

Procedure Name	STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION NON-ACADEMIC PROCEDURE
Procedure Number	G005_PR (Governance)
Purpose	This procedure details the steps the Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia (Whitehouse) takes to resolve a grievance that a student may have that is non-academic in nature.
Scope	Enrolled Students: This procedure applies to all currently enrolled students related to teaching and learning in accredited Higher Education courses at the Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia (Whitehouse). Courses and Campuses: This procedure applies to Whitehouse across all campuses and for all FEE-HELP enabled courses offered by Whitehouse to prospective and current students. Exclusions: Graduates are excluded under Commonwealth legislation if the grievance is about the remission of FEE-HELP / course tuition fees, after they have completed a unit(s) or a qualification of study in full. This is clearly specified on the Australian Government's Study Assist website: StudyAssist – Cancel your HELP debt under special circumstances. The Study Assist guidelines state that <i>"You cannot have your HELP debt cancelled if you have successfully completed the unit of study."</i>
Procedure	Stage 1 – Informal Resolution Process 1.1. In the first instance, the student is encouraged to seek informal resolution of their grievance by discussing the matter directly with the person concerned to resolve the problem providing the student feels comfortable doing so. 1.2. If the student has concerns about raising the matter with this person, then they should discuss it with the relevant course leader (of their discipline). The student may elect to be accompanied by a support person. 1.3. Whitehouse expects that in most cases the discussion of the concern or complaint with the relevant staff member or other student will result in a prompt resolution of the matter which both parties will find acceptable. 1.4. During the informal process, the nominated staff member may take such action as deemed appropriate to resolve the matter. This must include discussing the matter with the student, and may also include, but is not limited to: 1.4.1. reviewing the student's records; and/or 1.4.2. discussing the matter with other appropriate members of staff and/or 1.5. The informal resolution process must be completed within ten (10) working days from the date on which the student contacted the relevant staff member. The course leader may grant an extension not exceeding five (5) working days if it seems likely that the matter will be resolved in that time.

- 1.6. The student will be advised in writing within three (3) working days of the conclusion of the informal resolution process of:
 - 1.6.1. the outcome of the informal resolution process
 - 1.6.2. the availability of support services, and
 - 1.6.3. the review and appeals mechanisms available to the student if required.
- 1.7. If this informal approach to dealing with the student's concerns does not lead to an acceptable resolution, then the student should pursue the more formal process for resolution of the matter as set out below

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution Process

- 2.1. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution process the student can submit in writing within five (5) working days from the date of notification of the outcome from the informal review process, a request for a formal assessment review.
- 2.2. The written request shall state the following:
 - 2.2.1. details of the outcome of the informal resolution process
 - 2.2.2. an outline of why the student thinks the original resolution outcome was inappropriate
 - 2.2.3. any specific issues which the student believes are relevant to the situation
 - 2.2.4. any new and relevant evidence
 - 2.2.5. an assigned member of the Whitehouse Executive Management will read the student's communication and request a written report from the original nominated staff member involved, and
 - 2.2.6. the current assigned staff member will determine if a formal resolution process is warranted.
- 2.3. If a formal review is warranted, a designated member of the Executive Management Committee will:
 - 2.3.1. review all evidence provided by the student in their letter
 - 2.3.2. review the written report provided by the original nominated staff member involved
 - 2.3.3. discuss the matter directly with the student if further information is required
 - 2.3.4. discuss the matter directly with the original nominated staff member involved, if required.
- 2.4. The student will be informed of the outcome in writing within ten (10) working days of submission of the request for a formal review as identified by the date of receipt by the assigned staff member of the request for formal review. The written report will set out the result of the review and the reasons for the decision.
- 2.5. If the assigned staff member does not consider a formal review is warranted, the student must be advised in writing within ten (10) working days of submission of the request for a formal review. The student must be advised as to why no formal review has been initiated.
- 2.6. A student may appeal the outcome of the formal resolution process.

Stage 3 – Request for a Hearing

- 3.1. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal resolution process the student may submit in writing to the Secretariat of the Board of Governors, within ten (10) working days from the date of notification of the outcome from the formal review process, a request for a hearing by a Grievance Resolution Panel.
 - 3.1.1 A student may seek review of a grievance decision on one or more of the following grounds, that:
 - it can be demonstrated that the matter of grievance has not been decided on its merits
 - It can be demonstrated that the process for reviewing the grievance has not been appropriately conducted
 - a procedural irregularity has occurred
 - perceived bias has occurred
 - the student can provide new evidence that was not previously available at the time the matter was investigated by the appropriate staff of Whitehouse.
- 3.2. A student who wishes to seek a review of a grievance outcome or decision shall:
 - 3.2.1. lodge the review request in writing by the date specified in the written notification of the outcome of a formal review by the investigator, this normally being within ten (10) working days from the date of the notification
 - 3.2.2. lodge the review request with the Secretariat of the Board of Governors, and
 - 3.2.3. lodge the review request in the format shown below.
- 3.3. The written request must:
 - 3.3.1. state the ground(s) for the review in accordance with 3.1.1 above
 - 3.3.2. detail, and where appropriate, provide relevant information and evidence relating to the ground(s) for the review as itemised in 3.3.1 to enable the Board of Governors to prepare for the appeal hearing. Where available, attach relevant documentation. (Note: failure to present the evidence claimed in the written review request letter at the review hearing may affect the outcome of the hearing by the Board of Governors).
- 3.4. To assist the student to present the request for review, a preferred format (clause 3.1.1 above) will be provided.
- 3.5. Upon lodgment of the written request, Whitehouse will:
 - 3.5.1. confirm that the case has been considered through the review stages within the relevant department in accordance with the Grievance Procedure; where this has not occurred, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate department for investigation at the appropriate level and advise the student accordingly in writing
 - 3.5.2. check that the written request substantially complies with the

