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STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES (ACADEMIC & NON-ACADEMIC)

1.0 Overview

Shepparton ACE College (ACE) is committed to providing an effective, efficient, timely, fair and confidential grievance handling procedure for all Students. This policy covers both academic and non-academic grievances and appeals.

Academic matters include those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a VET course of study.

Non-academic matters include those matters which do not relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a course and include grievances in relation to personal information that the provider holds in relation to a Student. Non-academic grievances tend to arise from events occurring at a provider or from decisions made by a provider.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the Complainant's place of residence or mode of study.

This policy does not replace or modify policies or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Also, the dispute resolution procedures outlined below in this document do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

If a Student chooses to access this policy and procedure, ACE will maintain the Student's enrolment while the grievance and appeals process is ongoing.

2.0 Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation and Students and Complainants are made aware of its availability.

3.0 General principles

These principles, which will be adhered to by ACE, apply to all stages of this grievance procedure:

- The Complainant and any respondent will have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure.
- The Complainant and any respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.
- The Complainant and any respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.



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- At all stages of the process, discussions relating to grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or any respondent if requested.
- Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored at ACE, 130 Rowe Street, Shepparton, 3632, VIC. Access to these records may be requested by writing to the Principal at the aforementioned address.
- A Complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by ACE and the Complainant.

4.0 Informal Grievance Procedure

Students are encouraged initially to attempt to resolve a grievance informally by talking directly with the person concerned to resolve the problem. This step is not mandatory and a Student may proceed directly to the Formal Grievance Procedure.

5.0 Formal Grievance Procedure

5.1 Stage One

Formal grievances should be submitted in writing to the Administrator at ACE, 130 Rowe Street, Shepparton, 3632, VIC. The Complainant is invited to include suggestions about how the grievance might be resolved.

The Administrator will notify the Complainant of receipt of the grievance within five (5) working days. The Administrator will then assess the grievance, determine the outcome and advise the

Complainant in writing of their decision within twenty (20) working days.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to access Stage Two of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of **Stage One**.

5.2 Stage Two

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of **Stage One** they may lodge an appeal in writing with the Principal at ACE, 130 Rowe Street, Shepparton, 3632, VIC.

The Complainant's appeal will be determined by the Principal who will conduct all necessary consultations with the Complainant and other relevant persons and make a determination of



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the appeal. The Complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to progress to Stage Three of the grievance procedure if they consider the matter unresolved.

5.3 Stage Three

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal then an independent mediator will be sourced by ACE through LEADR, the Association of Dispute Resolvers. Complainants may request that their grievance is referred to the independent mediator by writing to the Principal at ACE, 130 Rowe Street, Shepparton, 3632, VIC.

Costs of such mediation will be shared equally by ACE and the Complainant. As a guide mediator's costs would be \$385 for the first four hours (or part thereof). Subsequent hours would be \$137.50 per hour. It is common for most disputes to be resolved within the initial four-hour allocation.

If the Complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the mediator's decision, then they may contact the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA). For contact details and information please see:

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/complaints.aspx>

ACE will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review of the grievance within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations.

6.0 Publication

This Student Grievance Policy and Procedure (Academic and Non-academic) will be made available to students and those seeking to enrol with ACE through publication on the website:

<http://www.sheppartonace.com.au/>