

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Policy Code	STU07
Policy Lead	Director Learning and Innovation
Approving Authority	Board of Directors
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Next Review Date	January 2027
Version	2025.1
Relevant legislation or external requirements	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) (NC: 10) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs: 2.3 (1-5), 2.4 (1-5), 7.2.2(f)) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act) Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 (Cth) (ESOS Regulations) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023 (Cth) Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act) Competition and Consumer Act 2010
Related ASA Documents	Student Grievance Procedure Quality Assurance Framework Student Support Framework Student Code of Conduct Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure Discrimination, Bullying, and Harassment Policy and Procedure Student Support, Wellbeing, and Health Policy and Procedure Student Admissions Policy Student Admissions Procedure Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Student Assessment Policy Student Assessment Procedure Student Assessment Review Policy Student Assessment Review Procedure Special Consideration Policy and Procedure Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy and Procedure Academic Integrity Policy Academic Misconduct Procedure Student Progression and At Risk Policy Student Progression and At Risk Procedure Student Fees, Charges, and Refund Policy Student Fees, Charges, and Refund Procedure Deferral, Suspension, and Cancellation Policy and Procedure Student Transfer Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent and fair framework for addressing and resolving student grievances effectively. This policy aims to assist students to voice grievances informally and formally, and all parties to investigate and resolve complaints, issues and concerns that arise. This policy reflects ASA Institute of Higher Education's (ASA's) expectations as well as

the responsibilities of ASA, staff, and students or prospective students in resolving student grievances.

By promoting a culture that values student feedback, this policy aims to elevate overall satisfaction, foster trust, and contribute to the overall well-being of the ASA student community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ASA applicants, students, and staff who support these processes.

This policy applies to all grievances related to students at ASA, including admissions, student experience, academic matters, wellbeing, and completion. It encompasses concerns not addressed under separate review, appeal, resolution, or complaint processes. For international students, this includes grievances and complaints against Education Agents (as defined by the National Code).

ASA is dedicated to establishing and sustaining an accessible grievance handling system that is effective, timely, fair, and equitable for all complainants.

The policy set out in this document does not remove the applicant or student's, right to take further action under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws, nor circumscribe the applicants' or students' right to pursue other legal remedies available under Australian Law.

This policy does not replace or modify those or any other responsibilities which may arise under other ASA policies, statutes, or any other law. There are separate policies for the internal management of:

- informal and formal assessment complaints and appeals (*Student Assessment Review Policy, Student Assessment Review Procedure*),
- appeals against misconduct decisions (*Student Code of Conduct, Academic Integrity Policy, Academic Misconduct Procedure, Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy and Procedure, Student Support, Wellbeing and Health Policy and Procedure*) and
- complaints about sexual assault or sexual harassment (*Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure (SASH)*).

Where the policy documents conflict, the specific policy process will take precedence over the general processes described in this document and associated procedure.

Grievances under this *Student Grievance Policy* and associated procedure will only be considered within three months from the date of the decision or event relating to the grievance, unless required otherwise by legislation or regulation.

3. Principles

The principles guiding this policy include transparency, fairness, accessibility, and efficiency. ASA is committed to addressing grievances in a timely manner, upholding the values of equity, and fostering an environment that values student feedback. The principles aim to enhance overall satisfaction, trust, and the wellbeing of the student body.

In the handling of student grievances ASA is committed to the following principles.

3.1 Accessibility and Transparency

- Ensure that information about the grievance process is readily available to all students.
- Clearly outline the steps involved in filing a grievance and the expected timeline for a resolution.
- Provide contact information for the designated grievance officer or office.

3.2 Fairness and Impartiality

- Ensure that the grievance process is fair, impartial, and free from bias.
- Avoid conflicts of interest in the selection of individuals involved in the resolution process.

3.3 Confidentiality

- Safeguard the confidentiality of the parties involved to the extent possible.
- Share information only on a need-to-know basis, respecting the privacy of those involved.

3.4 Promptness

- Establish a reasonable timeframe for the resolution of grievances.
- Communicate regularly with all parties involved to provide updates on the progress of the resolution.

3.5 Informal Resolution Options

- Encourage informal methods of resolution before formal procedures are initiated.
- Provide avenues for students to discuss their concerns with relevant faculty or staff members.

3.6 Formal Grievance Procedures

- Clearly define the formal process for filing a grievance.
- Specify the documentation required and the individuals or committees responsible for handling grievances.

3.7 Appeals Process

- Outline an appeals process for students who are dissatisfied with the initial resolution.
- Clearly define the grounds for filing an appeal and the procedures for doing so.

3.8 Record Keeping

- Maintain accurate records of all grievances, including the nature of the complaint, actions taken, and resolutions reached.
- Retain records for the time periods required under relevant legislation.
- Use this information to identify trends and areas for improvement in the institution's policies and practices.

3.9 Training and Awareness

- Train faculty, staff, and administrators involved in the grievance process to ensure they are knowledgeable about the policy and procedures.
- Raise awareness among students about the availability of the grievance process.

3.10 Continuous Improvement

- Periodically review and update the grievance handling policy to incorporate feedback and address emerging issues.
- Seek input from students and stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the grievance resolution process.