format required in 3.1.1 and, where reference is made to supporting documentation, a copy of the documentation is attached

- 3.5.3. check that the student has included a description of the relevant evidence in relation to the grounds for review to the Grievance Resolution Panel
- 3.5.4. if applicable, consider the reasons provided for the late lodgment of the request and determine
- 3.5.5. whether or not these are such as to warrant the review proceeding to the Grievance Resolution Panel
- 3.5.6. if the case has not been considered at the formal grievance stage within the relevant department, the case should be returned to the assigned executive staff member for consideration.

3.6. In preparation for the review hearing the assigned senior staff member shall have the following responsibilities:

- 3.6.1. if necessary for further clarification, seek a written response to the student's request from the staff member who conducted the formal investigation; this response should be provided within 5 working days of the lodgment of the request for review
- 3.6.2. collate all documents relevant to the review hearing and disseminate them to all parties including the members of the Panel, the student and the relevant staff or student who is the object of the grievance.

This must include as a minimum the letter to the aggrieved student advising the decision /outcome of the formal grievance stage against which the student has lodged their request and the letter of request by the student and all attachments; and / or any further written evidence provided relevant to the review

- 3.6.3. establish a date, time and place for the review hearing and advise all parties
- 3.6.4. inform the student of the support services that are available to assist them to prepare for the review; this is to be included in the letter of notice of the hearing arrangements as per 3.6.3
- 3.6.5. maintain a record of the proceedings of the review hearing and the decision(s) taken by the Panel and document the decision and reasons for the decision, including any penalty applied and reason(s)
- 3.6.7. draft the letter advising the student of the outcome of the review for the Chair's approval and signature
- 3.6.8. send the signed communication to the student within three (3) working days of the Panel's decision being made
- 3.6.9. ensure that a copy of all documentation is maintained on the official Panel file and student file and if necessary, that the student database is updated with the relevant information.

Stage 4 – The Hearing

- 4.1. The Grievance Resolution Panel shall meet as scheduled in 3.6.3 above.

- 4.2. The student, relevant staff or other student(s) and Panel members shall be given at least three (3) working days' notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing. This notice must be in writing.

For domestic students, the notice to the student will be sent by email, using their Whitehouse student email address, and / or personal email that was provided on the application for enrollment form

In the case of international students, a copy of the notice shall also be emailed to the student's designated personal email or postal address.

Failure to present the evidence claimed in the written review request letter by the student at the review hearing may affect the outcome of the hearing by the Appeals Panel.

- 4.3. The hearing shall be held in-camera. The Panel shall regulate its own proceedings.
- 4.4. The student and the relevant staff or other student(s) will be given the opportunity to appear in person before the Panel:
- 4.4.1 an advocate, who is not a member of the Panel and is retained as a legal counsel, may represent any student. Alternatively, the student may choose to be accompanied by a friend, who is not retained as legal counsel, as a support person.
 - 4.4.2. where a staff member is subject to a grievance review hearing, they may choose to be accompanied by a support person / representative.
 - 4.4.3. the student, staff member and Panel may call witnesses to appear before the Panel.
 - 4.4.4. the student and the staff member or other student must be given the opportunity to hear and examine the evidence given by such witnesses.
 - 4.4.5. the Panel must hear the matter on its merits, considering all the circumstances of the student's case.

4.5. Decision of the Panel:

- 4.5.1. after consideration of all of the evidence available in the case, the Panel shall reach its decision by consensus or, if consensus cannot be reached, by majority vote of the members, each of whom has equal voting rights
- 4.5.2. the Lead Officer (assigned management staff member) is not a member of the Panel and does not have voting rights.

4.6. The Panel may decide to:

- 4.6.1. confirm the outcome / decision of the formal grievance process against which the student lodged their request for review and dismiss the grievance
- 4.6.2. modify the directions of the Lead Officer (assigned management staff member)
- 4.6.3. direct that appropriate actions to address systemic or underlying causes (if any) with a view to preventing problems from occurring or recurring be undertaken; and/or take other action as appropriate.

4.7. The Assigned management staff member will then:

- 4.7.1 document the decision and reasons for the decision
- 4.7.2 draft the written communication for the Chair's approval and signature
- 4.7.3 send the signed communication to the student within three (3) working days of the panel's decision being made; this advice shall include the reasons for the decision and shall be sent to the student's address as shown on the letter of review request and to the student's personal email address if this information is held
- 4.7.4 provide copies of the decision to other appropriate parties including any affected staff member or other students and Student Administration.

