



SOUTHERN CROSS
School of Business

Complaints and Appeals

Policy & Procedure

Complaints and Appeals Policy

1. Purpose

Southern Cross School of Business (SCSB) aims to provide an effective and acceptable procedure for students to bring complaints and appeals to its attention.

It is the policy of SCSB to ensure students study in a friendly environment, free from any forms of coercion, unfair treatment, discrimination, victimisation, harassment, or bullying.

All complaints and appeals by a student will be handled professionally and confidentially, with the aim of achieving a satisfactory resolution as soon as practicable.

2. Scope

In accordance with access and equity principles this policy is available to all stakeholders particularly to all students enrolled at SCSB.

3. Policy Statement

This policy is designed to ensure that SCSB responds effectively and efficiently to individual cases of student dissatisfaction.

4. Policy Principles

This policy recognises that effective grievance management of students contributes to an improved learning environment for all students. This policy also provides an opportunity to improve SCSB's students' experience by identifying areas of risk and potential improvement. Student grievance management at SCSB is guided by the following principles:

- a. Consistency.
- b. Ethical and equitable practices.
- c. Resolution at the local level where possible.
- d. Respect for all parties.
- e. Procedural fairness.
- f. Transparency.
- g. Timely and effective grievance management.

This Policy demonstrates SCSB's commitment to the above-listed principles.

SCSB has adopted a case management approach to student grievance handling. The nature of the concerns raised will determine which area of SCSB takes primary case-management responsibility.

5. Before a Grievance becomes a Formal Complaint

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

6. Complaint Management Procedure

- a. This procedure can be utilised by students (and persons seeking to enrol in a course of study with SCSB) to submit a complaint of an academic or non-academic nature.

Complaints of an academic nature include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum, and awards in a course of study. Complaints of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including complaints in relation to personal information that the SCSB holds in relation to the student.

- b. During all stages of this procedure SCSB will take all steps to ensure that:
- i. the complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;
 - ii. 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;
 - iii. 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;
 - iv. where the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, SCSB will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
 - v. there is no cost to the complainant for utilising the internal or external complaint and appeals process.

Stage one – Formal Complaint:

- i. Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Student Support Coordinator. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within five (5) working days and the complaint management process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the written complaint and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable;
- ii. The Student Support Coordinator or their nominee, will, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.
- iii. 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 a support person to accompany them.
- iv. The Student Support Coordinator 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. That Student Support Coordinator 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.

Stage two – Internal Appeal:

- i. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint from Stage one, they may lodge an appeal with the Principal. An appropriate person or committee will be appointed to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within (10) ten working days;
- ii. Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask a support person to accompany them to these interviews;

- iii. Following the consultation, the Principal, or their nominee, will provide a written advice to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The Principal 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.

Stage three - Domestic Students – Other Appeal Options

The other options available to students include:

- i. Department of Fair Trading (<http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au>)
 - ii. Administrative Appeals Tribunal (<http://www.aat.gov.au>)
 - iii. Other options include getting a mediator or seeking legal advice at their own expense.
- c. NSW Fair Trading Department safeguards the rights of consumers and advises business and traders on fair and ethical practice. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) provides independent review of a wide range of administrative decisions made by the Australian government and some non-government bodies. The AAT aims to provide fair, impartial, high quality and prompt review with as little formality and technicality as possible. Both individuals and government agencies use the services of the AAT.

Stage three - international students – External appeal:

- i. If an international student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint or appeal at the end of the internal appeals process, the student may wish the matter would be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process facilitated by the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). SCSB does not charge any student for the referrals to external support services/agencies.
- d. Things students should know about complaining to the OSO
- i. In Australia, students have the right to complain;
 - ii. The OSO's services are free;
 - iii. In some cases, the OSO may decide not to investigate a student's complaint. This might happen where another organisation can help the student, or they have not spoken to their provider about their complaint;
 - iv. If OSO decides not to investigate, they will tell the student why. The OSO may refer the student to another organisation that can help;
 - v. The OSO is independent and impartial. If OSO does decide to investigate a student's complaint, they will contact the education provider and ask them for further details.
 - vi. The OSO will treat student information with privacy and respect, and collect, store, use and disclose student's personal information only in accordance with Australian privacy laws;

- vii. Where the outcome of the internal and external complaints and appeals process supports the student, SCSB will implement the decision or corrective action as soon as possible and advise accordingly.

7. How to make an external complaint

a. Online (International Students)

Students can make a complaint online via the following link:

<https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>

Note: In order to use the online complaint form, students would need to have the Adobe Reader installed on their computer. If they do not already have it, they may download the latest Adobe Reader version for free from the Adobe website.

b. Telephone

Students can contact OSO by telephone, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST). In Australia, call: 1300 362 072 (calls from mobile phones at mobile phone rates). Outside Australia, call +61 2 6276 0111.

c. Mail

Students can write a letter and post it to:
Overseas Students Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA

d. Further information

For further information, students may visit OSO website:

<https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

8. Enrolment status

Where a student chooses to access this Policy, SCSB will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaint handling process is ongoing.

9. Record keeping & confidentiality

- a. A written record of all complaints handled under this procedure and their outcomes will be maintained for a period of at least two years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Student Support Manager.
- b. All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and is covered by the SCSB's Privacy Policy.

Document and Version Control

Version	1.1
Date Effective	1 st May 2020
Review	This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with the SCSB's Policy Review Schedule
Approved by	Principal
Approval Date	3 rd February 2020
Policy Owner	Southern Cross School of Business
Policy contact	Principal / Student Support Manager
Related Standard	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth) Part D, Standard 6
Related Documents	ESOS Framework Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)