3.11 Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness

Natural justice is a principle that provides for procedural fairness to all parties by ensuring:

- all parties must be given an opportunity to present their case;
- the respondent must be provided with notice and information about allegations made against them and information about their rights, including to have a support person;
- the respondent must be given a reasonable timeframe within which to respond;
- the decision maker must declare any conflict of interest;
- the decision maker must:
 - act fairly and without bias,
 - consider all relevant evidence,
 - base any decision on evidence that supports it; and
- all relevant parties will be informed in writing of the outcome of a formal investigation.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
applicant	A person who has applied to study at ASA.
appeal	A formal request that a decision be changed.
complaint	A formal notification to ASA that something was wrong or unsatisfactory, and usually indicates what actions would resolve the issue.
complainant	A complainant is a member of the ASA Community who has made a disclosure or report under the provisions contained within this Policy.
domestic student	A student who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand), or the holder of an Australian permanent resident or permanent humanitarian visa.
duty of care	ASA owes a duty of care to its students through the need to take reasonable care for their health and safety and take such measure are reasonable to protect students from risks of harm that reasonably ought to be foreseen.
Education Agent (Agent)	A person or organisation (in or outside of Australia) who recruits overseas students and refers them to education providers.
grievance	Grievances are concerns, problems, or complaints that staff or students raise with the provider.
international student	An international student is a student who requires a Student Visa to study in Australia.
mediation	A process that involves dispute resolution, where an individual with mediation skills, commonly referred to as a mediator, assists the parties in conflict to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution. The mediator remains neutral, refrains from influencing the outcome, and guides the involved parties in exploring all potential solutions.
respondent (general)	Someone who responds or makes reply to a student grievance.

5. Policy Statement

ASA is committed to maintaining an effective, timely, fair, and equitable grievance handling system. This system ensures accessibility for all complainants and seeks continuous improvement in the learning environment. Grievances will be handled with transparency, and resolution efforts will align with the principles of fairness and justice within the academic community. ASA

encourages open communication and pledges to address and resolve student grievances in a constructive and supportive manner.

Applicants and students may, at any time during the grievance process, seek independent professional advice and support and may be accompanied by a third party at any relevant meeting.

6. Cost

There will be no charge (cost) to the student through the internal grievance process.

If a student chooses to have the matter resolved by an external reviewer for resolution, the applicant/student may be charged for half of any external mediation cost (if applicable).

International students who choose to take their grievance to the Australian Government's National Student Ombudsman service incur no charge.

Domestic students who chose to take their grievance to the Administrative Review Tribunal (**ART**) may incur charges. If an applicant/student decides to seek resolution at the ART the applicant/student is responsible for their own costs and any application fee/s charged by the ART.

7. Relevant HESFs

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. The following are relevant excerpts and specify that:

Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety

1. All students are advised of the actions they can take, the staff they may contact and the support services that are accessible if their personal circumstances are having an adverse effect on their education.
2. Timely, accurate advice on access to personal support services is available, including for access to emergency services, health services, counselling, legal advice, advocacy, and accommodation and welfare services.
3. The nature and extent of support services that are available for students are informed by the needs of student cohorts, including mental health, disability and wellbeing needs.
4. A safe environment is promoted and fostered, including by advising students and staff on actions they can take to enhance safety and security on campus and online.
5. There is a critical-incident policy together with readily accessible procedures that cover the immediate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident and any follow-up required.

Standard 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints

1. Current and prospective students have access to mechanisms that are capable of resolving grievances about any aspect of their experience with the higher education provider, its agents or related parties.
2. There are policies and processes that deliver timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals against academic and administrative decisions without charge or at reasonable cost to students, and these are applied consistently, fairly and without reprisal.
3. Institutional complaints-handling and appeals processes for formal complaints include provision for confidentiality, independent professional advice, advocacy and other support for the complainant or appellant, and provision for review by an appropriate independent third party if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance.
4. Decisions about formal complaints and appeals are recorded and the student concerned is informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons, and of further avenues of appeal where they exist and where the student could benefit.
5. If a formal complaint or appeal is upheld, any action required is initiated promptly.

Standard 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students [...]

2 Information for students is available prior to acceptance of an offer, written in plain English where practicable, accompanied by an explanation of any technical or specialised terms, and includes: [...]

f. information to assist in resolution of grievances, including an explanation of processes for resolution of grievances and complaints and internal and external appeals processes, guidance on how to participate in the processes and sources of assistance including advocacy.

8. Version Control

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the ASA Board of Directors as at March 2025 and is reviewed every three years.

This Policy, and the associated procedure, are published and available on the ASA website <https://www.asahe.edu.au/policies-and-forms/>.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2025.1	Director Quality and Compliance	Expanded coverage for domestic students and incorporated the establishment of the National Student Ombudsman.	11/03/2025	18/03/2025
2024.2	Project Officer	Document formatting updated to reflect change of Trading Name to ASA Institute of Higher Education	28/06/2024 by CEO	01/07/2024
2024.1	Director Student Experience & Academic Dean	Updated policy to include HESF references, changes in regulatory compliances. BENCHMARKED AGAINST 6 OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS.	29/01/2024	29/01/2024
Previous version archived. New Policy code and numbering system implemented.				
3.0		Annual review – BoD approval	06/07/2021	
2.0		New course accreditation		
1.0		Council approval		