- The decision of the Grievance Resolution Panel is final and is not subject to further review within Whitehouse. This does not preclude a student from seeking review of the decision of the Grievance Resolution Panel by an appropriate external body.

Stage 5 – External Appeals

Students are encouraged to complete internal complaints and appeals processes and resolve them before taking any external action. If the student feels that the outcome of their appeal is unfair or incorrect, the student can at any time apply for an external appeal. Whitehouse will participate fully in any such external appeal and resolution process.

External agencies are listed below under Relevant Legislation.

For information on the above external appeals processes, students are encouraged to contact the agency or visit their website directly.

Whitehouse acknowledges that if the external appeal is in favour of the student, the Institute will immediately implement the decision/recommendation and/or take corrective action and advise the student in writing of the outcome.

International Students

If the international student is unsuccessful within the institutes appeals and complaints process, Whitehouse will notify the student in writing within 10 working days of concluding the appeal and will advise the student of the external appeal options available, this will be at no cost to the international student.

If an international student is not satisfied with the outcome/decision of the institute's internal appeals process, the international student can lodge a complaint about the decision to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, international student complains.

Relevant Legislation

- National Student Ombudsman <https://www.nso.gov.au/>
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#), international student complains.
- Administrative Review Tribunal (ART): <https://www.art.gov.au/>
- Australian Human Rights Commission <https://humanrights.gov.au/>
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- [2016 Higher Education Support Act \(2003\)](#)
- [Australia Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#)

Key Related Documents	• Department of Fair Trading (Victoria) (NSW) • Consumer Affairs Victoria (VIC) • Office of Fair Trading Qld • National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 • Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 • Student Grievances and Complaints Resolution Procedure, Non-Academic • Student, Grievance Form, Non-Academic • Student Consultation Form • Code of Conduct (Students) • Student Course Handbook • Privacy Policy and Procedure • Critical Incident Policy and Procedure • Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure • Supporting Students Policy and Procedure.
Definitions	Complaint or Grievance: - a complaint or grievance can be defined as a student's expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the Whitehouse Institute's services and activities. Non-Academic Complaint or Grievance May Include but is not Limited to Issues of: • improper, irregular or negligent conduct by an Institute staff member • improper, irregular or negligent conduct by another student • failure by an Institute staff member to act fairly • failure of duty of care by a staff member of Whitehouse • a decision that has been made without sufficient consideration to facts, evidence or circumstances of specific relevance to the student • failure by Whitehouse to decide within a timely manner • a penalty that, where applied, is or would be too harsh. • bullying, discrimination or harassment • physical assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment Complainant: the student making the complaint or grievance. Executive Management Committee: Whitehouse's Senior Operations Group. Advocate: a person nominated by a student to present their case in an appeal on their behalf. (See clause 4.4.1 above). Product: in this context, a material good/s provided to a student, either free of charge or for a fee, to assist them to study at the Whitehouse Institute. Service: in this context, an act done for a student as part of their experience at Whitehouse. Written Notice/Letter: unless otherwise specified, written notice/letter can include notification with a written document, mailed or couriered letter, emailed and/or faxed.

	Grievances about Non-Academic Matters Decisions and actions associated with administrative or academic services. They include but are not limited to: • administration of Whitehouse Institute policies and procedures by administrative groups and departments • a decision by an administrative staff member that affects an individual or group/s of students • access to resources and facilities • payment of fees • student charges • enrolment • scholarships • course transfer • graduation • time limits for completing rationalized / discontinued / modified courses • interaction with peers or Institute staff.
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer or delegated Senior Executive Management Committee member
Approval Authority/ Authorities	Board of Governors
Date Approved	20/12/2023
Date of Commencement	21/12/2023
Date for Review	21/12/2026
Documents superseded by this Procedure	005 Student grievances and complaints resolution non-academic policy and procedure January 2013 008-001 Student Grievances Policy 008-001 Student Grievances Procedure 003.008 Student Misconduct Policy 003.008 Student Misconduct Procedure Assessment Appeals Procedure
Amendment History	10/2025 • Updated the scope and procedure statements in sections 4 and 5. • Checked URLs and updated the Relevant Legislation section, and definitions section.

	12/2023 Minor update and formatting of to text in procedure sections (Stages 2 to 5) Checked and updated links to Relevant Legislation section Updated Key Related Documents section. 02/2019 Update External appeals and The National Code 2018 reference. 05/2018 Re-branding – Header & Footer only 12/2016 Policy and Procedures separated. Updated formatting and minor amendments Hyperlinks updated 01/2013 Changed formatting - included procedure and policy in one document Changed title Major adjustments and inclusions to policy wording Material changes have been made. Delete ACPET Add external agencies 25/1/ 2013 Approved 19/09/2012 Prior Approval		
Signed and dated for Whitehouse Institute Pty Ltd			
	Signature	Leanne Whitehouse Name	20 12 2023 Date

INFORMATION FOR PUBLISHING ON POLICY REGISTER	
Category	Governance
Stakeholders	Academic Board Executive Management Academic Staff Administration Staff Students

