

MACLEAY COLLEGE

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC CONCERNS

POLICY OVERVIEW

All students of Macleay College's accredited higher education courses are entitled to:

- (a) Raise a concern or grievance relating to an academic matter; and/or
- (b) Have an academic decision reviewed.

Macleay College believes that all concerns or grievances should be resolved promptly, seriously, with strict confidentiality and professionalism, and a minimum level of formal procedure.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles should be upheld when handling a concern or grievance:

Timeliness: All concerns or grievances should be dealt with promptly. Macleay College will resolve all concerns and grievances promptly, and at the most, within 28 days of the issue being raised. All parties should be kept informed about the progress of an issue at regular intervals and should be further advised where resolution is likely to extend beyond four weeks.

Confidentiality: All communications regarding concerns or grievances will be dealt with confidentially and with discretion. This includes a requirement that all parties involved have an obligation to maintain complete confidentiality regarding both the process and records.

Procedural fairness: Procedural fairness must be observed in all aspects of handling a concern or grievance. Grievance handlers will employ honesty and fair dealing in all aspects of their communications, investigations, reporting and record keeping. All parties involved will receive appropriate information and assistance in resolving the issue at all times.

Victimisation or Discrimination: Fear of victimisation or discrimination may prevent a person raising a concern or grievance in the first instance. A complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any of the stages set out in this policy. Grievance handlers will make every attempt to ensure that complainants and respondents are not victimised or discriminated against. This includes advising all parties that both victimisation of, and discrimination against any individual(s) involved in the grievance will not be tolerated.

Anonymous grievances: Macleay College cannot act on an anonymous concern or grievance, and procedural fairness requires that any person raising a concern or grievance must be identified. An anonymous communication can include (but is not restricted to) unsigned letters, unidentifiable emails or anonymous phone calls.

Unsubstantiated grievances: Procedural fairness requires, in the interests of all parties, that a person raising a concern or grievance be aware that where a concern or grievance is investigated to its full extent and cannot be substantiated, no further action can be taken. This does not circumscribe the right of any parties to pursue legal remedies outside the college grievance handling procedures.

PROCEDURES

In the first instance, students are encouraged to raise any concerns or grievances with the staff member concerned. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator as early as possible. If necessary, a written account may be requested. The concern or grievance will be investigated and dealt with directly and the College will resolve the matter within 28 days of the issue being raised. This service is provided free of charge.

In the second instance, where a student is unsatisfied with the outcome or the time taken to resolve the matter, the student is required to submit a written account to the Dean, and is required to attend a meeting with the Dean. The concern or grievance will again be reviewed and dealt with directly and the College will resolve the matter within 28 days of written accounts being submitted. This service is provided free of charge. The Dean maintains formal records of all communications and actions taken, and will notify the student in writing of the outcome and outline reasons for the decision.

Where a student remains unsatisfied with the outcome or the time taken to resolve the matter, the student can make a written appeal to the Academic Board. The Academic Board will acknowledge receipt to the appeal in writing within seven days of receipt of the written appeal, indicating when a resolution of the matter can be expected. The College maintains formal records of all communications and actions taken, and will notify the student in writing of the outcome and outline reasons for the decision.

Where the internal review process fails to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the student, the student can request an independent, external party nominated by the College be invited to arbitrate the matter. For the purposes of this policy, the external independent party will be the person who holds the position of Chief Executive Officer of ACPET. The contact details for ACPET:

Address: Suite 12, Level 14
329 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9264 4490
Fax: (02) 9264 4550
Email: acpet@acpet.edu.au
Website: www.acpet.edu.au

The College will be responsible for engaging the external party to arbitrate the grievance and will request that the matter be resolved within 28 days of the request by the unsatisfied party. If the external party makes recommendations in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, the external party will be requested to forward those recommendations to the Dean within 14 days who will ensure that the recommendations are implemented within 28 days.

This service is provided free of charge.

At all stages, all parties have the right to (a) be represented by a third person if they so desire, and (b) request a written explanation for decisions, reasons and actions taken as part of the procedure process.

The procedures as set out 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.

DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICATION

This policy has been approved by the Academic Board and the Managing Board. The Dean is responsible for the implementation of the policy, which will be published as follows:

This policy will set out in the Macleay College Handbook so that it is available to all current and prospective students. In addition, the Macleay College Handbook will be accessible on the College website at www.macleay.edu.au. The Macleay College Handbook is automatically provided to all prospective students seeking to enrol at Macleay College and is again automatically provided to all enrolling students following confirmation of enrolment. Additional copies of the Macleay College Handbook are also available free of charge at the College reception.

This policy will be communicated to College staff members through the Macleay College Staff Handbook as part of the induction for all staff members.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records pertaining to a concern or grievance will be maintained in special confidential 'grievance' files separate to the general faculty student files. Grievance files will be maintained in strict confidence for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. All grievance files will be maintained in secure storage in the Dean's office. Parties to the grievance will be permitted supervised access to relevant records. Staff member(s) will not maintain additional files beyond those held in the Dean's office.

APPROVAL

This policy is approved by the Managing Board on 28 February 2007.

Approved by the Chairwoman of the Managing Board

FEBRUARY, 2007