACPET will arrange for an independent legal practitioner ("the external reviewer") to consider the appeal. All documentation from the student and the School will be forwarded to the external reviewer who will examine and review the submissions and documentation. The external reviewer will provide their decision in writing to ACPET within one month of lodgement of the application. ACPET will forward decision to all parties.

The School agrees to be bound by the external reviewer's recommendations and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the report from the external reviewer.

The following flowchart provides a visual representation of the external appeals process.

ACPET External Review Process – Post Student Application



5. Further action

If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external appeal, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to the National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6. Enrolment status

Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the School will maintain the student's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

7. Record keeping & confidentiality

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written

request to the Operations Manager. These records will be maintained at: 82 Cope Street, Waterloo, NSW 2017.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the School's *Privacy and Personal Information Policy*.

8. Approval, publication and training

The Policy and Procedure was approved by the Board of Directors on June 2 2009.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with the School through publication in the Student Handbook and on the School's website (www.sydneyfilmschool.com).

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will form part of the staff induction process.

9. Version control

Document: Student Grievance Handling Policy & Procedure		
Approved by: Board of Directors	Version #: 3	Date: June 2 2009



OFFICE USE ONLY	
DATE RECEIPT:	_____
RECEIVED BY (SIGNED):	_____
FILE NAME:	_____
FILE NUMBER:	_____
APPLICATION FEE PAID:	_____

Application for External Review

(Please note – Prior to applying for External Review an Internal Review must have been conducted)

*Indicates required field

1. Personal Details

*Family Name:	_____	*Date of Birth:	_____
			(dd/mm/yyyy)
*First Name:	_____	*Place of Birth:	_____
*Address:	_____	*Nationality:	_____
		Mobile:	_____
*Telephone:	_____	Fax No:	_____
*Email:	_____		_____
*PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT: <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Mail/Post			

2. Course Details

*Student ID Number:	_____	*Name of Course:	_____
*Name of Institution:	_____	*Course Code:	_____
		*Course start date:	_____
			(dd/mm/yyyy)
*Campus and/or Address of Institution:	_____	*Anticipated Course completion date:	_____
			(dd/mm/yyyy)
*Year of Study:	<input type="checkbox"/> First Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Fifth Year
	<input type="checkbox"/> Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Year
			<input type="checkbox"/> Other

3. Nature of Complaint

3.1 My grievance relates to:

- Unsatisfactory Course Progress
- Unsatisfactory Course Attendance
- Other Matters: Please specify:

3.2 My claims - I believe that:

<input type="checkbox"/>	There was an error in the assessment of my Course Progress or in calculation of my Course Attendance rate
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not receive the education provider's policy and procedure in relation to course progress or course attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not receive a Show Cause Letter
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not receive Warning Letters
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not receive Intention to Report Letter
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not receive Final Letter to Report
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was not given 20 working days to respond to the show cause/access internal review process
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was not given an opportunity to access the provider's Complaints Handling process
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other grievance – Please specify:

3.3 This is my first application for external review for this matter Yes No

If no - please provide details of previous application:

File Number:

Date of application:

Date of outcome:

Outcome:

4. Review Details

4.1. Date of Final Letter to Report:	_____
4.2. I am applying for external review within 20 working days of date of Final letter to Report.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – go to question 4.3.
4.3. If No – Have you received a Section 20 Notice from your education provider?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.4. I have reported to DIAC regarding the Section 20 Notice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

5. Fees and Charges

Student must pay a \$200.00 fee upon lodgement of application for external review.

An External Application will not be lodged unless fees are paid.

This is a *Paper Application* only.

<u>Outline of Total Fees</u>		
External Reviewer fees	\$330.00	
Administration costs	\$ 70.00	<i>All amounts are GST inclusive</i>
Total costs:	\$400.00	
Student pays 50%		
Provider pays 50%		

<input type="checkbox"/> BANK CHEQUE	The Australian Council for Private Education & Training (ACPET)		
<input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT CARD	PO Box 551		
	East Melbourne Vic 8002		
AUD\$ 200.00			
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard	Expiry date:	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Card Number:	<input type="text"/>		
_____		Date:	_____
Cardholder's Name	Cardholder's Signature		

6. Consent to ACPET to Access Student File from Education Provider

By signing below I hereby give my consent to ACPET and the external reviewer to gain access to my student file from my education provider in relation to my application for external review of my appeal.

I agree to the full disclosure of my personal information, including my academic results and/or attendance records for the specific purpose of determining compliance with my student visa conditions.

I understand that such information may be disclosed to third parties, such as the external reviewer, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), and Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and other agencies.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

7. Terms and Conditions

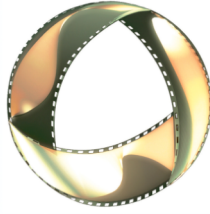
- The information requested on this form is essential to the application for external review of your appeal and will be treated in the strictest confidence and only be used for the intended purpose.
- I agree to be bound by the decisions and determinations of the external reviewer and such decisions and determinations are final and not reviewable.
- I agree to indemnify the external review panel member, the executive council and any members of staff of ACPET against any complaints, suits of action, legal proceedings, liability whatsoever arising out of the process and proceedings in relation to the external review and the determinations made as part of the external review.
- I declare that the information I have supplied in this application is true, complete, correct and up-to-date in every detail.
- I understand that if I give false or misleading information, including supplying false, or forged documentation, my application for external review may be refused, and any such information or documentation may be referred to external agencies, including the Australian Federal Police for further investigation.
- I authorise ACPET and the external reviewer to make any enquiries necessary to verify my claims and any information supplied in this application in relation to external review.
- The agencies/organisations to which information may be disclosed include:
 - federal, state or territory government agencies, including the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and;
 - federal, state or territory law enforcement agencies including the Australian Federal Police (AFP);
 - state or territory housing authorities (including private landlords);
 - local government authorities;
 - financial institutions;
 - educational institutions; and
 - private businesses (including telecommunication and internet service providers, insurance companies).
- I consent to my details and information about my application being provided to above agencies.
- I understand the external review will only proceed once funds for the application fee have cleared.
- I have read and understood the information supplied to me in this application.
- I hereby state that the information contained in this form is true, correct and accurate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

8. Checklist

I have attached the following documents in support of my application for external review:

- Lodgement fee
- Copy of my Student ID card/Passport
- Copy of Final Letter to Report from my education provider
- Copy of Section 20 Notice from my education provider (if applicable)



SYDNEY FILM SCHOOL

Notification of a Formal Grievance

- Please complete this form and return to the Operations Manager.
- You will be contacted to clarify the outcome that you hope to achieve by lodging this formal grievance.
- Please carefully read the Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure and do not hesitate to ask if you do not understand any aspect of the grievance handling process. The policy is available in your Student Handbook and on the Sydney Film School website.

Student Name: _____

Student No.: _____

Course of Study: _____

Please describe the nature of your grievance:

Signature: _____

Date: _____