Student and Student-Related Complaints Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy provides a framework for current, former and prospective students to seek resolution of complaints relating to aspects of their experience or engagement with the RMIT Group.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) The objective of this policy is to:

a. establish a transparent student and student-related complaint handling system
b. ensure staff handle student and student-related complaints fairly and objectively
c. ensure a consistent, coordinated and supportive approach that prioritises fair and timely complaint resolution across the RMIT Group, without reprisal.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy provides the framework for current, former and prospective students to seek resolution of complaints relating to:

a. administrative processes or decisions of an RMIT Group institution, or
b. actions by staff, students, contractors and affiliates of an RMIT Group institution.

(4) This policy does not apply to:

a. the merits of a decision reached by an appeal or review mechanism provided by another policy or associated procedure or alternative complaints mechanism. Complaints lodged under this policy can only be made about the process that was followed, not the final decision
b. decisions by RMIT University Council, Academic Board or external organisation.

Section 4 - Policy

Principles for Complaint Resolution

(5) The RMIT Group is committed to:

a. maintaining a culture that promotes student wellbeing by valuing and supporting an individual's right to complain
b. a non-adversarial and conciliatory approach to complaint resolution
c. responding promptly, equitably and with sensitivity to complaints

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d. ensuring no party to a complaint will be unfairly disadvantaged or face discrimination or reprisal by engaging in good faith with the complaints process
e. providing transparent processes and accuracy of records
f. promptly disclosing any actual or potential conflict of interest by all parties in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy
g. reporting allegations of misconduct by staff or students to external authorities such as the police, the Commission for Children and Young People or another government agency where appropriate, and
h. acting on, learning from and using feedback and complaint data to identify problems, improve services, and address underlying causes and trends to prevent reoccurrence.

(6) Complaints are:

a. considered in accordance with the policy instruments authorised by this policy
b. assessed and managed in a professional, fair and transparent manner in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness
c. managed with a focus on resolution, with all parties to a complaint expected to act in good faith and show respect for each other
d. handled in accordance with the Privacy Policy, privacy laws and other relevant legislation
e. assessed on their merits, based on evidence relevant to the complaint and any mitigating circumstances.

Support for Complainants and Respondents

(7) The RMIT Group is committed to:

a. the provision of a no-cost complaint resolution process
b. providing access to independent advice, advocacy and other supports where required and applicable
c. ensuring the safety and welfare of all parties to a complaint by acting to remove or isolate students or staff from the campus or workspace during an investigation where there are concerns about safety
d. balancing the right to confidentiality against the principles of procedural fairness by not unnecessarily disclosing the identity of the complainant or witnesses to the respondent where this may constitute a risk to safety.

Complaint Outcome and Review

(8) The RMIT Group:

a. provides detailed and timely outcomes in writing
b. acts promptly to implement outcome and review decisions
c. is accountable internally and externally for its decision making and complaint handling performance
d. notifies complainants of their right to seek an independent and impartial review of decisions
e. ensures that reviews are conducted by a case manager who has not had any involvement with the original complaint and investigation
f. retains records in accordance with the Privacy Policy and Information Governance Policy.

Responsibilities

(9) The Academic Registrar is responsible for:

a. the review and approval of the Student and Student-Related Complaints Procedure and supporting documents
b. monitoring high risk student and student-related complaints

c. addressing unreasonable conduct by complainants, witnesses and respondents
d. authorising notifications to external authorities, including mandatory reporting
e. reporting of trend and complaint analysis
f. monitoring compliance with this policy
g. identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

(10) The Academic Registrar's Group Student Complaints are responsible for:

a. providing processes that enable a consistent, coordinated and supportive approach to student and student-related complaint investigation and resolution
b. student and student-related complaint case management, notification of outcomes, records and outcome reviews.

(11) Staff are responsible for:

a. providing ARG Student Complaints case managers with local information in a complete and timely way to support resolution of student and student-related complaints
b. ensuring continuous improvement is achieved through the immediate implementation of a complaint outcome or review determination, taking action as expressed therein
c. consideration of, and where appropriate, taking action in respect of any further advice or recommended actions provided by ARG Student Complaints as a result of feedback or a complaint investigation.

(12) All parties to a student or student-related complaint must abide by the expectations under this policy, the Complaints Governance Policy, Student Charter, Statement of Student Responsibilities, and the Code of Conduct.

Compliance

(13) Breaches of this policy by a staff member will be managed in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Compliance Breach Management Procedure as appropriate.

(14) Breaches of this policy by a student (including any unreasonable conduct) will be managed in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy and the Compliance Breach Management Procedure as appropriate.

Review

(15) This policy will be reviewed at least once every five years in accordance with the Policy Governance Policy.

Section 5 - Schedules

(16) This policy includes the following schedule:

a. Schedule 1 – RMIT Complaints Framework

Section 6 - Procedures and Resources

(17) Refer to the following document which is established in accordance with this policy:

a. Student and Student-Related Complaints Procedure

Section 7 - Definitions

Advocate	Provides information and advice to a complainant or respondent and speaks on their behalf.
Affiliates	Contractors, agents, work integrated learning (WIL) providers and partners providing services on behalf of the RMIT Group.
Complainant	The party submitting a complaint. For the purposes of this policy, a complainant is a student (current, former or prospective).
Complaint	Advising dissatisfaction with: a decision, action or failure to act, a delay in providing a service or taking action, the behaviour of an employee, student or affiliate of RMIT.
Prospective student	A person engaging with RMIT for the purpose of admission or enrolment.
Feedback, concern or enquiry	An evaluation, comment or request for information about an action, process or service provided.
Respondent	A party about whom a complaint is made.
Support person	Provides wellbeing support to a complainant or respondent and may assist with interpretation, writing down planned actions and suggesting breaks during meetings.
Unreasonable conduct	(Refer to Student and Student-Related Complaints Procedure cl. 58-59)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	1st July 2024
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Policy Owner	Sherman Young Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education
Policy Author	Connie Merlino University Secretary and Academic Registrar
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"RMIT Group" - RMIT University and its controlled entities (RMIT Europe, RMIT Online, RMIT Vietnam, RMIT University Pathways)